

Information for Patients

5-Fluorouracil injection (5-FU) Following Glaucoma Trabeculectomy Surgery

What is 5-FU?

5-FU is a medication that can be very effective in reducing scar tissue. Eye drops and laser treatment do not always reduce the pressure within the eye to satisfactory levels. In these cases, surgery is often required.

Many current operations for glaucoma create an opening or channel through which the watery fluid, called aqueous humour, can drain out of the eye. The main complication following these operations is a build-up of scar tissue that can block the newly formed drainage channel and cause the pressure in the eye to rise. This can occur shortly after the operation is performed or at any time afterwards. It might be possible to prevent scarring and to maintain the success of the operation by administering 5-FU.

What does the procedure involve?

This procedure usually takes place in the out-patient clinic room at the slit lamp microscope. You will have anaesthetic drops put in to numb the front of your eye. The doctor will then give an injection of a very small amount of the anti-scarring medication into the conjunctiva (the transparent outer skin of the eye) that covers the surface of the drainage operation site.

Are there any side effects or risks of this treatment?

The risks are the same as those present at the time of undergoing the glaucoma operation. The most serious sight-threatening problems that can occur are bleeding inside the eye, or a serious infection. Antibiotic drops are given to reduce the risk of infection. These complications are very rare and occur in less than 1 in 1000 operations.

The pressure in the eye could become too low following the treatment and require further intervention, although this is rare. The anti-scarring agent might cause a leak from the injection site, or change the surface of the clear window at the front of the eye (cornea), which recovers in almost all cases.

There can be some discomfort after the injection. You could take pain relief medication, for example Paracetamol, to relieve this discomfort. **If you are already taking pain relief medication for a different condition continue with these, but do not take more than the recommended amount.**

Is the treatment successful?

It is successful in over two thirds of patients, although repeated injections might be required to achieve this success.

The information in this leaflet is intended as a guide only, as each patient's experience will be different. If you require any further information or are concerned about your eye following your injection, please contact your consultant's secretary. The telephone number is on the front of your appointment card.

If you are unable to speak to the secretary, and you consider your problem urgent, please ring the Emergency Eye Department on (0161) 276 5599 every day between 8.00 am and 8.15 pm.

If at any time you are unable to contact a member of staff on the above numbers and you consider your problem urgent, telephone Ward 55 on (0161) 276 5512 24 hours a day, seven days a week.