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Verteporfin Injection

pronounced as (ver" te pore' fin)

Why is this medication prescribed?

Verteporfin injection is used in combination with photodynamic therapy (PDT; treatment with a laser light) to treat abnormal growth of leaky blood vessels in the eye caused by wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD; an ongoing disease of the eye that causes loss of the ability to see straight ahead and may make it more difficult to read, drive, or perform other daily activities), pathologic myopia (a serious form of nearsightedness that worsens with time), or histoplasmosis (a fungal infection) of the eye. Verteporfin is in a class of medications called photosensitizing agents. When verteporfin is activated by light, it closes up the leaking blood vessels.

How should this medicine be used?

Verteporfin injection comes as a solid powder cake to be made into a solution to be injected intravenously (into a vein) by a doctor. Verteporfin is usually infused over 10 minutes. Fifteen minutes after the start of the verteporfin infusion, your doctor will administer a special laser light to your eye. If both of your eyes need treatment, the doctor will administer the laser light to your second eye immediately after the first eye. If you have never used verteporfin before and both your eyes need treatment, the doctor will treat only one eye with the laser light on your first visit. If you do not have any serious problems due to the treatment, the doctor will treat your second eye 1 week later with another verteporfin infusion and laser light treatment.

Your doctor will examine your eyes 3 months after verteporfin and PDT treatment to decide whether you need another treatment.

Other uses for this medicine

This medication may be prescribed for other uses; ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

What special precautions should I follow?

Before receiving verteporfin injection,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to verteporfin, any other medications, or any of the ingredients in verteporfin injection. Ask your pharmacist for a list of the ingredients.

- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking or plan to take. Be sure to mention any of the following: anticoagulants ('blood thinners'); antihistamines; aspirin or other pain medications; beta carotene; calcium channel blockers such as amlodipine (Norvasc), diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor, Tiazac, others), felodipine (Plendil), isradipine (DynaCirc), nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia), nimodipine (Nimotop), nisoldipine (Sular), and verapamil (Calan, Isoptin, Verelan); diuretics ('water pills'); griseofulvin (Fulvicin-U/F, Grifulvin V, Gris-PEG); medications for diabetes, mental illness, and nausea; polymyxin B; sulfa antibiotics; and tetracycline antibiotics such as demeclocycline (Declomycin), doxycycline (Doryx, Vibramycin), minocycline (Dynacin, Minocin), and tetracycline (Sumycin). Your doctor may need to change the doses of your medications or monitor you carefully for side effects.
- tell your doctor if you have porphyria (a condition that causes sensitivity to light). Your doctor will probably tell you not to use verteporfin injection.
- tell your doctor if you are being treated with radiation therapy and if you have or have ever had gallbladder or liver disease or any other medical condition.
- tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding. If you become pregnant while using verteporfin injection, call your doctor.
- if you are having surgery, including dental surgery, within 5 days of a verteporfin infusion, tell the doctor or dentist that you have used verteporfin.
- you should know that verteporfin may cause vision problems. Do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how this medication affects you.
- you should know that verteporfin will make your skin very sensitive to sunlight (likely to get sunburn). Wear a wristband to remind you to avoid exposure of the skin and eyes to direct sunlight or bright indoor light (e.g. tanning salons, bright halogen lighting, and high power lighting used in operating rooms or dental offices) for 5 days after the verteporfin infusion. If you must go outdoors in the daylight during the first 5 days after verteporfin infusion, protect all parts of your body by wearing protective clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat and gloves, and dark sunglasses. Sunscreen will not protect you from sunlight during this time. Do not avoid light entirely during this time; you should expose your skin to soft indoor light.
- talk to your doctor about testing your vision at home during your treatment. Check your vision in both eyes as directed by your doctor, and call your doctor if there are any changes in your vision.

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, continue your normal diet.

What side effects can this medication cause?

Verteporfin injection may cause side effects. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:

- pain, redness, swelling, or discoloration at the site of the injection
- back pain during the infusion
- dry eye
- itchy eye
- dry, itchy skin

- constipation
- nausea
- muscle pain or weakness
- decreased sensitivity to touch
- decreased hearing

Some side effects can be serious. If you experience any of these symptoms, call your doctor immediately:

- blurred vision
- decrease or changes in vision
- seeing flashes of light
- black spots in vision
- redness and swelling of the eyelid
- pink eye
- chest pain
- fainting
- sweating
- dizziness
- rash
- shortness of breath
- flushing
- rapid or irregular heartbeat
- headache
- lack of energy
- hives and itching

Verteporfin injection may cause other side effects. Call your doctor if you have any unusual problems while using this medication.

In case of emergency/overdose

In case of overdose, call the poison control helpline at 1-800-222-1222. Information is also available online at <https://www.poisonhelp.org/help> [<https://www.poisonhelp.org/help>]. If the victim has collapsed, had a seizure, has trouble breathing, or can't be awakened, immediately call emergency services at 911.

What other information should I know?

Keep all appointments with your doctor.

It is important for you to keep a written list of all of the prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines you are taking, as well as any products such as vitamins, minerals, or other dietary supplements. You should bring this list with you each time you visit a doctor or if you are admitted to a hospital. It is also important information to carry with you in case of emergencies.

Brand names

- Visudyne[®]

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