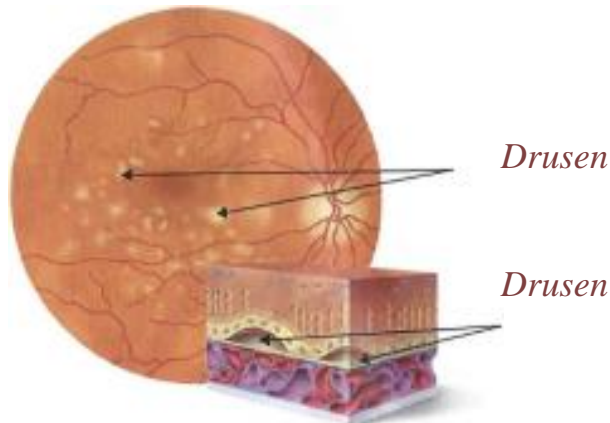


What is Macular Degeneration?

Age related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of vision loss and blindness among Americans age 65 and older. It is a disease that destroys your sharp, central vision. This affects the ability to see objects clearly and to perform tasks such as reading and driving. AMD affects the macula, the part of the eye that allows you to see fine details centrally.

Macular Degeneration is diagnosed as either the Dry (non-neovascular) form or the Wet (neovascular) form. Neovascular refers to growth of new blood vessels in an area where they are not supposed to be. New blood vessels are very weak and can leak fluid and blood under the macula, which can cause formation of permanent scar tissue leading to significant vision loss.



Dry AMD is the more common form, with 85% to 90% of AMD patients and is associated with Drusen, waste materials that build up due to cellular dysfunction. When drusen expand in size and number they can cause distortion and overtime can cause the macula to thin and stop functioning. Because the dry form can progress to the wet form, it is important to monitor the condition both at home and with regular eye examinations.

What can I do to protect my eyes from Macular Degeneration?

- It is important to have comprehensive eye exams at least once a year and to seek evaluation immediately if there is any change in vision. Advanced state-of-the-art testing is now available to help diagnose the earliest forms of this potentially blinding disease.
- Stop smoking!
- Chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity have been associated with AMD therefore adopting healthier habits have been linked to a reduced incidence of AMD.
- Protecting your eyes from harmful UV rays is also helpful. Some lenses are now being made that block the most harmful of the ultra violet light rays: blue light.

What are my treatment options?

- Dry AMD treatments include: stop smoking, controlling your blood pressure, taking an AREDS 2 vitamin if you can, eating leafy green vegetables several times a week and wearing blue blocking lenses or sunglasses
- Wet AMD cannot be cured but it usually can be controlled by injecting advanced medicines into the eye. These treatments may slow its progression and reduce vision loss
- For those who have mild or no AMD, the special "eye vitamins" did not appear to have any benefit

Current recommendations regarding Macular Degeneration

The recently released AREDS 2 study offers suggestions on how best to avoid progressive changes for patients who have AMD.

- Many factors contribute to the risk of developing AMD: genetics, diet, age, race and smoking.
- Lutein and zeaxanthin in a 10mg/2mg formulation works as good as beta carotene in preventing AMD from progressing to a more advanced form by about 18%.
- Patients with Macular Degeneration who are taking the AREDS vitamin formulation were 25-30% less likely to develop advanced macular disease.
- Patients who have low dietary levels of lutein and zeaxanthin (leafy green vegetables like spinach, broccoli, kale, collard greens, etc.), but took a lutein/zeaxanthin supplement had a 25% less chance of progressing to advanced AMD over a 5 year period.
- Patients using blood thinning medications should consult their primary care physician before consuming large quantities of leafy green vegetables, as this may further reduce their blood clotting factors.

Omega-3 fatty acids, like those found in salmon, sardines, tuna, and other cold water fish, and also found in fish oil capsules were found to have NO BENEFIT in preventing advanced AMD! However, there may be other benefits from taking Omega-3 fatty acids.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Who should take the antioxidant vitamins and zinc combinations used in the AREDS and AREDS 2 studies?

- Patients who have intermediate stage AMD in one or both eyes. Your eye doctor can determine the stage of AMD.
- Patients with advanced AMD in one eye but not the other eye.

Can I continue to take a multivitamin if I take "eye vitamins?"

◆ Yes. However, a multivitamin alone will likely NOT have the important ingredients necessary to delay progression of AMD. A multivitamin usually does not have a high enough concentration of the eye vitamins and minerals suggested by the AREDS study.

Can I achieve the same levels of antioxidants and zinc in the AREDS vitamin by diet alone?

- No. However, a diet rich in leafy green vegetables decreases the risk of developing Macular Degeneration.

What other side effects are possible from taking AREDS vitamins?

- High doses of vitamins can potentially interfere with the effectiveness of other prescription medications. Please consult your primary care physician for advice.