



# Macugen

Macugen<sup>®</sup> (pegaptanib sodium injection) is approved by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of the ‘wet’ form of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic macular edema (DME). Wet macular degeneration occurs when abnormal blood vessels grow behind the macula, then bleed. These vessels are very fragile and leak fluid and blood, resulting in scarring of the macula and the potential for rapid, severe damage. "Straight ahead" vision can become distorted or lost entirely in a short period of time, sometimes within days. Wet macular degeneration accounts for approximately 10 percent of the cases, however it results in 90 percent of the legal blindness.

Macugen<sup>®</sup> works by blocking vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), a protein that promotes blood vessel growth. This treatment has the potential for helping *all* patients with the wet form of the disease, whereas photodynamic therapy and laser photocoagulation are only approved for patients that have a subtype of wet macular degeneration. According to the data collected during the clinical trials, patients receiving Macugen<sup>®</sup> were less likely to progress to legal blindness and experience severe vision loss.

Macugen<sup>®</sup> is injected into the vitreous portion of the eye (the clear jelly-like substance that fills the eye from the lens back to the retina). Due to the fact that the production of VEGF is ongoing, routine administration of this drug is required. The most common side effects with Macugen<sup>®</sup> include inflammation of the eye, blurred vision or changes in vision, cataracts, bleeding in the eye, swelling

of the eye, eye discharge, irritation or discomfort of the eye, and seeing "spots" in your vision.

Patients diagnosed with macular degeneration should contact their eye care professional to determine if they are a good candidate for this treatment.

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Some of the information in this fact sheet was obtained from the National Eye Institute and the National Library of Medicine. The above information should not in any way substitute for the advice of a qualified health care 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](http://www.ahaf.org).

Spring 2007