

## Information for Patients

# Ozurdex Intravitreal Injection

### What is Ozurdex?

Ozurdex (Dexamethasone) is an anti-inflammatory medication belonging to the corticosteroid family. The medication is contained within a long-lasting implant that is injected directly inside the eye. As the implant slowly dissolves in the vitreous gel it releases steroid for up to 6 months.

### Why is Ozurdex being recommended for my eye condition?

Ozurdex has been proved to successfully reduce the swelling that occurs in the centre of the retina (macula). Macular oedema causes reduction in vision. This may occur for a few reasons, due to blockage in a retinal vein (retinal vein occlusion), due to diabetes (diabetic macular oedema) or due to inflammation (uveitis). Your consultant will discuss Ozurdex if it might be of benefit for you.

Ozurdex injection is given to improve vision by reducing the swelling of the macula. However, on occasions vision may not improve if there are other reasons for visual loss besides macular oedema, such as compromised blood flow to the eye (macular ischaemia) or the development of macular scarring. Your consultant will discuss the visual prognosis with treatment.

Intravitreal anti-VEGF injection therapy is generally the first choice of treatment for macular oedema and has a favourable safety profile to Ozurdex. VEGF stands for vascular endothelial growth factor, which is one of the chemicals involved in growing new blood vessels in the eye. Anti-VEGF medications block or slow down the effects of vascular endothelial growth factor.

Both drugs are very effective at clearing the macular oedema and restoring vision. If your response to anti-VEGF therapy is not satisfactory or you require frequent anti-VEGF treatments to maintain your vision, you will be offered Ozurdex as an alternative treatment, as it may offer longer duration of effect while requiring less frequent re-treatments to maintain vision.

Ozurdex may sometimes be offered as the treatment of choice in cases where anti-VEGF treatment is deemed unsuitable, which include recent cardiovascular event or pregnancy.

## How is Ozurdex given?

Dilating drops will be put in your eye to enlarge the pupil (the black hole in the middle of the iris) and anaesthetic drops will be put in to numb the surface of your eye. The skin around the eye and the surface of your eye is washed with an antibacterial solution to reduce the risk of infection. On occasions, an additional local anaesthetic injection might be given under the surface lining of your eye.

The Ozurdex implant is injected into the vitreous humour (the jelly like substance inside the back of your eye) using a specially designed applicator. You may hear a click when the doctor injects the medication into your eye.

You might experience a slight pressure, but rarely pain. You won't need any sutures. Instructions on potential side effects will be explained to you.

## What are the risks of treatment?

The potential risks are outlined below and will be discussed with you by your eye doctor. As with any medicine, side effects are possible with Ozurdex. However, not everyone who takes the drug will experience side effects and overall, the risks from treatment are very low.

## Risks of intravitreal eye injections

Rare/serious complications of the intravitreal injection procedure include:

- Infection (endophthalmitis)
- Retinal detachment
- Bleeding

Rare/serious complications of Ozurdex include:

- Migration of the implant towards the front of the eye
- Accidental incorrect placement of the implant

Some of these serious complications can lead to severe, permanent loss of vision. The risk of endophthalmitis ranges from 0.02% - 0.09% (1 in 1000 to 5000 injections). The likelihood of losing vision because of infection is less than 1:1000. Additional procedures may be needed to treat these complications.

Common side effects of any intravitreal injection include:

- Temporary eye pain, often relieved by pain relieving medication.
- Headache.
- Conjunctival bleeding (bloodshot eye).
- Swelling or scratch on the surface of your eye (corneal abrasion).
- Floaters in your eye.
- Blurred vision.
- Inflammation.
- Visual disturbances such as small specks in the vision.

Common side effects of Ozurdex include:

- Raised eye pressure (30%) generally temporary and not associated with repeated treatments. This is something you may not notice, but if significant it may require eye drops temporarily. Rarely, it will lead to uncontrolled raised eye pressure requiring surgery, or the development of glaucoma (optic nerve damage due to persistent raised eye pressure).
- Cataract (the lens in the eye goes cloudy) about 50% of the time associated with repeated implants but it is rare after the first implant. It may require surgery to remove it and restore your vision.

## Reducing the risk of infection

Antibiotic eye drops will be prescribed following your injection to reduce the risk of infection. If you have an eye infection on the day of your planned treatment the injection might have to be delayed until the infection has been resolved. Please inform your doctor or nurse if you have a red, sticky eye.

## Monitoring and further treatments

Your visual acuity, macular oedema and eye pressure will be monitored on a regular basis, usually at 8 weeks, unless you have a history of raised eye pressure or controlled glaucoma, in which case we will monitor at 4 weeks.

You might need repeated treatments. The implant dissolves completely from the inside of the eye at 6 months without need for removal, so often re-treatments are required every 4-6 months. This will depend on your eye condition and how it responds to treatment.

If the cause of your macular oedema is diabetic or uveitis and you have responded well to Ozurdex without significant side effects, you may be offered a longer-acting steroid implant called Iluvien (Fluocinolone acetonide). This usually lasts in the eye for around 3 years.

## Patient responsibilities

You must immediately contact the hospital on the numbers given below if any of the following signs of infection or complication develop:

- Pain
- Blurred or reduced vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Redness of your eye (increasing compared to immediately after your injection)
- Sticky discharge from your eye

You should avoid rubbing your eyes or swimming for 3 days following each injection to reduce the risk of infection. Please keep all post injection appointments or scheduled telephone calls, so that potential complications can be checked for.

## What if I change my mind?

If you have any concerns, please discuss these with the doctor. You can change your mind about your treatment at any time.

## Contact details

If you require further advice or do not understand anything contained in this leaflet please contact the Macular Treatment Centre on **(0161) 276 5575** Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

If your need to contact the hospital outside of the above hours the Emergency Eye Department is open from 8.00am to 8.00pm every day and Ward 55 is open 24 hours every day. These departments can be contacted via the hospital switchboard on **(0161) 276 1234** asking to be put through to the Emergency Eye Department or the ward.