

Endophthalmitis

What is endophthalmitis?

Endophthalmitis is an inflammation of the internal eye tissues most often caused by infection. It presents after trauma or an operation or injection into the eye but may present without an obvious cause. This causes redness of the eye, sensitivity to light, reduced vision and pain. The earlier the eye is treated the more likely a better outcome will be attained.

What is the cause of endophthalmitis?

Endophthalmitis is normally caused by bugs getting into the eye at the time of surgery or injection.

What is the treatment for endophthalmitis ?

The treatment involves injection of antibiotics into the eye. At the time of injection samples will be taken to determine the bug causing the infection. Both drops and sometimes antibiotics by mouth may also be used. In severe cases antibiotics may be given into a vein. In severe cases surgery may also be required. Surgery involves vitrectomy which is removal of the vitreous gel behind the lens. The main aim of surgery is to remove the pus from the eye and help it heal.

Endophthalmitis

What are the outcomes?

Endophthalmitis is a potentially sight threatening problem. It requires urgent treatment. About a third of patients will improve and get a reasonable level of vision. One in sixteen patients may lose the sight in the eye completely.

What anaesthetic is required for surgery?

Vitrectomy surgery can be performed under local anaesthetic or general anaesthetic. Under local anaesthetic you will be awake, but you will not feel any discomfort as the eye will be numbed with an injection. You will not see the operation and the other eye will be covered. If a general anaesthetic is chosen, then you will be fully asleep.

The decision as to which type of anaesthesia is most suitable will be made following a discussion between you and your surgeon.

What are the benefits of Surgery?

Surgery is not required in most cases which respond to injection of antibiotics. In the severe cases there is some benefit to doing vitrectomy.

What should I expect after the operation?

Although vitrectomy is a major operation, it is rarely very painful. The pain from the infection should be made better by the surgery. It is normal to experience some discomfort in the eye after surgery but this

Endophthalmitis

usually relieved with simple painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

The white of the eye will look red and the eyelid may appear swollen following surgery. You may also experience some watering from the operated eye and a gritty sensation during the first month following surgery as any stitches gradually dissolve. The redness, eyelid swelling and watering will gradually improve.

Vision in the operated eye will usually be very blurred for the first few weeks but will slowly improve. The final visual result may take several weeks or months and you may require new glasses. Your surgeon will discuss with you the expected final outcome of your vision.

Will I need to instil eye drops after the operation?

You will be given an eye drop to reduce inflammation (steroid drop), another to prevent infection (antibiotic), and sometimes additional drops to keep the pressure inside the eye within normal limits. You will be advised on how many times a day to use the drops before you leave hospital. Use the drops regularly until your first postoperative outpatient visit. You will then be given further instructions on how long the drops need to continue for.

What can I do after surgery?

You can bath or shower but avoid splashing water near the eye. Generally, you may do anything with which you are comfortable. Most people choose not to drive over the first few weeks.

Endophthalmitis

You must **not** fly until the gas bubble has gone and you **must** inform the anaesthetist if you require a general anaesthetic for any operation while there is gas in your eye.

How much time off work will I need?

Most people will need at least two weeks off work after surgery. Sometimes this may be longer. While there is gas in the eye the vision is quite poor and the ability to judge distance is affected. The amount of time off work will depend on the kind of work you do and the kind of surgery that is done. This will need to be discussed with your surgeon.

Where can I find more information?

The RNIB have further information, especially some practical advice: Helpline 0303 123 9999; internet www.rnib.org.uk; email helpline@rnib.org.uk

Scientific Evidence

The advice in this booklet is based on a variety of sources, including latest research published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. It has also been scrutinized by a panel of experts from the Britain & Eire Association of Vitreoretinal Surgeons (“BEAVRS”). If you require further information about this, please ask your surgeon.

Endophthalmitis

Space to write Questions