



Macular Degeneration

Signs & Symptoms

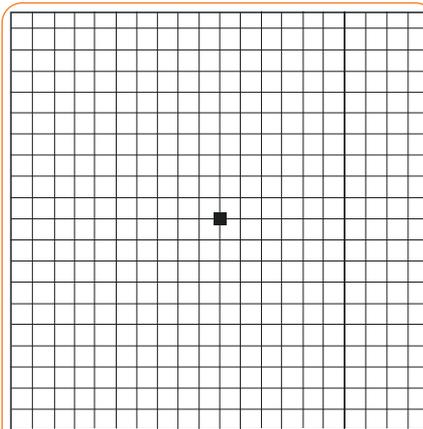
Macular degeneration is a progressive eye disorder. Known as **age-related macular degeneration (AMD)**, it is the most common cause of central vision loss in older Americans. The central part of the retina (the macula) deteriorates. This results in the loss of central (straight-ahead) vision. One or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

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:

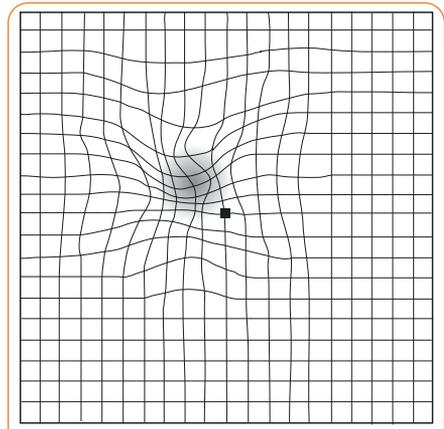
- Blurred or cloudy vision.
- Seeing a dark or blind spot at the center of vision.
- A hard time reading or doing other close-up work.
- A hard time doing any activity, such as driving, that needs sharp vision.
- Complete loss of central vision. Side vision is not affected.



Vision with macular degeneration



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.



Macular Degeneration, Continued

Causes

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

- Advancing age.
- Cigarette smoking. High blood pressure.
- Family history of AMD.
- Having light-colored eyes.
- Exposure to ultraviolet light.
- Poor diet.

Treatment

Treatment for the wet form includes photodynamic therapy and laser therapy. Medicine called “anti-VEGF therapy” can also be given. Most dry form cases are not treatable. Your eye doctor may prescribe special eyeglasses and low vision aids. He or she may also prescribe a specific high dose vitamin and mineral to reduce the risk of advanced AMD.

Questions to Ask

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

YES



NO

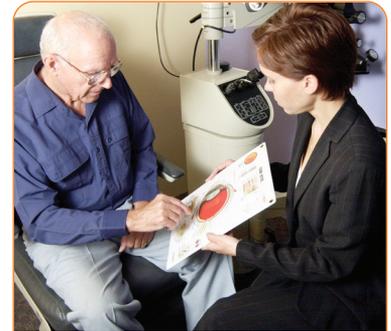


See *Self-Care / Prevention* in next column

Self-Care / Prevention

To Reduce the Risk for AMD

- Don't smoke. If you smoke, quit.
- Follow a healthy diet. Include green leafy vegetables and fish.
- Protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Wear sunglasses with UV block. Wear a hat with a wide brim.
- Use **Self-Care / Prevention** measures to control **high blood pressure** (see at www.HealthyLearn.com) and **heart disease** (see at www.HealthyLearn.com).



Get your vision checked as often as your doctor advises.

To Treat AMD

- Wear the special eyeglasses and use other vision aids, such as magnifying devices, as advised by your doctor.
- Talk to your doctor before taking vitamin and mineral supplements.



Get more information from:

HealthyLearn® • www.HealthyLearn.com

Macular Degeneration Foundation
www.eyesight.org

National Eye Institute (NEI)
www.nei.nih.gov