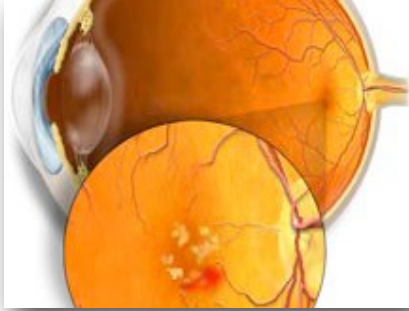


# AVASTIN

If you were to take a drop of fluid from a person's eye that had wet macular degeneration it would show very high amounts of a substance called VEGF



(Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor). VEGF is believed to be the biological trigger that causes abnormal blood vessels to grow

and is a very powerful stimulus for blood vessel leakage. **Avastin** (bevacizumab) is a drug that inhibits the VEGF molecule



thereby lessening its effects of causing new blood vessels to grow and leak. By doing this, often times vision can be stabilized and

sometimes even improved. The doctor will recommend Avastin to patients that have wet macular degeneration with abnormal leakage that extends near or under a patient's center of vision. Avastin is given by injection into the eye. It is very easy for the doctor to give the drug and it is very easy and pain free for a patient to receive the drug. A topical anesthetic drop is placed on the eye followed by a numbing shot on the white part of the eye that is not felt because of the drop. A few minutes later the drug is given thru the white part of the eye. Initially patients are given 4 injections spaced out by 1 month each. This is called the *induction phase*. The reason for the induction phase is that clinical trials demonstrated that this is the period when patients were most likely to improve. After the induction phase patients are followed closely and booster shots are given if new

leakage is detected. The drug does not cure the macular degeneration it simply shuts down the abnormal blood vessels, but they are still present and periodically will start to leak.

As with any injection there are risks. The most common problems associated with the treatment include:

- redness or a blood shot appearance to the white part of the eye, this goes away after a couple of days
- stinging or irritation of the eye after injection. This is typically from the betadine placed on the eye prior to injection and goes away shortly after the treatment
- floaters can occur as often times a small air bubble enters with the medicine and dissolves after a day or so.
- Any injection carries the risk of infection. The practice has done several thousand injections and has never had an infection but this is always a concern and can be a severe problem.
- Any injection also carries a risk of retinal detachment. The practice has never had this complication occur but is a noted risk.

If you receive an injection and feel there is a problem never hesitate to call the office to advise our staff of your concern.