



## The Provincial Retinal Diseases Treatment Program provides drug treatment therapy for B.C. patients diagnosed with wet age-related macular degeneration, diabetic macular edema and retinal vein occlusion.

Starting in 2009, the program provides 100% coverage for a number of drugs for the treatment of retinal diseases when the drugs are prescribed and administered by retinal specialists. PHSA manages the provincial program on behalf of the Ministry of Health by monitoring regional access to care; optimizing drug utilization appropriateness and cost control; minimizing drug wastage; and facilitating data collection, monitoring, measuring, and reporting. The standard of care for the treatment of retinal diseases is anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) drugs. These medications have been shown to help prevent vision loss and/or blindness, particularly in seniors.

### How we serve the people of B.C.:

Through the provincial program, B.C. patients who have been diagnosed with one of three conditions—wet age-related macular degeneration (wAMD), diabetic macular edema (DME) and retinal vein occlusion (RVO)—have access to bevacizumab (Avastin), ranibizumab (Lucentis) and aflibercept (Eylea). This program also provides coverage for verteporfin (Visudyne) with photodynamic therapy for wAMD.

- Wet age-related macular degeneration (wAMD) is a chronic eye disease that causes blurred vision or a blind spot in your visual field. It's generally caused by abnormal blood vessels that leak fluid or blood into the macula. The macula is in the part of the retina responsible for central vision. Early detection and treatment of macular degeneration may help reduce vision loss and in some instances, recover vision.
- Diabetic Macular Edema (DME) is an accumulation of fluid in the macula from leaking blood vessels. To develop DME, you must first have diabetic retinopathy. Diabetic retinopathy is a disease that damages the blood vessels in the retina, resulting in vision impairment.
- Retinal Vein Occlusion (RVO) is a blockage of the veins in the retina that carry blood away from the eye. The blockage can cause fluid to leak into the macula. The blockage caused by RVO cannot be reversed, but there are ways in which it can be managed, using treatments that may slow down the progression of vision loss and even improve vision.



### Key partnerships



The team of retinal specialists participating in the Provincial Retinal Diseases Treatment Program, collaborate with PHSA and the Ministry of Health to ensure the planning, coordination, accessibility, quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the provincial program. New patients can access a retinal specialist by direct referrals from health providers and optometrists. Retinal specialist services are available in all regional health authorities.



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