

What should I ask my eye doctor?

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2.

3.



THE WORLD IS BEAUTIFUL > TO LOOK AT

Protect Your Vision

Things to Know About Age-Related Macular Degeneration, or AMD.



Provided as a service by



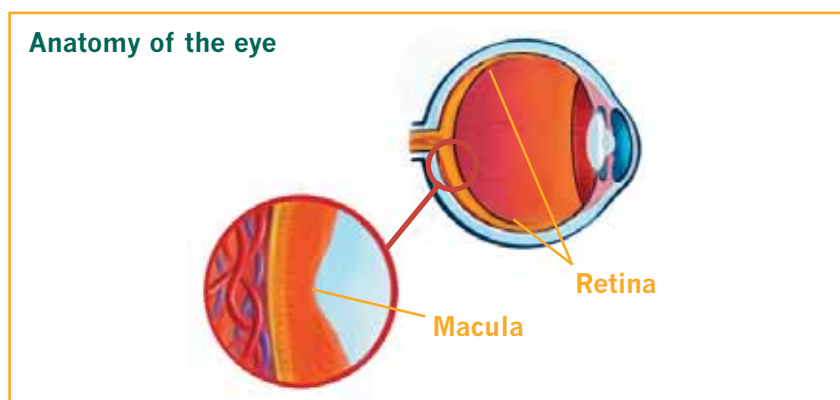
This brochure provides information about Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and answers questions about its causes, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment.

AMD is a chronic eye disease and one of the leading causes of severe vision loss in people 60 years of age and older. It is also one of the leading causes of adult blindness in the world.

Contrary to what many believe, vision loss – and specifically AMD – does not have to be an inevitable consequence of aging. Protect your vision by being active in your healthcare. Visit your eye doctor regularly.

What is AMD?

AMD is a disease that can affect the sharp central vision needed for “straight-ahead” activities like reading, driving, telling time and recognizing faces.



Sometimes AMD advances so slowly that you notice little change in vision. Sometimes AMD progresses quickly, resulting in rapid vision loss. AMD causes no pain, but it can rob you of your ability to see what is in front of you. There are two types of AMD: dry and wet.

Dry AMD

In dry AMD, which makes up about 85 percent of all AMD cases, light-sensitive cells in the retina die, affecting “straight-ahead” vision. The most common symptom of dry AMD is slightly blurred vision. Dry AMD tends to develop slowly, but may develop into a more severe form of AMD called wet AMD.

Wet AMD

In wet AMD, which accounts for about 15 percent of all AMD cases, but the majority of vision loss, abnormal blood vessels behind the retina grow under the macula. This may lead to bleeding, scar formation and permanent damage. Damage occurs more rapidly than in the dry form and tends to lead to more severe loss of central or “straight ahead” vision. If spotted in time, treatments for certain forms of wet AMD may reduce or delay vision loss.






AMD is one of the leading causes of adult blindness in the world

Who is at risk?

The two greatest risk factors for developing AMD are:





- Increasing age – About 25 percent of people over 65 years of age have AMD.
- Having AMD in one eye – Of those with AMD in one eye, about 40 percent will develop AMD in the other eye within five years.

Other risk factors for developing AMD include:

	Smoking
	Race – Caucasians appear to have a higher risk
	A family history of the disease
	Low dietary intake of certain vitamins and minerals
	Gender – women appear to be at greater risk than men

What are the symptoms?

