

Age-Related Macular Degeneration



FIGHTING
BLINDNESS
CANADA

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) results from changes to the macula (the center of your retina, responsible for central vision) that may cause vision loss over time. AMD is the leading cause of vision loss in adults over 60. You may not have symptoms of AMD at first, so it is important to get regular eye exams even if you do not notice changes in your vision.



WHAT IS DRY AMD?

As you age, your macula gets thinner. Sometimes little fat deposits, called drusen, build up which can damage the macula and cause vision loss. Most people who have AMD have dry AMD. There is currently no treatment for dry AMD, however some people with dry AMD may benefit from a multivitamin known as AREDS.

WHAT IS WET AMD?

As the macula thins, blood vessels under the macula may start to swell and grow more than normal. These blood vessels can break and leak blood and fluid into the eye, leading to wet AMD. This can cause blurred vision but may also damage the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) cells, which are responsible for nourishing cells in the macula. Damage to the RPE cells can cause permanent vision loss. The primary treatment for wet AMD is usually injections of a medicine that slows blood vessel growth (anti-VEGF therapy).

One of the first symptoms of AMD is blurry vision. You can use a tool called an **Amsler grid** to help you identify distortions in your vision. **Contact info@fightingblindness.ca to receive a free Amsler grid.** Put this on your fridge and check your vision often to help you identify any changes early.

Fighting Blindness Canada is the largest charitable funder of vision research in Canada. We offer hope to Canadians by funding the best, most promising research that is driving treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases.

HEALTHY HABITS TO HELP PREVENT VISION LOSS

Monitor

Pay attention to new changes in your vision, or worsening symptoms. Practice using an Amsler grid regularly to spot any changes in your vision.

Appointments

Book regular appointments with your eye doctor to keep track of any changes in your vision. If you are receiving injections or other treatments, go to all your appointments. If you cannot make an appointment, call your doctor to reschedule in a timely manner. Missing appointments and treatment may lead to long-term damage to your vision. Talk to your doctor if you are concerned about missing appointments because of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Medication

Take all your prescribed medication, including vitamins, as instructed by your doctor.

Lifestyle

Practice healthy habits like eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise. If you smoke, consider quitting. Speak to your doctor before starting a new diet, form of exercise, or if you need help quitting smoking.

Educate

Learn about your condition, symptoms, and treatment. The more you know, the more confidence you will have in managing your AMD.

If you have dry AMD, speak to your doctor about vitamin supplementation.

If you have wet AMD, learn more about the treatment you will be receiving.

ASSESS YOUR RISK OF VISION LOSS

Bring this handout to your next eye exam (i.e. optometrist, ophthalmologist).

Write down your questions in advance and ask your doctor to explain any answers you may be uncertain of.

Risk factors	My notes	Questions for my doctor
Appointment	The last time I had an eye exam or injection was:	
Vision changes	Any changes to my vision I have noticed:	
Blood pressure	The last time I checked, my blood pressure was:	
Other symptoms	I have noticed these things about my health:	

If you have questions about AMD, you can connect with FBC's Health Information Line at **1.888.626.2995** or by email healthinfo@fightingblindness.ca.