

Photodynamic Therapy

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is the process of blood vessel coagulation in the retina through activation of a light-sensitive drug injected into the system with the use of a non-thermal (or cool) laser

Why it is performed

Photodynamic therapy is used to treat wet Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD). The therapy may stop the leakage of abnormal blood vessels associated with wet AMD. PDT therapy is also used to treat myopic degeneration as well.

How to prepare

The pupil of the eye is enlarged using dilating drops. A fluorescein angiogram is performed prior to the treatment to fully determine the extent of the disease and leakage.

How it is performed

Visudyne drug is infused into the patient's arm for 10 minutes. Following infusion of the drug the physician will instill a drop to numb the eye and place a special contact lens on the eye. A non-heat or cool laser is shone onto the affected area of the retina for 83 seconds to activate the dye.

Results

The laser light activates the Visudyne that has selectively accumulated in the affected area and closes the abnormal blood vessels. The goal of PDT treatment is to stabilize vision and preserve the current level of sight. Restoring 20/20 vision is unlikely due to permanent damage caused by the disease prior to treatment.

How it feels

The patient may experience transient back pain during the infusion.

What the risks are

The patient's skin and eyes will be very sensitive to bright lights and sun for 48 hours after the treatment. Exposure to sun or bright lights during the first 48 hours can result in a severe burn. It is important that during the 48 hours following treatment the patient be completely covered with a wide brimmed hat, scarf, sunglasses, gloves, long pants and sleeves if the patient goes outside. It is also imperative to avoid heat lamps, dental

lights, medical lights, halogen lights and skylights. Normal indoor fluorescent lighting is not harmful. The patient can use a computer and watch TV.