

## Ophthalmology department

# Your visit to the macula clinic

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet provides information about the **macula clinic and the services it offers**. It aims to answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. If you have any further questions about the information below, please contact us.

### The macula clinic

The clinic diagnoses, monitors and treats conditions that affect the lining of the back of the eye, known as the retina.

Common conditions seen at the clinic include age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), diabetic retinopathy, retinal vein occlusion and other retinal diseases. Ask your care team if you need more information about these conditions or an explanation of what they are.

The macula clinic is open between 08.00 and 18.00, Monday to Friday (except weekends and bank holidays). The clinic is situated in the basement at the Western Eye Hospital and on the first floor (South wing) at Charing Cross Hospital.

### How long will my appointment last?

Your appointment could take up to three hours. This is because we may have to do a series of examinations and investigations. If needed, treatment is carried out on the same day depending on the complexity of your eye condition.

### Your appointment journey

#### 1. Registration

On arrival the receptionist will check you in and ask for your personal details. They will then take you to the nurse's waiting area for the initial assessment.

#### 2. Assessment

The nursing team will:

- check your vision (distance vision)
- check your eye pressure
- put in eye drops - it can take between 20 to 30 minutes to enlarge your pupils so we can examine the back of your eye (fundus). Your vision will be blurred for up to six hours. Please **do not drive** during this period.

If you wear distance glasses please bring them with you to the clinic appointment, as you will need them when checking your vision.

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### 3. Imaging

After your assessment, you will:

- be directed/accompanied to the imaging room waiting area
- have an optical coherence tomography (OCT) eye scan once your pupils are dilated enough
- if needed, colour fundus photos and fundus auto-fluorescence will be done (this is a non-invasive technique to study the back the eye). You can find out more in our [Fundus fluorescein angiography](#) leaflet.
- be asked to go back to the reception waiting area until the clinician calls you for your consultation

### 4. Consultation

A clinician will examine the images from the scans and examine your eyes using a slit lamp. Depending on the clinical findings, the medical retina team may perform one or more of the following:

- fluorescein angiogram investigation (dye test)
- anti-VEGF injections treatment
- laser treatment

If your care team thinks you would benefit from having a course of anti-VEGF treatments (a group of medicines which reduce new blood vessel growth and swelling at the back of your eyes), the clinician will explain the treatment available and the procedure including its benefits and risks. We will give you time to decide whether you would like to have the treatment.

If you agree to have the anti-VEGF injection, we will ask you to sign a consent form. The eyes/eye to be treated will be marked and you will be asked to go back to the nurse's waiting area for the injection.

If you are not getting an anti-VEGF injection, the clinician will either discharge you or book you for another follow-up appointment in four to eight weeks' time depending on your diagnosis.

### 5. Anti-VEGF injections

The nurse will do pre-injection checks. You will be asked if you:

- have allergies
- have had a heart attack, mini stroke (transient ischaemic attack) or cerebrovascular accident (stroke) in the past three months
- take anti-coagulant medications (i.e., aspirin, warfarin, Apixaban, Rivaroxaban, etc.)

Your nurse will put in anaesthetic eye drops before your injection. Once your eye is numb, we will carry out the procedure.

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The actual injection itself takes only a few seconds but the whole process can take up to 20 minutes. The injection should not be painful, but you may feel a bit of pressure on the eye during the procedure.

## 6. After the injection

After the injection, we will give you eye drops to take home. Your next appointment will be within four to eight weeks and this will be sent out by email or text.

## Who can I contact for more information?

- Outpatients at Western Eye Hospital - 020 3312 3236
- Outpatients at Charing Cross Hospital - 020 3311 1955 or 020 3311 1109 or 020 3311 1233

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)