

The Facts about Age-related Macular Degeneration

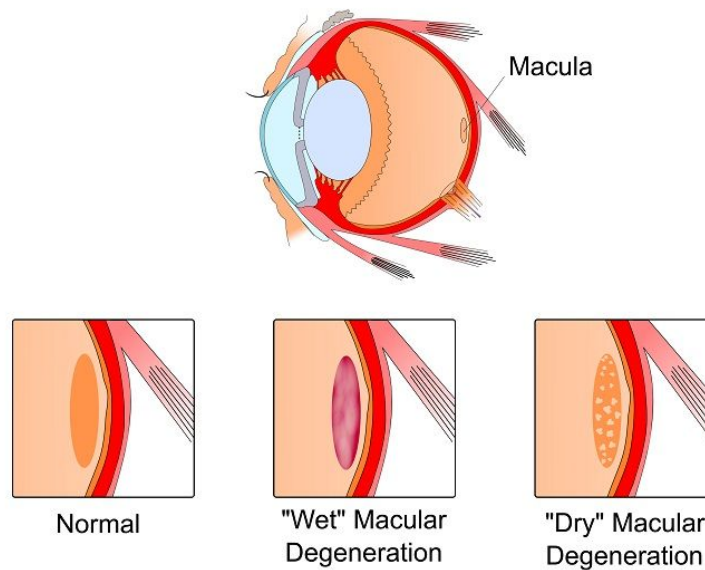
There is so much information available on the internet available relating to Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

AMD does not cause complete blindness. However, AMD does affect someone's ability to see faces, do work up close, drive, read, write, cook or live alone. It occurs when the small central portion of the retina, known as the macula, deteriorates.



There are two main types of age-related macular degeneration, dry and wet. Most patients with macular degeneration have the dry form of the disease and can lose some form of central vision. However, the dry form of macular degeneration can lead to the wet form.

The “dry” form of macular degeneration is characterized by the presence of yellow deposits, called drusen, in the macula. A few small drusen may not cause changes in vision; however, as they grow in size and increase in number, they may lead to a dimming or distortion of vision that people find most noticeable when they read. In the advanced stages, patients lose central vision.



The “wet” form of macular degeneration is characterised by the growth of abnormal blood vessels from the choroid underneath the macula. These blood vessels leak blood and fluid into the retina, causing distortion of vision that makes straight lines look wavy, as well as blind spots and loss of central vision. These abnormal blood vessels and their bleeding eventually form a scar, leading to permanent loss of central vision.

Symptoms of macular degeneration include dark, blurry areas in the centre of the visual field and diminished or changed colour perception.

If someone has a family history of AMD, they are at higher risk for developing this degenerative disease. Early detection of age-related macular degeneration is very important because there are treatments that can delay or reduce the severity of the disease.