**AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION**

**What is Age-related Macular Degeneration?**

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the world’s leading causes of irreversible blindness in the United States.

The disease affects the macula at the back of your eye, which is the part of the retina that lets you see fine detail, like images in front of you, facial features or words on a page. AMD is not painful and can occur in one or both eyes. How quickly the disease progresses varies from person to person, and from eye to eye. When the disease advances rapidly, it may lead to sudden and severe vision loss. AMD can be diagnosed by your eye doctor during a comprehensive eye exam.

Age is the greatest risk factor for AMD and people over 50 are at the greatest risk[[1]](#footnote-2). Other risk factors include smoking, cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, obesity, and family history. Studies show that AMD may be hereditary, and it’s recommended that anyone with a family history of AMD should have their eyes examined.

There are two types of AMD: wet and dry.

<insert “What is AMD” video. Download here: <https://vimeo.com/230009108>>   
<Title: What is age-related macular degeneration and why should you take it seriously?>

**What is dry AMD?**

About 85-90% of people with AMD have dry AMD. In dry AMD, yellow-colored fatty deposits called “drusen” build up in the cells of the macula. As the size and number of these deposits increase, so does your risk of developing wet AMD.

<insert “Dry AMD Drusen Graphic” from the [Practice Resource Center](https://prc.notal.vision/) under “Images & Videos”>

Symptoms may include blurry vision, such as difficulty seeing sharp details, both up close and from a distance. However, many people with dry AMD have no symptoms at all, or do not notice any of these changes in their vision over time.

Most importantly, dry AMD puts you at an increased risk of progressing to wet AMD, which can cause significant vision loss without treatment. Dry AMD can suddenly change to wet AMD without notice, and you may not notice any changes or decline in your vision. Studies show that catching the progression from dry to wet AMD as soon as possible is critical to prevent irreversible vision loss.

There is currently no cure or treatment for dry AMD but there are steps you can take to reduce your risk of developing wet AMD. These include healthy lifestyle choices, like not smoking, and taking AREDS2 vitamins daily if recommended by your doctor. It’s also important to monitor your eyes with at-home testing between office visits.

<insert “Website Badge” from the [Practice Resource Center](https://prc.notal.vision/) under “Website Content”>

There is advanced home monitoring technology available that is sensitive to changes in AMD. The ForeseeHome® AMD Monitoring Program is an easy-to-use early warning system for your eyes that can catch the progression from dry to wet AMD as soon as it happens, which lets your doctor step in sooner and determine the appropriate course of action. People preserved more of their vision when wet AMD was detected using ForeseeHome between office visits, in addition to your doctor’s standard of care[[2]](#footnote-3). ForeseeHome is FDA-cleared and covered by Medicare.

[Learn more about ForeseeHome](http://www.foreseehome.com/).

**What is wet AMD?**

About 10-15% of people with dry AMD progress to a more advanced form called wet AMD. In wet AMD, abnormal blood vessels can suddenly leak fluid in the back of your eye without notice. The disease destroys the sharp, pinpoint vision needed to see clearly, which can cause permanent vision loss if left untreated. Wet AMD is also known as “neovascular” or “exudative” AMD.

<insert “Wet AMD Fluid” graphic from the [Practice Resource Center](https://prc.notal.vision/) under “Images & Videos”>

When you have wet AMD, your central vision becomes distorted. Symptoms include blurry vision, vision distortion where straight lines look wavy, and a dark spot (or spots) in the center of your vision.

<insert “Symptoms of wet AMD” image from the [Practice Resource Center](https://prc.notal.vision/) under “Images & Videos”>

Wet AMD can severely impact quality of life and limit independence. It can make many of the activities you enjoy and rely on impossible; like driving, reading, watching television, and using a computer.

Rapid and severe vision loss can happen very quickly if treatment is delayed.Some people may not notice any changes in their vision until significant vision loss has occurred. Early detection of wet AMD allows your doctor to step in sooner so he or she can determine the best course of action to help preserve your vision.

[Understand the risks and how to manage AMD in this educational e-book](https://prc.notal.vision/resources/telehealth/digital-patient-education/ebrochures/the-risk-and-management-of-amd.pdf)

1. National Eye Institute [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Chew EY, Clemons TE, Bressler SB, et al; AREDS2-HOME Study Research Group. Randomized trial of a home monitoring system for early detection of choroidal neovascularization home monitoring of the [↑](#footnote-ref-3)