

Fundus Fluorescein Angiography and Indocyanine Green

Information for patients

The aim of this leaflet is to give you some information about Fluorescein Angiography (FFA) and Indocyanine Green (ICG). Some patients may only have the FFA without having the ICG- you will be informed before the procedure if you need to have both.

What is Fundus Fluorescein Angiography and Indocyanine Green?

This is a photographic test to find out more information about the blood circulation and condition of the back of your eyes. It helps the doctor decide the best form of treatment or management for your condition. The FFA highlights the retinal vessels and the ICG highlights blood vessels in the deep area of your retina, called the choroid.

Before the test

- Eat, drink and take all medicines as normal (If you are having the ICG you should not drink alcohol for 24 hours before your test). Please bring a list of all medicines you are taking to your appointment
- If possible, please bring someone with you. If you are unable to do this, please bring a telephone number for your next of kin or your chosen contact person

- When you arrive a nurse will ask you some questions about your general health. Please tell us if you have any breathing or heart problems, if you are pregnant, or if you are on renal dialysis. It is also very important to inform us of any allergies, including any reactions you have ever had to medicines, food, insect bites or stings, hay fever, contact rashes, or any previous tests. Your blood pressure and pulse will be taken
- The doctor will fully explain this test and obtain signed consent from you before we can carry out these procedures
- The nurse will put drops into both of your eyes to dilate your pupils. The drops take about 20 minutes to take effect. These drops might blur your vision for 5 to 6 hours. At this time the nurse will also put a cannula (a thin, plastic tube) into your arm or hand using a needle, in preparation for the test
- Please feel free to ask any questions at any time.

During the test

When your pupils are dilated you will be taken into the imaging room, the photographer will position you comfortably in front of a special camera. Some photographs will be taken before the test starts. After these “base line” images have been taken a flush of saline will be put through the cannula. If you are having the ICG, the Indocyanine Green dye will then be put through the cannula. This will travel through your veins to your eyes quickly to highlight the blood vessels in the deep part of your retina. The images will then be taken. You will be given the fluorescein dye through the cannula approximately five minutes later.

If you are not having the ICG, you will be given the fluorescein dye through the cannula after the saline.

The Fluorescein dye travels to your eyes within seconds and highlights the blood circulation during a series of images taken over the next few minutes. It is important to keep your eye in the position requested by the photographer.

The whole test only takes between 20-30 minutes. Imaging is not continuous throughout this- there will be intervals in between. Please expect to be in the department for one to two hours so that we can do the necessary checks before and after the test.

After the test

Once the test is complete we will ask you to sit within our department for 10 minutes, in order to ensure that you feel well. The cannula will be removed and you can go home.

If you are having the ICG, you should not drink alcohol for 24 hours after the procedure.

Your test results will be fully discussed at your next appointment to see the doctor.

Are there any side effects?

- The eye drops will blur your close vision and will also make light seem brighter for approximately 5-6 hours after the test. It is advisable to bring sun glasses to the appointment and do not drive during this time
- The fluorescein dye will give the whole of your body a yellow tinge and make you slightly more sun sensitive for up to 2 days. **Do not** expose yourself to an artificial sun lamp

- Your urine will also be bright yellow for the same time. Drinking plenty of fluid will help
- The ICG will not discolour your skin or urine.
- 1 in 10 patients feel slightly nauseated or “light headed” for a few seconds to a few minutes shortly after the injection. The feeling usually passes quickly
- Some patients feel an itching or tingling sensation, or feel a little short of breath and may be given anti-histamine to settle this down
- Although extremely rare, a serious anaphylaxis (allergic) reaction has been reported on 1 in 200,000 patients. For this reason, doctors and staff are trained in the management of anaphylaxis

We provide fast and effective treatment for all side effects lasting more than a few minutes.

Contact details

Eye Pavilion clinic
0131 536 3751
(8:30am – 4:30pm)

Outpatient Department at St John’s Hospital
01506 524 286

Department of
Ophthalmology
The Princess Alexandra
Eye Pavilion
Chalmers Street
Edinburgh
EH3 9HA

Department of Ophthalmology
OPD1 St John’s Hospital
Howden Road West
Howden
Livingston
West Lothian
EH54 6PP