

MACULAR DEGENERATION



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Macular Degeneration (MD) Defined

What is macular degeneration?

Macular degeneration (MD) 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.

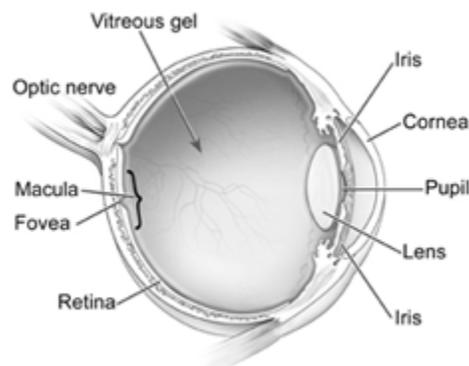
MD affects the macula, the part of the eye that allows you to see fine detail. MD causes no pain.

In some cases, MD 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. MD is a leading cause of vision loss in Americans 60 years of age and older.

MD 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 Macular degeneration?

Wet Macular degeneration 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 MD, loss of central vision can occur quickly. Wet MD is also known as advanced MD. It does not have stages like dry Macular degeneration.

An early symptom of wet Macular degeneration 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 Macular degeneration?

Dry Macular degeneration occurs when the light-sensitive cells in the macula slowly break down, gradually blurring central vision in the affected eye. As dry MD 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 MD is slightly blurred vision. You may have difficulty recognizing faces. You may need more light for reading and other tasks. Dry MD 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 MD 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 Macular degeneration. They do know that an increase in the size or number of drusen raises a person's risk of developing either advanced dry MD or wet MD. These changes can cause serious vision loss.

Dry 1. Early Macular degeneration has three stages, all of which may occur in one or both eyes:

1. **Early Macular degeneration.** People with early MD have either several small drusen or a few medium-sized drusen. At this stage, there are no symptoms and no vision loss.
2. **Intermediate Macular degeneration.** People with intermediate MD 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.
3. **Advanced Dry Macular degeneration.** In addition to drusen, people with advanced dry MD 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.

Herbal Supports

[Eyebright Eyewash](#): (Herbal Eyebright) this formula is excellent for brightening and healing the eyes, and it is known to remove the cataracts and heavy film from the eyes:

Add 5-10 drops of tincture into a glass eye cup with distilled water.

There will be a slight burning sensation when using the cayenne in the eye at first, but there is nothing to be concerned about.

Tip head back and apply the eye cup to eye. Exercise eye while doing this as though you were swimming under water. Do this three to six times a day.

Drink $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. (two droppersful) added to cup of hot distilled water in the morning and evening.

See our [Eye Ailments Information Sheet](#) for more on healing the eyes.