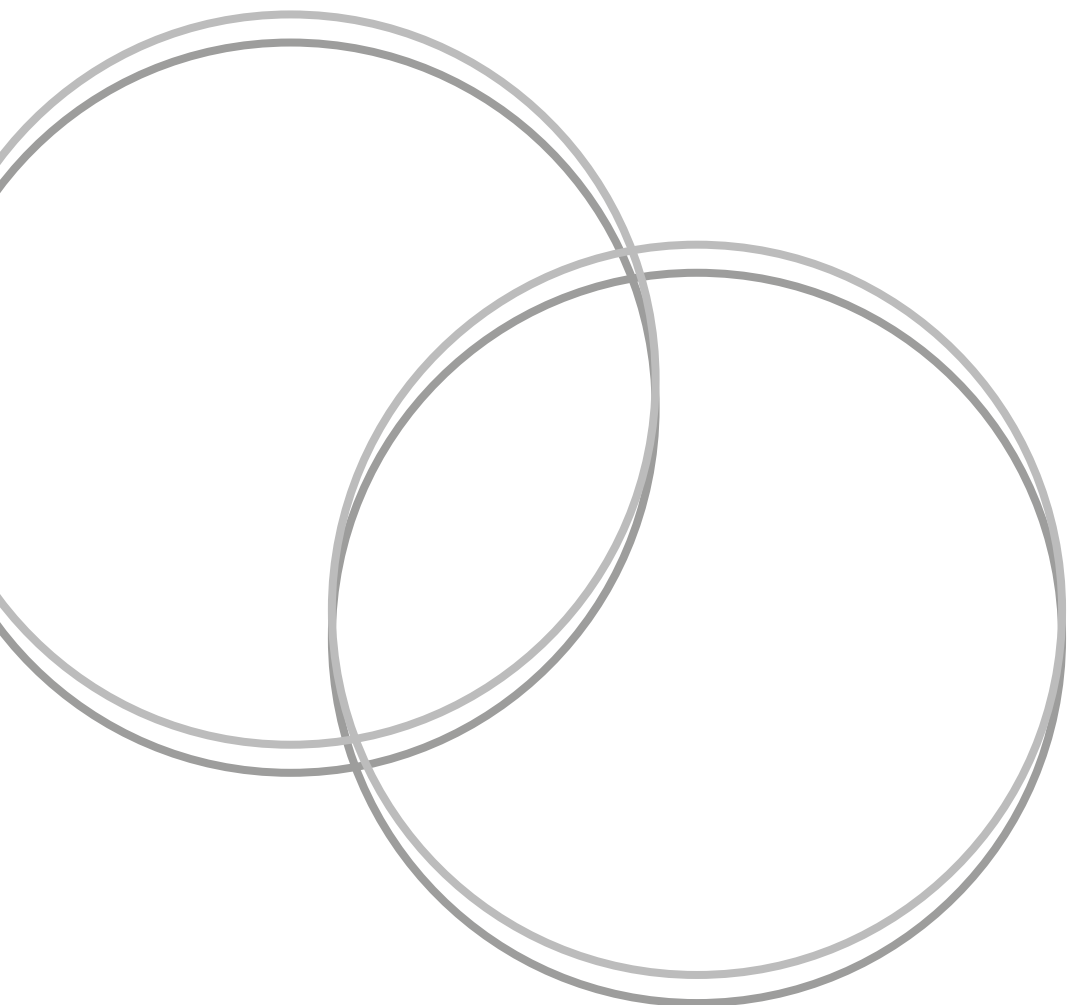


Intravenous steroid treatment for Thyroid Eye Disease

Information for patients



This leaflet is for people who may have intravenous (IV) steroid treatment for thyroid eye disease (TED). It explains what the treatment is, what to expect, and where to get help. Please keep this leaflet so you can refer to it during your treatment.

What is thyroid eye disease?

Thyroid eye disease (TED) happens when the immune system causes inflammation and swelling around the eyes.

Symptoms can include:

- Eye pain or pressure
- Red or swollen eyes
- Bulging eyes
- Double vision
- Changes in appearance
- Problems with eyesight (in severe cases)

TED often occurs in people with Graves' disease (an overactive thyroid), but it can also happen when thyroid levels are normal or low.

What are intravenous steroids?

Steroids are medicines that reduce inflammation.

In thyroid eye disease, steroids:

- Calm the immune system
- Reduce swelling around the eyes
- Improve pain and discomfort
- Help protect sight

Steroids do not cure thyroid eye disease, but they can help control symptoms and prevent the condition from getting worse.

Why are steroids given through a drip?

Steroids can be given:

- As a tablet (oral steroids)
- Or through a drip into a vein (intravenous or IV steroids)

IV steroids are preferred because:

- They work better in thyroid eye disease
- They are linked to fewer serious side effects than tablets

We always aim to use the lowest effective dose.

How often will I have treatment?

- Treatment is usually given once a week
- Your local ophthalmologist will advise on the number of treatment sessions that you will require
- Steroids may sometimes be given with other treatments

What happens during treatment?

- A small plastic tube (cannula) is placed into a vein, usually in the back of your hand
- The steroid is given through a drip with saline
- The infusion takes about one hour
- The cannula is removed afterwards and a small dressing is applied

You can usually go home the same day.

Tests and monitoring

To keep you safe, you will need regular checks:

- Blood tests before and during treatment
 - Liver function
 - Blood sugar
 - General health
- Blood pressure and weight checks

These help us monitor side effects and adjust treatment if needed.

What improvement can I expect?

Many people notice:

- Less eye pain and pressure
- Reduced swelling
- Better comfort
- Improvement in vision

Steroids often work quickly, but results vary between people.

Possible side effects

Common side effects (usually temporary):

- Metallic taste during infusion
- Increased appetite
- Difficulty sleeping
- Flushing (redness of the face)
- Indigestion
- Palpitations
- Mood changes
- Headache

Possible side effects with longer treatment:

- Weight gain
- Thinning of the skin
- High blood sugar
- High blood pressure
- Weakening of the bones (osteoporosis)
- Cataracts

Protecting your health during treatment

- You will be given a medication to protect your stomach
- You will be prescribed calcium and vitamin D
- Some people may need a bone (DEXA) scan

If you have diabetes

Steroids can raise blood sugar levels.

Please inform your diabetes doctor or nurse, as your medication may need adjusting.

When should I seek help?

Contact us or seek medical help urgently if you develop:

- Signs of infection (fever, chills, feeling unwell)
- Severe mood or behaviour changes
- Severe or persistent headache
- Sudden changes in vision
- Any symptoms that worry you

Please DO NOT come to the Oxford Eye Hospital straight away.

Call our specialist telephone triage number:

Tel: **01865 234 567**

and select the option for 'eye emergencies'.

Monday to Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm

Saturday and Sunday 8.30am – 3.30pm (including Bank Holidays)

You will be able to speak to an ophthalmic health professional who will advise you.

If you need advice out of hours, please phone NHS 111 or your out of hours GP practice.

For less urgent issues contact the Ophthalmology Secretaries:

Tel: **01865 234567**

Email: OculoPlastics@ouh.nhs.uk

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Thyroid Eye Disease Team

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