

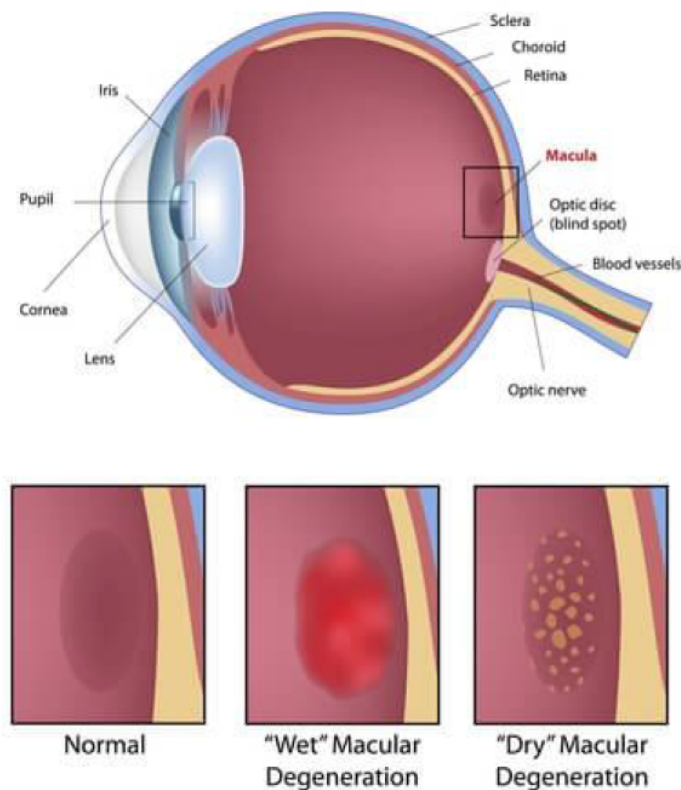


Macular Degeneration

What is Macular Degeneration?

Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in the United States and many European countries. The neovascular "wet" form of the disease is responsible for most (90%) of the severe loss of vision.

Macular Degeneration



There are approximately 200,000 new cases of wet macular degeneration in the United States each year. The average age of patients with the wet form of macular degeneration is the mid-70s. It rarely occurs before the age of 50. Wet macular degeneration is more common in whites, but occurs in all races.

What is age-related macular degeneration?

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a disease associated with aging that gradually destroys sharp, central vision. Central vision is needed for seeing objects clearly and for common daily tasks such as reading and driving.

AMD affects the macula, the part of the eye that allows you to see fine detail. AMD causes no pain.

In some cases, AMD advances so slowly that people notice little change in their vision. In others, the disease progresses faster and may lead to a loss of vision in both eyes. AMD is a leading cause of vision loss in Americans 60 years of age and older.

AMD occurs in two forms: wet and dry.

Where is the macula?

The macula is located in the center of the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. The retina instantly converts light, or an image, into electrical impulses. The retina then sends these impulses, or nerve signals, to the brain.

What is wet AMD?

Wet AMD occurs when abnormal blood vessels behind the retina start to grow under the macula. These new blood vessels tend to be very fragile and often leak blood and fluid. The blood and fluid raise the macula from its normal place at the back of the eye. Damage to the macula occurs rapidly.

With wet AMD, loss of central vision can occur quickly. Wet AMD is also known as advanced AMD. It does not have stages like dry AMD.

An early symptom of wet AMD is that straight lines appear wavy. If you notice this condition or other changes to your vision, contact your eye care professional at once. You need a comprehensive dilated eye exam.

What is dry AMD?

Dry AMD occurs when the light-sensitive cells in the macula slowly break down, gradually blurring central vision in the affected eye. As dry AMD gets worse, you may see a blurred spot in the center of your vision. Over time, as less of the macula functions, central vision is gradually lost in the affected eye.

The most common symptom of dry AMD is slightly blurred vision. You may have difficulty recognizing faces. You may need more light for reading and other tasks. Dry AMD generally affects both eyes, but vision can be lost in one eye while the other eye seems unaffected.

