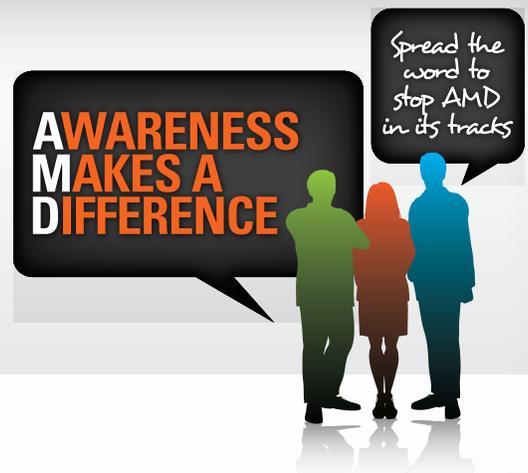


Facts About AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION



AMD, or age-related macular degeneration, is a leading cause of vision loss for Americans age 65 and older.

As you age, your risk for AMD increases. But you can take steps to help prevent loss of sight from AMD. If you are 65 or older, you should:

- Visit your eye doctor regularly
- Learn and watch for the signs and symptoms of AMD
- Take care of yourself: quit smoking, eat healthy foods, stay active

VISIT YOUR EYE DOCTOR REGULARLY

The key to preventing vision loss from AMD is regular eye exams. If you are 65 or older, you should get a complete eye exam every one or two years, even if you have no problem seeing well. Be sure to ask your eye doctor for a dilated eye exam. This exam will allow your eye doctor to check for eye diseases such as AMD.

Healthy habits can lead to healthy eyes. Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program or adding vitamins to your diet.

HOW DOES AMD HURT MY VISION?

AMD affects part of the back of the eye called the macula, the central part of the retina.

When AMD damages the macula, the center part of your vision may become blurred or wavy, or you may develop a blind spot.

AMD can cause vision loss quickly or slowly, and can make it very hard for you to do things that require sharp vision, such as reading, driving or sewing.

The good news is that AMD almost never causes total blindness, since it usually does not hurt side vision.

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF AMD.

“Wet” AMD causes the most serious vision loss. In this form of the disease, tiny unhealthy blood vessels grow under the retina. These blood vessels often break and leak, causing a loss of vision.

The most common form of AMD is “dry” AMD. This form of the disease usually progresses more slowly.

HOW IS AMD TREATED?

The treatment of AMD has changed rapidly over the past few years, and new research and treatments continue to be developed and tested. Some medications currently used to treat wet AMD include Lucentis (ranibizumab), Avastin (bevacizumab), Eylea (aflibercept) and Macugen (pegaptanib). Each of these is delivered through an injection to the eye, administered by an ophthalmologist, aimed at blocking the development of new blood vessels. While some pressure will be felt during the injection, the eye is first numbed to minimize any discomfort. Several injections over time are needed in this treatment (frequency of injections varied

based on medication and your ophthalmologist’s judgment).

Prevent Blindness strongly recommends that you consult with your eye care professional to determine the best treatment options for you.

Laser treatments can help some people with wet AMD. One treatment, called photodynamic therapy, uses a laser beam with a light-sensitive dye to destroy unhealthy new blood vessels under the retina.

Another laser treatment, called photocoagulation, uses a stronger laser to destroy the new blood vessels. The treatment itself leaves permanent blind spots in a person’s vision. But it also helps to slow or stop the growth of new blood vessels that could damage vision even more. It helps protect the vision that remains.

A recent study offers some hope for people with moderate and advanced stages of AMD. The study suggests that large doses of vitamins C and E, lutein, zeaxanthin, and zinc may help slow vision loss from moderate and advanced cases of AMD.

While these supplements may slow the disease at later stages, they are not a cure. Ask your doctor about these vitamins before taking them.

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