



Age-Related Macular Degeneration Information Sheet

What is Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)?

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is a common eye condition that affects the macula - the part of your eye that helps you see fine details in the center of your vision. It usually develops after age 50 and is more common in people with family members who have had it. AMD can make it harder to read, see faces, or drive.

Types of AMD

There are two main types:

- **Dry AMD** (the most common type)
This happens when the part of your eye that helps you see clearly in the center of your vision slowly wears down over time. This can make it harder to read, recognize faces, or see fine details.
- **Wet AMD** (less common, more serious)
This happens when new unhealthy blood vessels grow in the back of the eye and leak fluid or blood. It can cause faster vision loss if untreated.

What Are the Symptoms?

- Blurry or fuzzy vision in the center
- Straight lines may look curved or wavy
- Trouble reading or recognizing faces
- A dark or blank spot in the center of your sight

Your side (peripheral) vision is usually not affected. AMD often starts without symptoms, so regular eye exams are important to make an early diagnosis.

Who Is at Risk?

You're more likely to get AMD if you:

- Are over 50
- Smoke



- Have a family history of AMD
- Have high blood pressure or heart disease
- Eat a poor diet (low in leafy greens and vitamins)
- Spend a lot of time in the sun without sunglasses

How Is It Diagnosed?

Your eye doctor may do:

- A dilated eye exam to look at the macula at the back of your eye
- A scan of your retina (the back of your eye)

Treatment Options

There's no cure for AMD, but treatment can slow it down and help you keep your vision.

For dry AMD:

- Eat a healthy diet with leafy greens and fish
- Take eye vitamins (with the AREDS2 formula) if recommended by your doctor
- Stop smoking
- Wear sunglasses with UV protection

For wet AMD:

- Same as for dry AMD, plus:
- Get eye injections to stop leaking blood vessels
- Laser treatment is occasionally used

Living with AMD

- Go to regular eye exams
- Use good lighting, magnifiers, or electronic devices like tablets that can adjust text size and brightness to help with reading
- Use an Amsler Grid at home to check for changes in your vision
- Ask about vision rehab programs to help you adapt



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can macular degeneration cause blindness?

A: AMD can cause loss of central vision, but it usually does not lead to total blindness.

Q: Do the eye injections hurt?

A: Most people feel only mild pressure. Your eye is numbed before the injection.

Q: Will glasses fix the vision loss?

A: Glasses do not fix vision loss from AMD. They may help a bit, but they won't bring back the vision that's been affected by AMD.

This document was reviewed by Dr. Steve Arshinoff.