Your guide to therapy with Lucentis® (ranibizumab) for visual impairment due to choroidal neovascularization secondary to pathologic myopia

[Introduction]

Welcome to your guide to therapy with Lucentis®!

You have been given this leaflet and CD because your doctor has prescribed you Lucentis®. Your doctor believes you should receive Lucentis® as a treatment for your visual impairment due to choroidal neovascularization, or CNV, secondary to pathologic myopia, or PM. First, you'll learn about Lucentis®, followed by information on CNV secondary to PM.

[About Lucentis®]

To start off, let's talk about Lucentis®.

Lucentis® belongs to a group of treatments known as anti-vascular endothelial growth factor, or VEGF, therapies.

Lucentis® prevents VEGF-A, a substance that causes abnormal blood vessel growth, from causing further damage to the eye and can even repair some of the damage that has occurred.

Next, let's talk about what you can expect when you receive your Lucentis® injection.

Lucentis® treatment is given as an injection in the eye. It is normal to worry about such injections but most often the injection is painless.

On the day of your treatment, care will be taken to make sure you are relaxed and comfortable.

Before receiving Lucentis® you should inform your doctor if you have had a stroke or experienced transient signs of stroke such as weakness or paralysis of limbs and face or difficulty speaking or understanding. This will help the doctor decide whether this is the most appropriate treatment for you.

A doctor or nurse will cover your face and the area around the eye with a special drape, and clean your eye and the skin around it. They will hold your eye open so that you don't blink and may use a device to help, and they will then numb your eye with an anesthetic to prevent pain.

The doctor will then give the injection into the white part of your eye. You may feel a little pressure with the injection.

It's important to tell your doctor if you have any pain, redness or discharge in your eye, or if you think you may be allergic to Lucentis® or to Betadine® (iodine).

After you receive your Lucentis® injection, your doctor will do eye tests, including a measure of the pressure in your eye, to make sure that the treatment went well and check for any complications associated with the injection process. The white area of the eye, where the injection was given, will likely be red. This redness is normal and it will go away in a few days. However, please contact your doctor immediately if it doesn't go away or gets worse.

You may see a few spots or 'floaters' in your vision. These spots are normal and should go away after a few days. Again, contact your doctor if they don't go away or if they get worse.

Your pupils will be dilated for the injection, which can make it difficult for you to see for a few hours after the treatment. You should not drive until your vision has returned to normal.

It is important to monitor changes in the condition of your eye and body in the week following your injection. Rarely, injections in the eye can cause infection. Contact your doctor as soon as possible if you have any of the following

signs and symptoms in your eye: pain; light sensitivity or tearing; swollen lids or other swelling; increasing redness; blurred or distorted vision, or sudden vision loss; flashes of light; seeing flies, black spots, colored halos; or drying of the surface of your eye.

Now, let's talk about how long you will need to continue treatment with Lucentis®.

Every patient is different – you may need additional Lucentis® injections depending on how you respond to treatment. Talk with your doctor about your results and your feelings about your treatment.

If your vision is not maintained or doesn't get better immediately, it is important to keep attending your eye doctor appointments. The best way to protect your independent lifestyle and your vision is to visit your doctor on a regular basis. Be sure to discuss available options with your doctor.

Your doctor will monitor the condition of your eye and, depending on how you respond to the treatment, will decide if and when you need to receive further treatment.

Always go to every appointment that your doctor arranges for you.

[Visual impairment due to CNV secondary to PM]

Now that you know about Lucentis®, let's talk about visual impairment due to CNV secondary to PM.

Myopia, also known as near- or short-sightedness, is a common condition where light entering the eye is focussed in front of the retina instead of directly on it, causing distant objects to appear blurry.

Myopia can be classified into two groups based on its severity: low-to-modest degree of myopia, which is sometimes referred to as simple myopia, and high myopia.

Eyes with high myopia become elongated compared with normal eyes. Many of them have signs of structural damage where the tissue in the eye has deteriorated – this is called pathologic myopia, or PM.

Eyes with PM can have invasive blood vessels growing in the layers of tissue of the retina; this process is called choroidal neovascularization, or CNV. Myopic CNV is a common cause of vision loss in patients with PM and is a serious threat to vision if left untreated.

One of the contributing factors for myopic CNV is a substance called VEGF-A. VEGF-A can cause leakage and thickening in the layers of the retina that damage your vision.

It may be that visual impairment due to myopic CNV has already started to affect your ability to do everyday things like reading, shopping and driving.

You may need to see your doctor regularly for tests after being treated, to have your progress and need for further treatment assessed.

It is also important for you to know how CNV secondary to PM is diagnosed.

A technique called fluorescein angiography, which visualizes the blood vessels at the back of the eye, is commonly used for the diagnosis of CNV secondary to PM.

For this test, the doctor will dilate your pupils with some eye drops. A yellow dye will then be injected into your arm and a series of photographs will be taken.

Now we'll talk about what you can expect after treatment with Lucentis®.

For almost all patients, vision at least stays the same with Lucentis®, and improves for many patients.

Following treatment, some patients notice a difference in their vision in as early as 1 week. You may not notice an improvement right away, but it is important that you continue with regular check-ups and any scheduled treatments because you may notice improvement with continued treatment.

With Lucentis®, you may find that you are able to perform everyday activities that you have found difficult since being diagnosed with visual impairment due to CNV secondary to PM, such as reading, shopping and driving.

Finally, let's talk about the ways you can help your vision loss.

Monitor your own vision regularly. At home, take note of any changes in your vision. Inform your doctor or nurse if you notice any changes: treatment will provide an opportunity to reduce further vision loss or improve your vision.

Dealing with changes in your vision can be difficult – it is OK to ask for support. Talk with family and friends about your vision, and let them know if you are having trouble reading, getting around, taking medication or doing housework. If you do not have family or friends who can help, ask at your doctor's office about support services.

We hope that this information has helped you to better understand Lucentis® and how it can help treat visual impairment due to CNV secondary to PM. If you have further questions, please ask your doctor.

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