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5- Fluorouracil injection (5-FU)

What is 5-Fluorouracil injection?

5-FU is a drug that is 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. The most common drainage surgery for glaucoma is called a 'Trabeculectomy'.

This operation creates an opening through which the watery fluid called aqueous humour can drain out of the eye.

The main complication following this operation is a build up of scar tissue that can block the newly formed opening and cause the pressure in the eye to rise. This can occur shortly after the operation is performed or at any time afterwards.

It may be possible to prevent scarring and to maintain the success of the operation by giving 5-FU.

What does the procedure involve?

This procedure usually takes place in the clinic at the slit lamp microscope. You will have anaesthetic drops put in to numb the front of the eye. I will then give an injection of a very small amount of the anti scarring drug 5-FU, underneath the conjunctiva (the lining of the eye) that covers the surface of the drainage operation site. You will be given some antibiotic drops to take at home and a further clinic appointment made.

Are there any side effects or risks of this treatment?

There may be slight discomfort after the injection. You may wish to take a mild painkiller, for example Paracetamol, to relieve this discomfort. **If you are already taking painkillers for a different condition continue with these, but do not take both.**

The pressure in the eye may go too low following the treatment and require further intervention, although this is rare.

The anti-scarring agent may cause a leak from the wound, or change the surface of the clear window at the front of the eye (cornea), which recovers in almost all cases.

Is the treatment successful?

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

Contact information

The information in this leaflet is intended as a guide only, as each patients experience will be different. If you require any further information or are concerned about your eye following treatment, please contact my secretary at the Alexandra hospital, the telephone number is 0161 495 6815.

If you are unable to speak to my secretary, please ring my secretary at the Eye Hospital who can contact me. The telephone number is 0161 276 6949. If you are unable to contact my secretaries or me at the Eye Hospital and are concerned then the Emergency Eye centre on 0161 276 5597 is open everyday between 8.00 am and 8.30 pm.

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