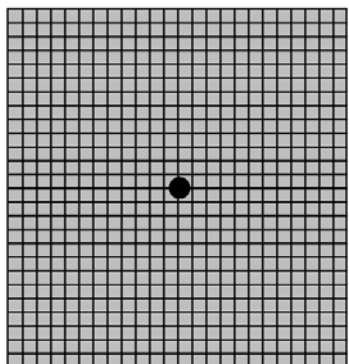
Symptoms of AMD include:

	Dim, fuzzy or less sharp central or "straight ahead" vision (decreased Visual Acuity)
	A blank or blind spot in your central vision (Central Scotoma)
	Seeing objects as wavy or curved (Metamorphopsia)
	Colors that seem washed out and dull (loss of Contrast Sensitivity)

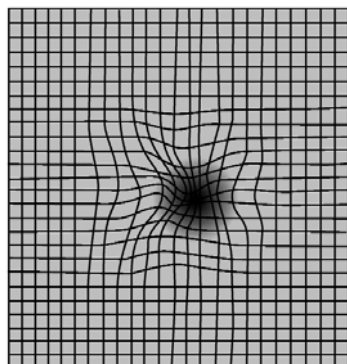
Be aware of AMD symptoms. If you notice changes in your vision, contact your eye doctor at once

Can I test my vision?

There is no substitute for regular eye examinations with your eye doctor, but there is a way to check for vision symptoms at home. To test your vision for AMD, use a checkered square known as the Amsler grid.



Amsler grid/normal vision



Amsler grid/AMD-affected vision

Ask your eye doctor for an Amsler grid so you can test your vision regularly. If you detect changes, schedule an eye exam immediately.

Why should I visit an eye doctor?

You can protect yourself against vision loss by working in partnership with your eye doctor. Some people ignore symptoms of vision loss because they consider them to be a normal part of the aging process. Regular screening examinations can detect early signs of AMD.

An eye doctor can help you determine your risk for developing AMD, tell you if you have AMD and assist you with treatment options if AMD is diagnosed. Early diagnosis and treatment may help preserve the sight you still have.

Remember:

- Timely diagnosis and assessment for treatment of AMD is extremely important.
- Treatment cannot usually bring back vision that is already lost, but the sooner you are treated, the more likely you are to have a better outcome.
- Your eye doctor can help.

Don't ignore symptoms of vision loss. Early diagnosis and treatment of AMD may preserve your sight

Can I prevent AMD?

While there is no cure for AMD, evidence suggests that it may be possible to lower your risk of developing AMD by taking simple health-wise measures:

- Get regular eye examinations. Early detection and treatment of AMD may help reduce or delay loss of central vision.
- Don't smoke.
- Eat a balanced diet including foods, such as fruits and vegetables, that are rich in antioxidants (e.g. vitamins A, C and E).
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from ultraviolet light.
- Discuss vitamin supplementation with your eye doctor.
- Exercise regularly.

Regular eye exams can detect AMD early so that steps can be taken to preserve sight and slow further vision loss

Can AMD be treated?

AMD causes permanent vision loss. While current treatments cannot usually restore central vision that has already been lost, successful treatment can stabilize and/or slow vision loss. Although new treatments are always being researched, treatment options today are:

- Photodynamic therapy, used to help treat wet AMD – In this procedure, a light-activated drug is injected in to the blood stream and travels to the abnormal blood vessels in the eye. It is then activated in the eye by a non-heat laser to help reduce the risk of further vision loss.
- Laser photocoagulation – In this procedure, a high-energy beam of light is used to destroy leaky blood vessels, preventing further loss of vision. Through heat, the treatment damages the retina at the treatment spot, producing scars and causing blind spots, and is only appropriate for a select group of patients.

Other treatment possibilities include:

- Antioxidants – Your eye doctor may recommend that you take a multivitamin daily or in some cases a special vitamin formulated for eye health.

For people with AMD, what does the future hold?

When left undiagnosed and untreated, AMD can continue to damage your vision, leading to more and more loss of central vision. This loss of “straight-ahead” vision can become substantial and can eventually lead to “legal blindness.”

If you have been diagnosed with AMD, take action. Early treatment may stabilize and preserve your vision. Treatment, vision rehabilitation services and support can help you maintain an active and independent lifestyle.

If you have AMD, ask questions
and get information you need
to care for yourself

Where can I go for more information?

Learning that you are losing your sight as a result of AMD can be difficult. But knowledge is important, and there are resources that can help.

Contact:

<http://www.amdalliance.org>

Additional local sites

Please use sites that
are appropriate for
your local market
