

Age related macular degeneration



What is age related macular degeneration?

Age related macular degeneration is the leading cause of severe vision impairment in people aged over 40 years in Australia. It is also referred to as AMD or ARMD.

Which part of the eye is affected?

AMD affects the macular region of the retina which is used for straight ahead sight. Activities which rely on the macula functioning well are reading, writing, looking at detailed objects, and colour vision.

What are the types of AMD?

AMD is described as either dry or wet. Dry AMD is the most common and results in a gradual loss of central vision. Wet AMD is rarer and leads to sudden and significant changes in vision.

What are the common symptoms?

- A gradual decline in the ability to see objects clearly
- Distorted vision
- Dark or empty spaces blocking the central field of vision
- Dimming of colour vision
- Visual hallucinations (see Charles Bonnet Syndrome)

Who is at risk?

Those most at risk of developing AMD are people with a family history of AMD, people over the age of 75 and smokers.

Can AMD be treated?

There is currently no treatment for dry AMD but treatments are available for wet AMD that are aimed at maintaining the vision for as long as possible.

Some eye doctors recommend vitamin supplements to reduce the progression of dry AMD – particularly zinc, Vitamins C, E and beta carotene.

The main treatment for wet AMD is Lucentis injections. The injections aim to reduce the progression of the disease and prevent further loss of vision. In some cases, vision may improve. The desired outcome is to prevent the growth of new abnormal blood vessels in the retina.

About Vision Australia

Vision Australia provides support and services to people of all ages who are blind or have vision loss which cannot be corrected by glasses or cured. We provide everything from magnifiers and audio books to in-home orientation services, seeing eye dogs and more.

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