

What are the Fluorescein (FFA) and Indocyanine Green (ICG) Angiographies procedures?

These are important diagnostic procedures that give information about the condition of the blood vessels at the back of your eye. The tests help to diagnose many eye diseases within the retinal vasculature (FFA) and also beneath the retina (ICG), evaluate the severity of condition and plan the best form of treatment.

How is the test performed?

Upon arrival at the outpatient clinic the nurse will test your sight. You will then be asked questions about your general health, current treatment and any allergies or reaction to medications, seafood, or to previously done FFA/ICG tests. At the same time your blood pressure, pulse and level of blood sugar will be checked (in diabetics). Eye drops will be put into your eyes to make pupils larger. This means your vision will be affected for some time afterwards so it is not safe to drive and you should arrange to be accompanied home.

The test is performed by injecting the fluorescein or ICG dyes, which have fluorescent properties (i.e. they glow under certain light), into a vein in your hand or arm. Within 5-10 seconds the dye travels to the blood vessels in your eye. A computerised retinal camera equipped with special filters that highlight the dye is used to photograph the dye as it circulates within the blood vessels of the eye. The whole test lasts about 10-15 minutes (FFA) or about 20-40 minutes (ICG). Following the test, we ask you to stay in the unit for about 30 minutes to be sure that you do not have any side effects and that you are alright to go home.

Is it all right to eat and drink before the test?

Yes, you can have a light food or drink before the test.

Would be all right to have the test if I am on medication?

Yes, you can take any tablets or medicine as usual on the day of the test.

Things you may notice:

- Your vision may be blurred as a result of the drops and some dazzle from the camera flash – this usually settles down over 2 hours.
- As your pupils are dilated, you may be sensitive to the light, so it is advisable to wear sunglasses afterwards.
- The fluorescein dye is yellow and will give your skin a yellow tinge for a few hours following the injection. This is nothing to worry about.
- Your urine will be bright yellow for day or two as your body gets rid of the dye (the ICG dye does not have this effect).
- The most common side effect of ICG is discoloration of the stool.
- You may experience a short wave of nausea and occasional vomiting after the injection. This passes very quickly.
- You may develop a rash or itching following the test.
- There is a very small risk of a serious complication such as circulatory or cardiovascular impairment. However, we carry out at least 20-25 tests each week and are well prepared if any problems occur.

When these tests are not advised:

Patients with a previous history of allergic reactions (especially to iodine or shellfish), asthma, ischaemic heart disease and liver disease are not advised to have ICG angiography.

Importantly, ICG angiography, unlike FFA is not recommended in patients with renal problems or those on dialysis.

When will I know the results?

One of the doctors will be discussing the results of the test at your next clinic appointment.

Contact the Eye Casualty

If you have got a minor eye problem, please seek advice from your GP, optician or pharmacist. If you think your problem might be urgent, please attend Eye Casualty.

- Eye Casualty (Reading): Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm; Sat & Sun & bank holidays 9am-12.30pm; Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day
- Eye Casualty: Prince Charles Eye Unit (Windsor): Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm; Sat 9am-12.30pm; Closed Sun & bank holidays

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