



OPHTHALMOLOGY

FLUORESCEIN ANGIOGRAPHY

A Patient's Guide

Fluorescein angiography is a diagnostic procedure that uses a special camera to take a series of photographs of the retina. The retina is the light sensitive tissue in the back of the eye. This is a non-invasive procedure.

Eye drops are put into the eye(s) to be examined to open the pupil. This is the black opening in the centre of the eye. This only shows some of the structures needed to be examined so a dye is then used to highlight other things such as blood vessels. A special dye (fluorescein) is injected into a vein in the arm. The dye travels through the veins and arteries that circulate throughout the body. As the dye passes through the blood vessels of the retina, a special camera flashes a blue light into the eye and takes multiple photographs of the retina.

Abnormalities and their precise location can be determined by careful interpretation of the fluorescein angiography by the ophthalmologist. The ophthalmologist will let you know the results of the test.

What are the risks of Fluorescein Angiography?

After the fluorescein dye is injected, your skin may turn yellowish for several hours. This colour disappears as the dye is filtered out of the body by the kidneys. Because the kidneys remove the dye, your urine will turn dark orange for up to 24 hours after the test.

Some individuals may experience sudden nausea and/or vomiting during the procedure. This usually passes within a few minutes. If the dye leaks out a fragile vein during the injection, some localized burning and yellow staining of the skin may occur. The burning lasts only a few minutes and the staining will go away in a few days.

As with any medication, allergic reactions may occur. However, allergic reactions to fluorescein dye are rare. If they occur, they may cause skin rash and itching. These reactions may pass without treatment or respond very quickly to medication. Even more rare, severe allergic reactions (anaphylactic) can also occur and be life threatening.

Because of the eye drops used to open the pupil, your vision will be blurred in the eye(s) tested for up to several hours. Until your vision is clear, **DO NOT** drive, use machines or do anything else that could be dangerous **if you are not able to see well**. Your eyes will also be more sensitive to light until the medication wears off;

therefore, you should wear sunglasses that block ultraviolet light to protect your eyes from sunlight (even on cloudy days) and other bright lights.

As with any procedures or tests, it is important to report any known allergies, chronic conditions and/or medications that you are taking as these may influence your testing and diagnosis.

Estimated time spent at the hospital for the procedure:
2 1/2 hours (time includes filling out forms).