

# AMD: Dimming Lights

## February is AMD/Low Vision Month

Age-related macular degeneration, known as AMD, already affects more than 10 million Americans.<sup>1</sup> But as the last baby boomers make it to age 60—when the risk increases—"AMD will become more and more widespread."<sup>2</sup>

AMD causes low vision and blindness. Like glaucoma, the disease progresses slowly. Symptoms include "blind spots, grayness and other distortions in the center frame of your vision."<sup>2</sup>

### Are you at risk?

The most common (85 to 90 percent) type of AMD is "dry," in that it does not involve fluid loss. You are at greatest risk if you are over 60 or have:

- Family history of AMD
- Light skin
- Light eyes<sup>3</sup>

Other risk factors deal with lifestyle changes. Smoking, sun exposure, a high-fat diet, and obesity are linked to increased risk. So are inactivity and some medications.<sup>3</sup>

### Reducing your risk and treatment

In the case of dry AMD, the prevention is also the treatment—a diet with antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals to support the macula, pigments, and cell structure. Eat plenty of leafy greens and fresh fruit. Have a high-omega-3 fish twice a week.<sup>4</sup> These will help you maintain a healthy weight, which keeps your cholesterol in check. Exercise to keep blood pressure down. And finally: protect your eyes! Wear sunglasses and hats with a brim to protect your eyes from UV rays and blue light.<sup>2</sup>

### Low vision aids

If you do develop AMD, low vision aids can help you see better. Special television screens, microscope and telescope lenses, and other devices can bring the world back into view. For more information about AMD, visit the American Macular Degeneration Foundation.

### Diagnosing AMD

A routine dilated eye exam will reveal any damage to the retina or optic nerve. Other tests include:

- Visual acuity to test for distance vision
- Amsler grid to see if any lines disappear
- Dye injection to check for leaking blood
- High-resolution imaging using light waves

## AMD Fast facts<sup>1</sup>



**11 Million**

people affected in the U.S.;  
could double by 2050



**\$98 Billion**

costs to the U.S., Canada,  
and Cuba per year



**#1**

cause of irreversible  
blindness and visual  
impairment in the world

1 <https://www.brightfocus.org/macular/article/age-related-macular-facts-figures>, January 2019.

2 <https://lowvisionmd.org/february-is-amd-macular-degeneration-low-vision-awareness-month>, February 2018.

3 <https://www.sightmatters.com/what-is-amd>, accessed December 2020.

4 <https://www.macular.org/treatments>, accessed December 2020.

*Material discussed is meant for general informational purposes only and is not to be construed as medical advice. Although the information has been gathered from sources believed to be reliable, please note that individual situations can vary. You should always consult a licensed professional when making decisions concerning eye care.*

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