

What You Need to Know About Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

What is AMD?

- AMD is a common eye condition and a leading cause of vision loss among people aged 50 years and older.
- AMD causes damage to the macula, a small spot near the center of the retina and the part of the eye needed for sharp, central vision, which lets us see objects that are straight ahead.

What Are the Risk Factors?

- The disease is most likely to occur after age 60, but it can occur earlier.
- Research shows that smoking doubles the risk of AMD.
- AMD is more common among Caucasians than among African Americans or Hispanics/Latinos.
- People with a family history of AMD are at higher risk.

Does Lifestyle Make a Difference?

You might be able to reduce your risk of AMD or slow its progression by making these healthy choices:

- Avoid smoking
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain normal blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Eat a healthy diet rich in green leafy vegetables and fish

Treatment of Early AMD

- Currently, no treatment exists for early AMD, which in many people shows no symptoms or loss of vision. Your eye care professional may recommend that you get a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year. The exam will help determine if your condition is advancing.

Treatment of Intermediate and Late AMD

- The Age-Related Eye Disease Studies (AREDS and AREDS2) found that daily intake of certain high-dose vitamins and minerals can slow progression of the disease in people who have intermediate AMD, and those who have late AMD in one eye. The clinically effective doses tested in AREDS and AREDS2 were:
 - ◇ 500 mg of vitamin C
 - ◇ 400 international units of vitamin E
 - ◇ 80 mg zinc as zinc oxide (25 mg in AREDS2)
 - ◇ 2 mg copper as cupric oxide
 - ◇ 15 mg beta-carotene, OR 10 mg lutein and 2 mg zeaxanthin

Treatment of Advanced Neovascular AMD

- Anti-vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF) Injection Therapy
- Photodynamic Therapy
- Laser Surgery

Source: National Eye Institute. Facts about age-related macular degeneration. http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/maculardegen/armd_facts.asp. Accessed December 6, 2013.