

Aflibercept biosimilar: Patient Information Sheet

What is aflibercept?

Aflibercept is a medicine injected into the eye. It is used to treat:

- neovascular (wet) age-related macular degeneration
- macular oedema secondary to retinal vein occlusion
- diabetic macular oedema
- myopic choroidal neovascularisation

It belongs to a group of medicines called anti-VEGF (Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor) and Placental Growth Factor (PIGF) agents.

How does aflibercept work?

Aflibercept has been shown to stop the growth of new abnormal blood vessels in the eye. Growth of new abnormal blood vessels is caused by excess of VEGF and PIGF. Abnormal blood vessels in the eye may leak fluid or bleed. Aflibercept helps to stabilise and may improve vision loss.

How is aflibercept made?

Aflibercept is a biological medicine. Biological medicines are medicines made or derived from living cells. Biological medicines were first used to treat people with serious illnesses in the UK over 20 years ago and they have improved the lives of millions of people worldwide.

How does aflibercept compare to other anti-VEGF agents?

Other anti-VEGF medicines include ranibizumab, brolucizumab, bevacizumab and faricimab. Your ophthalmic healthcare professional will discuss treatment options with you and advise which medicine is best for your condition.

What versions of aflibercept are available in the UK?

Until recently, only one pharmaceutical company made aflibercept. Now other companies make a biosimilar aflibercept.

What is biosimilar aflibercept?

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the organisation in the UK which regulates medicines. All medicines, including biosimilars, must pass rigorous tests for quality, biological activity, safety and effectiveness.

Are biosimilars safe?

The body in the UK who regulate medicines is the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). All medicines must pass rigorous tests for quality, biological activity, safety and effectiveness. Biosimilar medicines pass the same tests as the original medicine.

What does treatment with biosimilar aflibercept mean for you?

Whether you are due to start treatment with aflibercept for the first time or have agreed with your clinician that your treatment will change from Eylea to biosimilar Yesafili, you can expect the same results.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) produces guidance for health care. If NICE recommends the original biological medicine in their guidance, the same recommendation applies to the biosimilar medicines.

All versions of aflibercept can cause similar side effects. If you experience any problems with your treatment, report it promptly to your treating clinician, nurse or pharmacist.

What are the benefits of biosimilars?

Many original biological medicines are expensive and the number of conditions they treat is increasing. Biosimilar medicines are highly similar to the original medicines and have the same quality, safety and effectiveness as well as being less expensive.

Therefore, the savings made by using biosimilars allow the NHS to treat more patients and invest in new medicines to further improve patient care.

Further advice

If you have further questions about aflibercept or biosimilars, then please speak to a member of your ophthalmology or pharmacy team.

You can find further information on the Macular Society website

www.macularsociety.org/support/

Accessibility

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