

GENERAL INFORMATION

# MACULAR DEGENERATION



vision  
eye institute

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# WHAT IS MACULAR DEGENERATION?

**Macular degeneration (also called age-related macular degeneration or AMD) is a group of degenerative diseases of the retina – the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye.**

The condition affects the specific part of the retina called the macula, which is responsible for central and fine-detail vision, causing people to lose the ability to distinguish faces, read, drive and see fine detail.

Macular degeneration can be classified into wet and dry forms. Most people with macular degeneration have the dry form.

Many people are not aware that they have macular degeneration until the disease is in the advanced stages. This is because the condition is painless and often progresses slowly. In addition, the healthy eye can compensate for the affected eye, masking vision loss. Early diagnosis and treatment offers the best hope of minimising damage.

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**APPROXIMATELY ONE IN SEVEN AUSTRALIANS OVER THE AGE OF 50 HAVE SOME EVIDENCE OF AMD.<sup>1</sup>**

## REFERENCES

1. Macular Disease Foundation Australia. HYPERLINK "<http://www.mdfoundation.com.au/>" [www.mdfoundation.com.au/ content/what-is-macular- degeneration](http://www.mdfoundation.com.au/content/what-is-macular-degeneration) (accessed online 14 October 2025).
2. Baurnal CR. Wet age-related macular degeneration: treatment advances to reduce the injection burden. *Am J Manag Care.* 2020;26(5 Suppl):S103-S111.
3. Macular Disease Foundation Australia. Risk factors. Sydney (NSW): Macular Disease Foundation Australia; [date unknown]. Available from: HYPERLINK "<https://www.mdfoundation.com.au/about-macular-disease/age-related-macular-degeneration/risk-factors-for-amd/>" [Accessed 14 October 2025]
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## What are the symptoms of macular degeneration?

- Blurred vision
- Shadows or missing areas of vision
- Distorted vision
- Straight lines appear wavy
- Difficulty discerning colours
- Poor adaption to dark conditions (from brighter environments)
- Numbers and letters appear jumbled

If you experience any of these symptoms, have your eyes checked immediately.

## Who is likely to get macular degeneration?

Anyone can get macular degeneration, but some people may be at higher risk than others.

Risk factors include:

- Age (50+)
- Family history
- Smoking.

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# HOW IS WET MACULAR DEGENERATION TREATED?

There is no cure for wet macular degeneration, although some treatments can slow or stop progression of the disease and vision can be maintained (or even improved) for many people.

**Eye (intravitreal) injections** are the gold standard treatment for wet macular degeneration. They can be used to stop abnormal blood vessels leaking and dry up the abnormal macular fluid (oedema). Repeated injections and regular monitoring can prevent further vision loss in 95% of sufferers.<sup>2</sup> Most patients receiving eye injections will require regular, lifelong treatments to maintain their vision.



A photograph of the back of the eye showing wet macular degeneration.



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# HOW IS DRY MACULAR DEGENERATION TREATED?

Unfortunately, there is no approved treatment for patients with the dry form of macular degeneration, other than specific supplements available from pharmacies. You should discuss whether these are suitable for your stage of disease with your retinal specialist.

For some people with late 'dry' macular degeneration (geographic atrophy), a newer injection treatment can slow progression. It does not restore vision and is suitable only for selected patients. Your retinal specialist will advise on eligibility and access.

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# HOW CAN I PREVENT MACULAR DEGENERATION?

## QUIT SMOKING

Smokers are three to four times more likely to develop macular degeneration<sup>3</sup> (in addition to many other serious health-related issues), so now is the time to quit.

## EAT FISH, GREEN AND GOLD

Research has shown eating foods rich in carotenoids are particularly beneficial.<sup>4</sup> These include dark green leafy vegetables (e.g. spinach and kale) and coloured vegetables (particularly gold-coloured ones, e.g. corn, yellow capsicum, sweet potato). Foods rich in vitamin C, omega-3 fatty acids (e.g. oily fish such as salmon) and zinc are also good for eye health.

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## OUR RETINAL CLINICS

For more information or to find a Vision Eye Institute clinic that treats macular degeneration, visit [visioneyeinstitute.com.au/services/macular-degeneration/](https://visioneyeinstitute.com.au/services/macular-degeneration/)

This information is general in nature. All medical and surgical procedures have potential benefits and risks. Consult your ophthalmologist for specific medical advice.



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