Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)
Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)

Photodynamic therapy may help an eye condition called wet Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Central Serous Retinopathy (CSR). AMD affects your central vision when new abnormal blood vessels grow under your retina. CSR is a buildup of fluid under the retina. The retina is the delicate lining in the back of your eye. Your retina turns light into images.
The first step in treatment is an intravenous (IV) infusion of a medicine that is activated by a special light. The infusion will take 10 minutes. The light is given by non-thermal (non-heat) laser therapy which activates the medicine to seal the abnormal blood vessels in the back of your eye.

Although your vision may not get better after this treatment, it may prevent further vision loss. You may need more than one treatment. Treatments are given 2 to 3 months apart.

On the day of your treatment, staff in the Eye Care Centre will give you a prescription for Visudyne®. Take the prescription to the hospital drugstore on the main floor. This medication costs about $2,000 (October 2019). Pharmacare or third-party insurance may cover the cost. If the cost is not covered by your insurance, please be ready to pay when you pick up the medication at the drugstore.
Getting ready for the treatment

• It may not be possible to have PDT if you have certain allergies or liver disease. A nurse will review your health history with you before the treatment. The doctor will then decide if it is OK for you to have the treatment.

• You will need to have an IVF (dye) test or an ICG test before each treatment. This may be done on the day you have your PDT or a day or so before. If you live outside of Halifax, you may need to stay in Halifax overnight. Your eye doctor’s office can answer any questions about this.

• If you are flying home after your treatment, make sure you give yourself plenty of time. There may be delays at the Eye Care Centre. For example, if your treatment is in the morning, do not schedule an early afternoon flight home.

• Plan to be at the Eye Care Centre for about 2 to 3 hours.
• On the day of your treatment, bring clothing with you that will cover your arms, legs, head, and neck. We suggest that you wear ankle-length pants, a long-sleeved top, gloves, and a wide-brimmed hat. You will be given dark sunglasses to wear on the day of your treatment. None of your skin should be exposed.

• Elective surgery or dental work cannot be done within 48 hours (2 days) after your treatment. You will need to cancel any of these procedures and rebook at a later time.

• If you wear contact lenses, you may be asked not to wear them on the day of your treatment.

• Eat your meals as usual before coming to the Centre. You can bring a snack.

• Register at the self check-in kiosk, located in the main entrance of the Centennial or Dickson Building, Victoria General site.

• Your height and weight will be measured.
• A nurse will dilate (make bigger) your pupils with eye drops. You may need to have drops 1 to 3 times.

How is the treatment done?
• The doctor will ask you to sign a consent form.
• You will have an IV needle placed into a vein in your arm. You will be given medication through the IV for 10 minutes.
• Freezing drops will be placed in your eye to prevent discomfort from the special contact lens used. The lens will hold your eyelids apart to let the doctor see the area being treated.
• You will see a light during the laser treatment. Laser treatment is almost always painless, although some patients may have slight discomfort. Be sure to tell the doctor or nurse if you are uncomfortable.
• The laser treatment will take just over 1 minute.
After the treatment

- Do not expose your eyes or skin to bright light for at least 2 days after the treatment. This includes, but is not limited to, bright sunlight, halogen lighting in houses and offices, and the lighting used in a dentist’s office, operating room, or tanning salon.

- Do not stay in the dark. It is good to expose your skin to indoor light. **This helps to clear the medication from your body.**

- For the first 2 days after the treatment, you must wear the sunglasses the Centre gave you if you go outside. Cover all parts of your skin with clothing when outdoors for the first 2 days.

- **Using sunscreen will NOT protect you from getting a very bad sunburn.**

- Your nurse will put an “alert bracelet” on your wrist before you leave the Centre. This will tell any health care worker that you are very sensitive to sunlight and halogen lighting. Take the bracelet off after 48 hours (2 days).
• 12 to 24 hours after the treatment, your vision may get worse for a little while. This usually gets better in 2 to 3 days.

• If you have any problems after the treatment, call your eye doctor’s office at the phone number on your alert bracelet.

• Do not drive for at least 48 hours (2 days) after the treatment because your vision may be blurred. Ask your eye doctor when you can drive.

• Your eye doctor’s office will contact you for your followup visit, which will be in 3 to 4 months.

Looking for more health information?
Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides
Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.
For more information, go to http://library.novascotia.ca
Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit https://811.novascotia.ca
Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit http://ns.211.ca

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.
Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!
www.nshealth.ca

Prepared by: Eye Care Centre
Illustration by: LifeART Super Anatomy 1 Images, Copyright © 1994, TechPool Studios Corp. USA
Designed by: NSHA Library Services

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.
The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.
If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.