

Eye Pavilion clinic
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(8:30am – 4:30pm)



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Use of iodine before eye injections

Patient Information Leaflet

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Why is iodine used before my eye injection?

Using iodine before an intravitreal injection procedure means there is minimised risk of infection UK audits demonstrate that the use of Iodine during IVT procedures carry an infection rate of one in 3000 cases in the UK.

What happens?

Before your injection treatment (intravitreal injection) is given, we clean the eyelids and surrounding area of your eye with an antiseptic agent called povidone-iodine (PVP-I). Iodine is also used for patients undergoing any type of eye surgery or procedure. This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions patients frequently ask us about our use of iodine, however, if there is anything else you would still like clarified, please ask your eye doctor or nurse practitioner.

If I experience sensitivity to iodine does that mean I may be allergic?

All antiseptic agents/drops are known to cause mild to moderate irritation or some redness but that does not mean that you are allergic to them. Very rarely, patients are truly allergic to povidone-iodine. If you have any known allergy to povidone-iodine please tell your eye doctor when you attend the injection clinic appointment.

Why would I experience sensitivity to iodine?

Iodine is in the same group as chlorine (used as an antiseptic in swimming pools) and so it is likely that you will have a similar reaction to the eye irritation you may get from extended swimming.

Is there any preparation I can do to reduce iodine sensitivity?

It is common to have sensitivity to iodine and we make every effort to reduce possible irritation by thoroughly washing out the iodine. Ocular lubricants are available should you develop an sensitivity to iodine,

please ask a nurse in the unit if you think you require these. Patients who use drops for glaucoma maybe more sensitive to iodine than others and so should be aware of this.

Can an alternative antiseptic agent be used?

For patient allergic or sensitive to povidone-iodine we can use another antiseptic agent like chlorhexidine gluconate. Chlorhexidine is a good alternative antiseptic agent; however it is not as effective as povidone-iodine. Studies show that there is a 10 times greater chance of risk of infection when using chlorhexidine.

Therefore, to prevent the risk of serious infection, our advice and policy is to use povidone-iodine as an antiseptic agent rather than Chlorhexidine.

If you have a known allergy to iodine please speak to a doctor or a nurse before your injections.

It is important to remember that there have been no known serious adverse effects following the use of iodine in ophthalmology.

Keeping your Appointment

If you cannot keep your appointment, or have been given one that is unsuitable, please change it by phoning the relevant number on the back of this leaflet. Your call will give someone else the chance to be seen and will help us keep waiting times to a minimum.

Interpretation and Translation

This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language