One of the most common early signs of dry AMD is drusen.

What are drusen?

Drusen are yellow deposits under the retina. They often are found in people over age 60. Your eye care professional can detect drusen during a comprehensive dilated eye exam.

Drusen alone do not usually cause vision loss. In fact, scientists are unclear about the connection between drusen and AMD. They do know that an increase in the size or number of drusen raises a person's risk of developing either advanced dry AMD or wet AMD. These changes can cause serious vision loss.

Dry AMD has three stages, all of which may occur in one or both eyes:

- Early AMD. People with early AMD have either several small drusen or a few medium-sized drusen. At this stage, there are no symptoms and no vision loss.
- Intermediate AMD. People with intermediate AMD have either many medium-sized drusen or one or more large drusen. Some people see a blurred spot in the center of their vision. More light may be needed for reading and other tasks.
- Advanced Dry AMD. In addition to drusen, people with advanced dry AMD have a breakdown of light-sensitive cells and supporting tissue in the central retinal area. This breakdown can cause a blurred spot in the center of your vision. Over time, the blurred spot may get bigger and darker, taking more of your central vision. You may have difficulty reading or recognizing faces until they are very close to you.

Diagnosing AMD

This is why Macular Degeneration is so dangerous, both dry and wet AMD cause no pain.

For dry AMD: the most common early sign is blurred vision. As fewer cells in the macula are able to function, people will see details less clearly in front of them, such as faces or words in a book. Often this blurred vision will go away in brighter light. If the loss of these light-sensing cells becomes great, people may see a small-but growing-blind spot in the middle of their field of vision.

For wet AMD: the classic early symptom is that straight lines appear crooked. This results when fluid from the leaking blood vessels gathers and lifts the macula, distorting vision. A small blind spot may also appear in wet AMD, resulting in loss of one's central vision.

How is AMD detected?

Your eye care professional may suspect AMD if you are over age 60 and have had recent changes in your central vision. To look for signs of the disease, he or she will use eye drops to dilate, or enlarge, your pupils. Dilating the pupils allows your eye care professional to view the back of the eye better.

AMD is detected during a comprehensive eye exam that includes:

1. Visual acuity test.

This eye chart test measures how well you see at various distances.

2. Dilated eye exam.

Drops are placed in your eyes to widen, or dilate, the pupils. Your eye care professional uses a special magnifying lens to examine your retina and optic nerve for signs of AMD and other eye problems. After the exam, your close-up vision may remain blurred for several hours.

3. Tonometry.

An instrument measures the pressure inside the eye.

Numbing drops may be applied to your eye for this test.

The doctors at Eye Care Surgery Center may do other tests to learn more about the structure and health of your eye.

During an eye exam, you may be asked to look at an Amsler grid. The pattern of the grid resembles a checkerboard. You will cover one eye and stare at a black dot in the center of the grid. While staring at the dot, you may notice that the straight lines in the pattern appear wavy. You may notice that some of the lines are missing. These may be signs of AMD.

If the doctors at Eye Care Surgery Center think you need treatment for wet AMD, he or she may suggest a fluorescein angiogram. In this test, a special dye is injected into your arm. Pictures are taken as the dye passes through the blood vessels in your retina. The test allows your eye care professional to identify any leaking blood vessels and recommend treatment.

How is wet AMD treated?

Wet AMD can be treated with laser surgery, photodynamic therapy, and injections into the eye. None of these treatments is a cure for wet AMD. The disease and loss of vision may progress despite treatment.

1. Laser surgery.

This procedure uses a laser to destroy the fragile, leaky blood vessels. A high energy beam of light is aimed directly onto the new blood vessels and destroys them, preventing further loss of vision. However, laser treatment may also destroy some surrounding healthy tissue and some vision. Only a small percentage of people with wet AMD can be treated with laser surgery. Laser surgery is more effective if the leaky blood vessels have developed away from the fovea, the central part of the macula. Laser surgery is performed in a doctor's office or eye clinic.

