



# Irish College of Ophthalmologists

**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

## Fluorescein Angiography



Irish College of  
Ophthalmologists  
*Eye Doctors of Ireland*  
*Protecting your Vision*

**Irish College of Ophthalmologists**

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\_\_\_\_\_

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## Introduction

In order to undergo Fluorescein Angiography, you have to give consent and to sign the hospital consent form where appropriate. Before you sign the consent form, it is important that you understand the procedure you are about to have, including any risks or side effects.

### What is Fluorescein Angiography?

Fundus Fluorescein Angiography is a photographic dye test, usually performed by a retinal photographer with the assistance of a nurse/technician. The test involves injection of a yellow dye (Fluorescein) into your arm to highlight the blood vessels at the back of the eye in the retina. Photographs are then taken as the dye passes through the retinal circulation. This will give your eye doctor more information about the condition of your retina, and help to decide the best form of treatment.

### What are the benefits?

The benefit of the test is that it allows your doctor to confirm your diagnosis and provides an accurate method of monitoring your condition, or its response to treatment.

### Are there any alternatives to this test?

OCT is a non-invasive test which provides complementary but different information on macular conditions than fluorescein angiography. It can be used as an alternative where fluorescein angiography is not possible.

### What are the risks?

Most people experience no problems following this procedure, however there are some risks:

1. 2.9% of patients experience nausea. 1.2% experience vomiting. 0.5% develop hives or itching after the dye injection. This can be treated with antihistamine.

2. Less than 1:10,000 patients are allergic to the dye. The allergy may be very mild (itching or redness), or very rarely (less than 1/200,000) a severe life-threatening anaphylactic reaction can occur. Our medical staff are trained to deal with this emergency should it occur. Should a serious reaction occur once you have left the clinic you should seek medical attention immediately.

### **What are the risks of not having the test?**

The risk of not having this test is that the doctor will not be able to make a full diagnosis of your condition.

### **Breastfeeding**

You should inform the doctor if you are breastfeeding. Fluorescein will pass into the breast milk, and is then slowly eliminated. You should not breastfeed for four days after fluorescein angiography. During this time, breast milk should be expressed and discarded.

### **You must inform the doctor:**

If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, as this test may not be suitable for you.

If you have a history of anaphylaxis/ severe allergy.

If you have a history of shellfish allergy.

If you are breast feeding.

### **Preparing for the test**

Before this test, you may eat and drink as normal and take your usual medication. If you are elderly or have a long way to come, bring someone with you as your eyesight will be blurred, and you may be a little dazzled from the camera flash.

### **During the test**

The test is carried out in the Out-Patients Department. Please allow approximately two hours for your visit, and longer if you also have a clinic consultation.

1. The test will be explained to you and you will be asked to sign a consent form.
2. The test will involve dilating drops being put into your eyes to enlarge the pupils. It may take up to thirty minutes for the drops to work. The eye drops will cause your vision to blur.
3. You will have a cannula placed into a vein in the back of your hand or fold of your elbow.
4. You will be called into the photography room. A small amount of yellow dye (Fluorescein) will be injected into a vein in your arm. This dye will highlight any abnormality of the retinal blood vessels.
5. A series of photographs will then be taken of your eye.

### **What to expect after the test**

You will stay in the Department for a short period after the fluorescein injection so we can monitor you in case you experience any of the severe side-effects or have an allergic reaction to the dye.

The yellow dye may give your skin a yellow colour that will usually go away over twelve to twenty four hours. Your urine colour may also change for one to two days.

You should not drive or operate machinery until twelve hours after the test. You can return to other normal activities as soon as you feel comfortable.

### **Blood Tests**

Small amounts of the dye can remain in the blood for up to seventy two hours after the test.

If you are due to have any blood tests for any reason, you should inform your doctor that you have had a fluorescein angiogram.

Some blood tests may be affected by the dye and can result in incorrect readings for up to seventy two hours after the injection.

If you feel unwell after you are discharged, you should contact the Eye Clinic, your G.P. or your nearest hospital emergency department.

## **Irish College of Ophthalmologists**

**The Irish College of Ophthalmologists (ICO) is the training and professional body for eye doctors in Ireland.**

The ICO is dedicated to promoting and setting the highest standards of excellence and patient care in the practice of ophthalmology in Ireland. We do this by educating eye doctors in training, providing on-going education for eye doctors in practice, giving accurate medical advice to the public and policy guidance to the government.

**For further information, visit [www.eyedoctors.ie](http://www.eyedoctors.ie)**