

Treatments for Macular Degeneration

Most people with macular degeneration have the dry form, for which there is no known treatment. The less common wet form may respond to laser procedures, if diagnosed and treated early.

Researchers have linked eye-friendly nutrients such as lutein/zeaxanthin, vitamin C, vitamin E, and zinc to reducing the risk of certain eye diseases, including macular degeneration. For more information on the importance of good nutrition and eye health, please see the diet and nutrition section.

Preventing Macular Degeneration

Some common symptoms are: a gradual loss of ability to see objects clearly, distorted vision, a gradual loss of color vision, and a dark or empty area appearing in the center of vision.

If you experience any of these, contact your doctor of optometry immediately for a comprehensive examination. Central vision that is lost to macular degeneration cannot be restored. However, low vision devices, such as telescopic and microscopic lenses, can be prescribed to maximize existing vision.

Protect Yourself

- Never ignore blurred vision, line distortions, blind spots, or loss of color vision.
- Protect your eyes from ultraviolet (UV) light with UV coating on your glasses
- Have a complete eye exam every 2-3 years. If you have diabetes or a family history of eye disease, have your eyes checked at least once a year.

OUR #1 PRIORITY IS YOU

We specialize in advanced care for your eyes, from exams to surgery to glasses and everything in between. You and your vision are the focus of everything we do. Helping you see life more clearly is always our #1 priority.

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 AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

MACULAR DEGENERATION




The
Eye Center
— AT SOUTHWEST HEALTH —

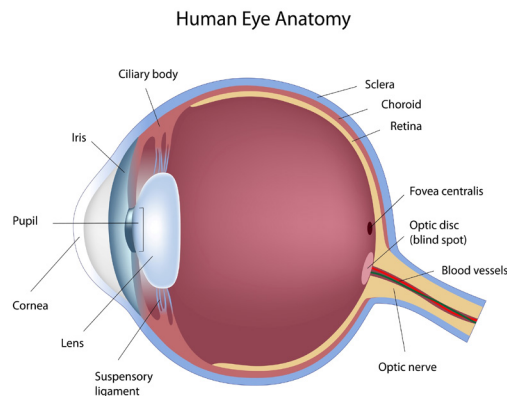
WHAT IS MACULAR DEGENERATION

Macular degeneration is a gradual breakdown of the part of the eye called the macula, or the central part of the retina. The retina is a light-sensitive lining in the back of your eye. It works somewhat like the film in a camera. Light images are carried by nerves from the retina to your brain.

The macula is the part of the retina that normally allows you to see fine detail. As such, macular degeneration can make it harder for you to see fine details in the center of your field of vision.

Macular degeneration usually affects both eyes, though it may affect one eye earlier than the other. It occurs in many people as they get older.

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of severe vision loss in adults over age 50. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 1.8 million people have AMD and another 7.3 million are at substantial risk for vision loss



from AMD. Caucasians are at higher risk for developing AMD than other races. Women also develop AMD at an earlier age than men.

This eye disease occurs when there are changes to the macula, a small portion of the retina that is located on the inside back layer of the eye. AMD is a loss of central vision that can occur in two forms: “dry” or atrophic and “wet” or exudative.

Symptoms of Macular Degeneration

- Gradual loss of ability to see objects clearly
- Objects appear distorted in shape. Straight lines look wavy or crooked.
- Loss of clear color vision
- A dark or empty area appears in the center of vision.

Diagnosis of Macular Degeneration

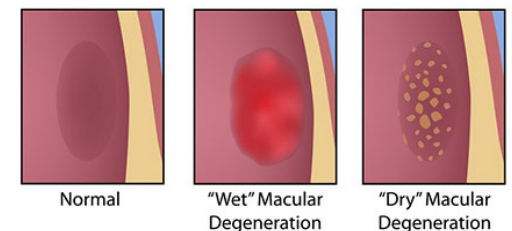
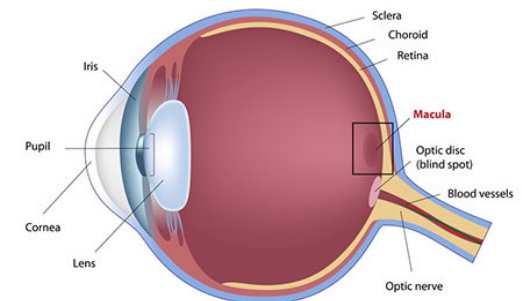
In its early stages, signs of macular degeneration can go unnoticed. Yet, if you experience any signs/symptoms, contact your doctor of optometry immediately. In a comprehensive eye exam, your optometrist will perform a variety of tests to determine if you have macular degeneration, or any other eye health problems.

Types of Macular Degeneration

- **Dry**—With “dry” macular degeneration, the tissue of the macula gradually becomes thin and stops functioning properly. There is no cure for dry AMD, and any loss in central vision cannot be restored. However, doctors now believe there is a link between nutrition and the progression of dry AMD. Dietary changes favoring low-fat content and dark green leafy vegetables can slow vision loss. Nutritional supplements also may be beneficial.

- **Wet**—Less common, “wet” macular degeneration results when fluids leak from newly formed blood vessels under the macula and blur central vision. Vision loss can be rapid and severe. If detected early, “wet” AMD can be treated with laser treatment, which is often called photocoagulation. A highly focused beam of light seals the leaking blood vessels that damage the macula.

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) uses a medication injected into the bloodstream, which is then activated with a laser shone into the eye. A new therapy available, where a medication is injected into the back of the eye, is showing favorable results. These are not permanent cures but are used to slow the rate of central vision loss.



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