

Fluorescein angiography

Eye Clinic (Exmoor Unit)
Tel: 01271 322770

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

What is a fluorescein angiography?

Fluorescein angiography is an eye test that uses a special dye and photography to look at blood flow in the retina. It is used to help the doctor decide on the best form of treatment for your eye condition.

Why is it needed?

Fluorescein angiography is most commonly used to identify abnormal areas of the retina. The most common conditions requiring this test are diabetes, age related macular degeneration and circulatory problems (such as a blockage in a blood vessel). The test will supply your doctor with the information needed to either confirm or refute a diagnosis, or to change the management of your condition. Sometimes the test may confirm no treatment is needed or no further eye review is required. If this is the case, you will be contacted with your test results either by post or telephone.

What does it involve?

Eye drops that make the pupils dilate will be given. These take 20 to 30 minutes to take effect.

These eye drops cause temporary blurring of your vision, so you are advised **not to drive to your appointment.**

You will be required to sign a consent form before your test commences.

In a darkened room, you will be asked to place your chin on the camera's chin rest and your forehead against a support bar to keep your head still during the test. The photographer will take pictures of the retina inside your eye. After the first group of pictures are taken, a dye called fluorescein is injected into a vein, usually in your arm or hand by a specially trained nurse. Then, a series of pictures are taken as the dye moves through the blood vessels in the back of your eye. You may notice a blue flash is used to take pictures.

No x-rays or radioactive materials are used for this test.

How long will the test take?

The dilating drops take approximately 30 minutes and the procedure takes approximately 20 minutes. The photographer will take a rapid series of photographs every few seconds on the eye of most interest. After five minutes and 10 minutes, further photographs will be taken of both eyes.

You will be asked to take a seat in the waiting room for 15 minutes following your test to ensure you are feeling comfortable before going home.

Where is the test done?

The test is carried out in the Exmoor Unit on Level 2 of the North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple.

What preparations are needed?

You are required to bring a list of your usual medications to this appointment.

Are there any side-effects or risks?

A small number of people feel slightly nauseous and occasionally vomit immediately after the injection of dye. This rarely lasts more than a minute or two.

Your skin will be a yellowish colour and your urine will be more yellow than usual for 48 hours whilst your body excretes the fluorescein dye.

You may experience temporary dazzle from the camera flash lasting approximately 20 minutes following the test.

You must not drive or operate machinery until your vision has returned to normal. This may take several hours following your fluorescein angiography due to the dilating eye drops.

Allergic reactions to the fluorescein dye are rare. However, if you suffer a mild allergic reaction in response to the dye, an anti-histamine tablet may be administered to relieve the symptoms.

Although serious side-effects are rare, bronchospasm (tightening of the muscles around the airways) and anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction that can develop rapidly) are reported to occur rarely.

Diabetic patients should note that the results of urine and blood sugar testing may be affected for a short period following the fluorescein angiography.

What happens after the test?

Test date:

The photographs from your fluorescein angiogram today will be examined within a week after your test. You will be contacted about the results and what needs to happen next.

If you have not been contacted about your results after two weeks, please contact:

Anne (Optometry Bookings Officer) on 01271 311714.

If you are greeted by a voicemail facility, please leave a message including your name, date of birth and a contact telephone number, and say that you are enquiring about an angiogram result.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask any member of the medical or nursing team or contact the Exmoor Unit on 01271 322770 (Monday to Thursday, 8am to 6pm).

Useful contact

Royal National Institute of Blind People
Helpline number: 0845 766 9999
Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Macular Disease Society
PO Box 1870, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 9AD
Website: www.maculardisease.org

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

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Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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