

MACULAR DEGENERATION

FACT SHEET

What is macular degeneration?

Macular degeneration is a leading cause of vision loss among people over age 60. It results from changes to the macula, a portion of the retina which is located on the inside back layer of the eye. The macula is responsible for clear, sharp vision and is many times more sensitive to vision changes than the rest of the retina. Without a healthy macula, seeing detail or vivid color is not possible.

There are two types of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), wet and dry. In the dry type, deposits form in the tissue of the macula and it stops functioning properly. In some people, dry AMD is thought to occur as part of the eye aging process. There is currently no preventive treatment available for this slowly progressive condition, although much research is being conducted in this area. Studies suggest that taking certain nutritional supplements may slow the progression of dry AMD.

Wet AMD is less common than dry AMD. In wet AMD, fluids from newly formed blood vessels leak under the macula and cause retinal changes with significant vision loss. This condition can sometimes be treated with laser therapy, photodynamic therapy, or injections. Early detection and prompt treatment is vital in limiting vision loss.

Some symptoms of AMD are:

- A gradual loss of ability to see objects clearly
- Objects appear to be distorted in shape or straight lines appear wavy or crooked
- A gradual loss of clear color vision
- A dark or empty area appearing in the center of vision

These symptoms may also indicate other eye health problems, so if you are experiencing any of these, you should contact your doctor of optometry as soon as possible.

During a comprehensive eye examination, your doctor will perform a variety of tests to determine if you have AMD or other eye conditions.

How is AMD treated?

There is currently no way to restore central vision lost to AMD. However, since AMD does not affect side vision, low vision aids such as special telescopic and microscopic lenses, magnifying glasses and electronic magnifiers for close work can be prescribed to help make the most of remaining vision. With adaptation, a person with AMD can often cope well and continue to do most things he or she is accustomed to doing.



Above: normal vision.

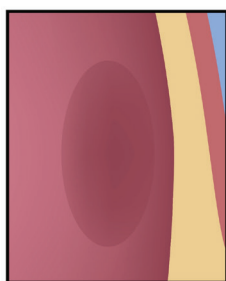
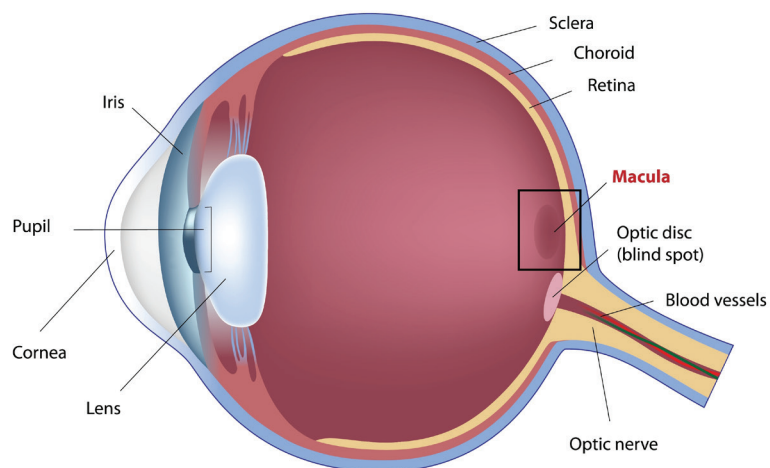
Below: As macular degeneration advances, a distorted, dark or empty area often appears in the center of vision.



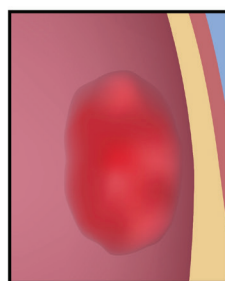
Remember, early detection of AMD is the most important factor in determining if you can be treated effectively.

See your doctor of optometry annually for your comprehensive eye examination to help protect your vision.

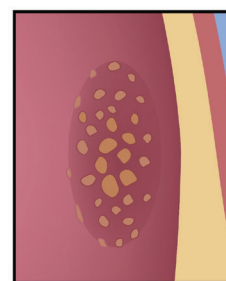
Macular Degeneration



Normal



"Wet" Macular Degeneration



"Dry" Macular Degeneration

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