The risk of new blood vessels developing after laser treatment is high. Repeated treatments may be necessary. In some cases, vision loss may progress despite repeated treatments.

2. Photodynamic therapy.

A drug called verteporfin is injected into your arm. It travels throughout the body, including the new blood vessels in your eye. The drug tends to “stick” to the surface of new blood vessels. Next, a light is shined into your eye for about 90 seconds. The light activates the drug. The activated drug destroys the new blood vessels and leads to a slower rate of vision decline. Unlike laser surgery, this drug does not destroy surrounding healthy tissue. Because the drug is activated by light, you must avoid exposing your skin or eyes to direct sunlight or bright indoor light for five days after treatment.

Photodynamic therapy is relatively painless. It takes about 20 minutes and can be performed in a doctor’s office.

Photodynamic therapy slows the rate of vision loss. It does not stop vision loss or restore vision in eyes already damaged by advanced AMD. Treatment results often are temporary. You may need to be treated again.

3. Injections.

Wet AMD can now be treated with new drugs that are injected into the eye (anti-VEGF therapy). Abnormally high levels of a specific growth factor occur in eyes with wet AMD and promote the growth of abnormal new blood vessels. This drug treatment blocks the effects of the growth factor.

You will need multiple injections that may be given as often as monthly. The eye is numbed before each injection. After the injection, you will remain in the doctor’s office for a while and your eye will be monitored. This drug treatment can help slow down vision loss from AMD and in some cases improve sight.

**

If you have vision loss from dry AMD in one eye only, you may not notice any changes in your overall vision. With the other eye seeing clearly, you still can

drive, read, and see fine details. You may notice changes in your vision only if AMD affects both eyes. If blurriness occurs in your vision, see an eye care professional for a comprehensive dilated eye exam.

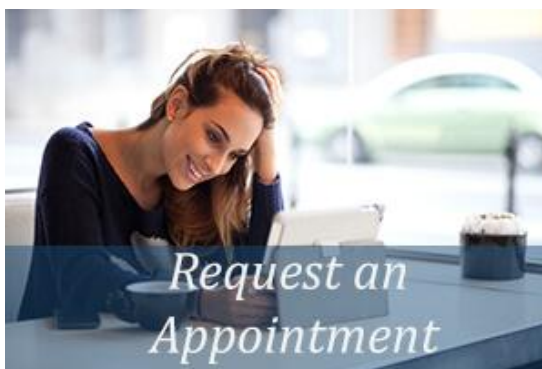
Ninety percent of all people with AMD have this type. Scientists are still not sure what causes dry AMD.

Diabetes / Retina

Diabetic Retinopathy

Retinal Detachment

Macular Degeneration



- Home
- About
- Doctors
- LASIK
- Cataract
- Cosmetic
- Doctors/Locations
- Diabetes/Retina
- Glaucoma
- Dry Eyes
- Patient Info/Forms
- Contact

Name
Email
Phone
Message
Send Email

Eye Care Surgery Center Tigervision, LLC, Inc.
10423 Old Hammond Hwy.
Baton Rouge, LA 70816
225-923-0960

Hammond Clinic

42373 Pelican Professional Park
Hammond, LA 70403
1-985-542-5624

Gonzales Clinic

1004 Hwy. 30, Suite A
Gonzales, LA.
1-225-644-4444

Mandeville

3545 HWY 190
Mandeville, LA. 70471
985-674-5050

Precision Optical

42373 Pelican Professional Park
Hammond, La. 70403
985-542-7408 or 1-800-749-0315

[Home](#) [About](#) [Doctors](#) [LASIK](#) [Cataract](#) [Cosmetic](#) [Doctors/Locations](#)
[Diabetes/Retina](#) [Glaucoma](#) [Dry Eyes](#) [Patient Info/Forms](#) [Contact](#)



All Rights Reserved.