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WHAT IS AMD?

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a leading cause of vision loss in Americans over the age of 60. It is a chronic disease that causes a loss of central vision, and can dramatically impair “straight-ahead” sight that is critical in daily activities.

AMD occurs in the macula, the part of the eye responsible for the central part of your vision, allowing you to see color and fine detail. The deterioration or changes that occur there can progress slowly and painlessly over time, or rapidly lead to loss of vision.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT KINDS OF AMD? WILL I NOTICE ANYTHING?

AMD occurs in 2 different forms – dry and wet.

Dry AMD: About 85% of those with macular degeneration have the dry form, which is caused by a breakdown of the light-sensitive cells in the macula. This causes blurring of central vision. Dry AMD can often be unnoticed until the advanced stages because it progresses so slowly.





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Dry AMD symptoms can include: Needing more light to look at objects up close

Print appearing more blurry

Colors seem less bright

Vision is hazy

Blurry or blind spot in center of vision

Wet AMD: This is the less common form, occurring in about 10% of people with AMD, but is far more serious. It is caused by the leakage of abnormal blood vessels growing under the macula. This can cause the macula to detach from its underlying blood supply, resulting in a faster loss of central vision.

Wet AMD symptoms can include: Straight lines appearing as wavy or crooked

Objects look smaller or distorted

Blurry or blind spot in center of vision

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

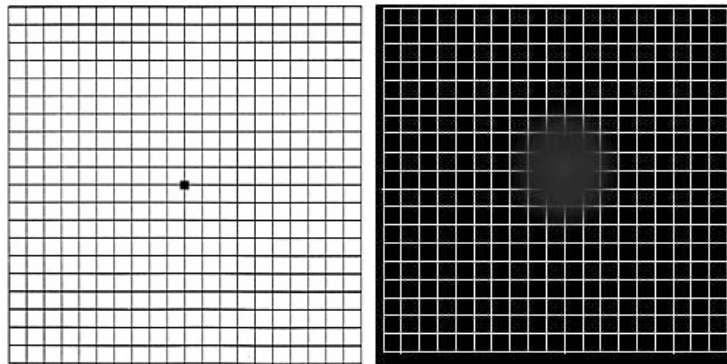
There is currently no known treatment for dry AMD. Central vision that is lost cannot be restored. Wet AMD may respond to laser procedures or injections, if diagnosed and treated early. In cases of more severe vision loss, devices such as magnifiers (to enlarge print) or telescopes (to enlarge more distant objects) can be prescribed and can often help.



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Recent research indicates certain vitamins and minerals may help prevent or slow the progression of macular degeneration. Your doctor will prescribe any appropriate supplements for daily use. You may also be asked to use a checkerboard grid (Amsler grid) to monitor any changes at home.



AM I AT RISK FOR AMD?

While the exact cause of AMD is not known, there are a number of risk factors. These include:

- **Age:** AMD usually occurs during middle age or later
- **Smoking:** recent studies have shown that smoking can more than double the risk of developing AMD
- **Family history**
- **Obesity:** being overweight increases the risk of progression from early to more severe stages of AMD
- **Gender:** women are more likely to get AMD
- **Race:** Caucasians or people with lighter complexions are at higher risk
- **Cardiovascular disease:** Conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, or heart attacks can increase your risk



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WHAT CAN I DO?

Your lifestyle can play a role in helping to reduce the risk for developing AMD.

Diet: Many fruits and vegetables are sources of the vital nutrients essential for keeping the eyes healthy. Eat a well-balanced and colorful diet high in green leafy vegetables and fish.

Healthy Lifestyle: Don't smoke. Maintaining a normal blood pressure and watching your weight can help.

Nutritional Supplements: Clinical studies have shown that taking certain vitamins and minerals – such as high levels of Vitamins A, C and E, zinc, and copper - can help delay the progression of AMD. Other ingredients like lutein and zeaxanthin may also contribute to eye health. Your doctor may prescribe specific specialized formulations in order to achieve the recommended dosages for maximum benefit.

Annual comprehensive eye exams: Dry AMD generally affects both eyes, but may go unnoticed if only one eye is symptomatic. Several tests are performed, including dilation and/or retinal photos, to help detect early signs of AMD.

AMD is painless, so early detection by your eye doctor is crucial!