concern that antivegf medications may increase risk of stroke or blood clots (called thromboembolic events) in rare cases.

**Most insurance companies pay for at least part of the cost of treatment with antivegf injections.** The cost of Lucentis is approximately $2,000 a dose and the cost of Avastin is approximately $50 a dose. If there are gaps in your insurance coverage, you will be responsible for at least part of the cost of treatment. Our insurance specialists will assist in determining any cost of treatment that you will incur.

**The treatment of wet AMD is evolving.** There are many research studies called clinical trials that are currently underway investigating new medications or different strategies using existing treatments for wet AMD that may prove to be better than the existing treatments. Your doctors at Retinal Consultants are proud to be involved in some of these studies and there may be opportunities for you to participate. Ask your Retina Doctor if you would be a candidate for a clinical trial.
Wet age-related macular degeneration (Wet AMD) describes a condition whereby abnormal blood vessels grow under the central retina, or macula, inside of the eye. It can cause severe and sometimes rapid loss of central vision if left untreated. Wet AMD arises as a complication of dry age-related macular degeneration (or Dry AMD). Your Retina Doctor may sometimes refer to wet AMD as “bleeding inside of your eye” or “bleeding under the retina.”

Treatment for wet AMD is aimed at halting the growth of these abnormal blood vessels growing under the retina thereby reducing the damaging effects on vision that these blood vessels have. Note that treatment for wet AMD does not alter the course of one’s underlying dry AMD as the disease itself is not treatable. Only the complication of abnormal blood vessel growth that characterizes and defines wet AMD is the target of therapy.

In the past, wet AMD was treated with a laser and often resulted in poor vision. Now-a-days, newer treatments for wet AMD may restore some of the vision that has been lost.

Treatment consists of an injection of medicine directly into the eye in an office-based procedure. This treatment is carried out after carefully “numbing” the eye with a topical anesthetic thus minimizing any discomfort from the procedure. The treatment must be repeated regularly (at least initially) and often requires at least intermittent injections be performed indefinitely, perhaps even for the rest of one’s life.

The class of medicine that is being used presently in treating wet AMD is called “anti-VEGF” medication. Anti-VEGF medication, when injected into the eye, may reduce the odds of severe vision loss and may, in fact, reverse some of the damage to vision caused by abnormal vessel growth.

There currently are two different medicines being used to treat wet AMD and they are called Lucentis and Avastin. Lucentis is an FDA approved treatment for wet AMD. Injections to the eye are administered monthly (often for a period of 3 or 4 months), and then perhaps less frequently or only intermittently thereafter. Avastin is used “off-label” which means that, although not FDA approved, it is used for treating wet AMD (much like Lucentis). Research has not shown whether one of these, whether it be Avastin or Lucentis works any better than the other or is any safer to use than the other. A large national research study sponsored by the US government is currently underway to try to answer that question. Many retina specialists, including those at Retinal Consultants, believe that these medications work about the same.

Results of treatment show that about 35% of patients with wet AMD treated with antivegf injections may have vision improvement. About 50% of patients undergoing treatment will remain stable and approximately 10-15% of patients undergoing treatment will continue to lose vision. These results underscore the fact that THIS IS NOT A CURE NOR A PERFECT TREATMENT FOR THE WET AMD. It does, however, offer patients with wet AMD the best chance of maintaining vision.

Risks of treatment include the potential of a complication of the injection causing loss of vision. The likelihood of losing vision from a complication of treatment is very low. Among the most serious type of complication is infection of the eye (called endophthalmitis) that may occur in about one in every one thousand injections. There is some