

Fluorescein (FFA) angiography

Fluorescein (FFA) angiography is a simple diagnostic tests, which involve the injection of fluorescein (yellow) dye into your bloodstream via a vein in your hand or arm, followed by a series of photographs taken over several minutes.

The FFA test gives your doctor more information about the condition of your retina in the back of your eye.

These tests help the doctor to consider the best treatment options for you. Please take your medication as normal on the day of your procedure. You may eat and drink as normal.

What does the test involve?

1. On arrival at the eye clinic your vision will be tested.
2. You will be asked about your general health. Please tell us if you have any breathing or heart problems, are pregnant or on renal dialysis, or have photosensitive epilepsy. It is also very important to inform us of any allergies particularly to fluorescein, iodine or iodide, medications, sulpha drugs or latex. We will use FFA cautiously in patients that are allergic to shellfish or seafood.
3. Your pupils will then be dilated with eye drops; these drops might blur your vision, particularly near vision, for five to six hours. It is therefore advisable not to drive home after your appointment.
4. You will have the procedure explained to you and you will be asked to sign a consent form to agree to the procedure. Please feel free to ask any questions.

5. Once your pupils are dilated, you will be taken into the imaging room.
6. You will be seated at a camera with your arm supported, and some (flash) photos will be taken.
7. A cannula (small plastic tube) will be inserted into a vein in the back of your hand.
8. The fluorescein dye will be injected into your arm. A series of flash photos are taken, whilst the dye enters the retinal or choroidal vessels at the back of your eye.
9. The whole test only takes about 10 to 30 minutes. Please expect to be in the eye clinic for one to two hours so that we can do the necessary pre and post test checks.
10. It is very important to keep your eye in the position requested by the photographer.

Are there any side effects?

- The fluorescein dye will give your skin a yellow tinge and your urine will be bright yellow for one or two days.
- You might experience a hot flush sensation as the dye is injected.
- One in 10 patients might feel nauseous or short of breath, or develop a transient rash, but this rarely lasts for more than a few seconds.
- In rare instances, flash photography may trigger an episode of epilepsy or tonic-clonic seizure.
- There is a very remote risk of a severe allergic reaction to these intravenous drugs. For this reason, doctors and staff trained in Intermediate Life Support (ILS) are always available on site and trained in the management of anaphylaxis.

After the fluorescein angiogram:

The cannula will be left in your hand for 30 minutes. Once we are certain that you have not suffered any adverse reactions, the cannula will be removed.

The doctor will discuss the results with you and make recommendations for any treatment you might need.

If you have any concerns following the procedure please contact Bahamas Vision Centre.