

# AMD (Age-Related Macular Degeneration)



*Prevent Blindness America can help put you in touch with low vision resources including clinics and rehabilitation services.*

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

## 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.

## Learn and Watch for the Signs and Symptoms of AMD

As AMD gets worse, the signs become more obvious. If you have AMD, you may notice that:

- > Straight lines (such as telephone poles or the sides of buildings) appear wavy
- > Type in books, magazines or newspapers appears blurry
- > Dark or empty spaces may block the center of your vision

People with AMD should check the central vision in each eye separately every day. Report any changes to your eye doctor.

## Take Care of Yourself

Good health is an important part of good vision. You can lower your risk of eye disease and vision loss if you:

- > Avoid smoking
- > Eat healthy foods
- > Stay active

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## AMD—Continued

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

### How is AMD Treated?

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 zinc, vitamins C and E, and beta-carotene 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.**

### Low Vision Rehabilitation

If you have lost some sight to AMD, low vision rehabilitation can help you make the most of your remaining vision. Low vision rehabilitation can help you keep your independence and improve your quality of life.

Orientation and mobility training can give you skills to live with limited vision. You can also learn ways to arrange your household to make living with low vision easier.

Low vision aids can help you if you have partial sight. These include telescopic and magnifying lenses, closed circuit televisions, large-screen computers and other adaptive devices.

