



Macular degeneration

Macular degeneration is a progressive eye disorder. Known as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), it is the most common cause of central vision loss in older adults. The central part of the retina (the macula) deteriorates. This results in the loss of central (straight-ahead) vision. One or both eyes may be affected.

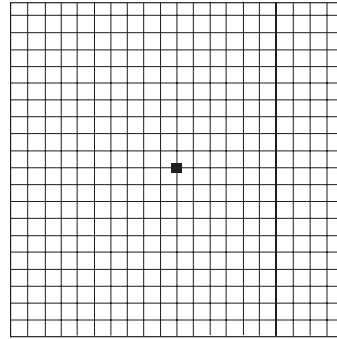


Vision with Macular Degeneration

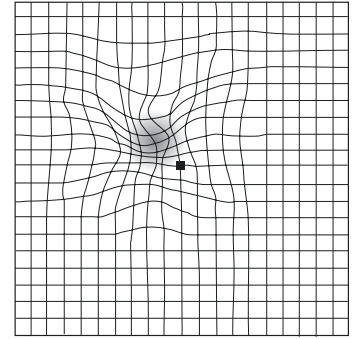
TYPES

The most common type is called the dry form. With this, cells under the retina do not function well, causing subtle to overt blank spots in central vision. Only 1 to 2% of people with the dry form have a lot of vision loss.

In the wet form, tiny blood vessels leak blood or fluid around the macula. The wet form is less common than the dry form. It causes more vision loss, though.



Cover one eye and stare at the center dot in this grid. Seeing blurry, curvy, or distorted lines or empty spots could be a sign of macular degeneration. Repeat, covering the other eye.



This grid shows how the lines might look to someone with macular degeneration.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Macular degeneration is painless. It usually develops gradually, especially the dry form. With the wet form, symptoms can occur more rapidly. Symptoms for both forms are:

- Blurred or cloudy vision
- Seeing a dark or blind spot at the center of vision
- A hard time reading or doing other close-up work
- A hard time doing any activity, such as driving, that needs sharp vision
- Complete loss of central vision. Side vision is not affected.

CAUSES

The exact cause of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is not known. Risk factors include:

- Age 55 and older
- Cigarette smoking
- High blood pressure
- Family history of AMD
- Caucasian
- Exposure to ultraviolet light
- Unhealthy diet



TREATMENT

Treatment for AMD depends on the stage and type.

- Wear the special eyeglasses and use other vision aids, such as magnifying devices, as advised by your doctor.
- Access vision rehab services to learn skills needed to stay independent and active with low vision.
- Talk to your doctor before taking vitamin and mineral supplements.

Treatment for the wet form includes photodynamic therapy and laser surgery. Medicine shots in the eye called “anti-VEGF therapy” can also be given.

Most dry form cases are not treatable. Your eye doctor may prescribe a specific high dose vitamin and mineral (AREDS2) to reduce the risk of advanced AMD.

TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Do you have signs and symptoms of macular degeneration, especially if they come on quickly?

NO
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YES ➔

SEE DOCTOR



USE SELF-CARE



SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

- Don't smoke. If you smoke, keep trying to quit.
- Get regular physical activity.
- Follow a healthy diet. Include green leafy vegetables and fish.
- Get your vision checked as often as your doctor advises.
- Protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Wear sunglasses with UV block. Wear a hat with a wide brim.
- Use self-care measures to control high blood pressure and heart disease.