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## NEW USES FOR MACULAR DEGENERATION "MIRACLE" DRUG

The drug that caused a sensation in the eye world, VEGF inhibitors, now has been proven in two large clinical trials to be helpful for two additional diseases, diabetes and retinal vein occlusion. These diseases both cause swelling of the retina, thus decreasing vision. VEGF stands for vascular endothelial growth factor, and it is a substance that causes harmful blood vessels to form in the eye when there is not enough oxygen. The drug comes in two forms, Avastin (bevacizumab) and Lucentis (ranibizumab). Avastin is the much less expensive of the two and is a larger form of the drug. It is not specifically packaged or FDA-approved for use in the eye as is Lucentis.

Diabetes is a common disease that affects about 8% of the population, 40% of which will get eye disease called diabetic retinopathy from it. A study called READ-2 (Ranibizumab for Edema of the mAcula in Diabetes) studied the current treatment for diabetic swelling of the retina (laser) versus a combination of Lucentis and laser versus Lucentis alone. At six months, 24% of the Lucentis group gained 3 or more lines of vision compared to 12% of the combination group and 0% of the laser only group. (Ophthalmology Times Aug. 1, 2009)

Central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) is a disease where the main vein to the eye becomes blocked, usually from high blood pressure or atherosclerosis. This causes the retina to become swollen as well as not have enough oxygen. A study called CRUISE (Ranibizumab for the Treatment of Macular Edema after Central Retinal Vein Occlusion Study: Evaluation of Efficacy and Safety) evaluated Lucentis for CRVO. At six months 47% of the treated patients had improved vision of 15 letters or more versus 17% of sham injected controls. (Ophthalmology 117:6)

A branch of the central vein can become blocked as well, causing swelling of the retina. This is called a branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO). This was studied as well in a clinical trial called BRAVO which compared Lucentis versus sham injection. At six months, 60% of patients in the Lucentis group gained 15 letters or more of vision versus 29% of controls. (Ophthalmology Times Aug. 1, 2009)

As you can see, anti-VEGF drugs are an exciting new addition to our tools to treat eye diseases. Dr. Lus cavage will always let you know if you should be getting these treatments when she examines your eyes.

## Staff Picks

We want to share with you some of our favorite things so you can see how much you have in common with us...

### *Favorite Musical artist:*

Dr. Lus cavage: Daughtry, Billy Joel, Elton John

Joanne: Jackson 5, Michael Buble, Billy Joel

Peg: Kenny Rodgers, Stevie Nicks

Rebecca: Beyond the Pale, Carman, Avalon

### *Favorite Book:*

Dr. Lus cavage: The DaVinci Code, On Food and Cooking

Joanne: James Patterson Books

Peg: The Labyrinth, The Secret Garden

Rebecca: Left Behind series

### *Favorite Actor and Actress:*

Dr. Lus cavage: Harrison Ford, Sandra Bullock, Cary Grant

Joanne: Adam Sandler, Julia Roberts

Peg: James Dean, Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts

Rebecca: Denzel Washington, Sandra Bullock



**For the Patients & Friends of  
Eye to Eye Ophthalmology**

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**Eye Care With a Family Touch!**



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## News Items

- ✓ Rebecca, one of our fine front desk staff, got a new puppy this summer! Her name is Sarah Grace and she is a long-haired Chihuahua. Her picture is on the front of the newsletter.
- ✓ Eye to Eye purchased some new equipment which will make your experience at the office even faster and smoother than before. We now have the same equipment in both examination lanes. We also purchased a brightness acuity tester which helps quantify how bad your cataracts are getting.
- ✓ Eye to Eye Ophthalmology has a face book page. Keep up to date on the latest news from the office by becoming a fan!
- ✓ Thank you to all who bought tomatoes at our tomato sale. Eye to Eye matched the donated funds. Thanks to your support, Eye to Eye was able to make a nice donation to the Chester County SPCA.

### **Important Phone Numbers &**

#### **Resources**

Eye to Eye Ophthalmology

610-388-9755

Eye to Eye Fax

610-388-9756

Riddle Memorial Hospital.

610-566-9400

Wills Eye Hospital

215-928-3000

Behind Your Eyes is a production of Eye to Eye Ophthalmology. Comments or suggestion can be addressed to Joe Lusavage at 610-613-9887 or email Eyetoeyeop@aol.com