



Avastin

Physicians have been using a drug called Avastin[®] as an “off-label” treatment for advanced wet AMD, with promising results. Avastin has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a blood vessel growth inhibitor used to treat colorectal cancer, but is not approved for AMD. Avastin is manufactured by the same pharmaceutical company, Genentech, Inc., that makes Lucentis[®], which was approved by the FDA in 2006 as a therapy for wet AMD. Lucentis is actually a form of Avastin developed by Genentech to specifically treat AMD through the use of smaller molecules for increased penetration of the retina. Both are similarly administered through a series of injections into the vitreous portion of the eye (the clear jelly-like substance that fills the eye from the lens back to the retina) at regular intervals over the course of months or a year.

While Lucentis costs approximately \$2,000 per injection, each Avastin treatment costs between \$20 and \$100, and many physicians believe both drugs are equally effective. Since much smaller doses of Avastin are used for AMD than for cancer treatment, physicians normally use a compounding pharmacy to obtain the correct dosage.

The National Eye Institute (NEI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is currently conducting clinical trials to compare the relative efficacy and safety of both Avastin and Lucentis.

Please contact your physician and health insurance company for more information concerning the cost, treatment regimen and insurance coverage for Avastin.

The source for this fact sheet is the Food and Drug Administration. The above information should not in any way substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional and is not intended to constitute medical advice. For further information, contact Macular Degeneration Research, a program of the American Health Assistance Foundation, at 22512 Gateway Center Drive, Clarksburg, Maryland 20871, call 1-800-437-2423, or visit our website at www.ahaf.org.

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