



ELDERCARE PROGRAMME

AGE MACULAR DEGENERATION

Age Macular Degeneration (AMD) is a common eye condition and a leading cause of vision loss among people aged 60 and older.

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NEWSLETTER

26TH EDITION | MAY 2016

This sheet is for your general information and is not a substitute for medical advice. You should contact your physician or other healthcare provider with any questions about your health, treatment or care.

Evidence shows that the prevalence of AMD is 1% among people in their 60s as opposed to 15% among people in their 90s. AMD is defined as a deterioration or breakdown of the macula, which is part of the retina that allows one to see fine details clearly and perform activities such as reading or driving. In some people AMD advances slowly that vision loss does not occur for a long time. While in others the disease progresses faster and may lead to a loss of vision in one or both eyes.

Who is at risk of developing AMD?

Besides macular degeneration being associated with age, evidence strongly suggests that the following are also the contributing factors:

» Smoking

This is high on the list of risk factors for macular degeneration. Evidence

further suggests that people living with a smoker doubles the risk of developing AMD.

» Race

AMD is more common among people with lighter skin and eye colour than those with darker skin and eye colour.

» Hereditary

People with family history of AMD are at higher risk. Researchers identified nearly 20 genes that can affect the risk of developing AMD.

» Drug side effects

Macular degeneration can be induced from side effects of toxic drugs such as chloroquine, chlorpromazine, thioridazine, fluphenazine, perphenazine etc.

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» **High Blood Pressure**

This may be associated with the development of macular degeneration.

» **Obesity and inactivity**

Evidence shows that overweight people with macular degeneration have more than double the chance of developing advanced forms of macular degeneration than people with normal body weight. And again, people who perform vigorous activities at least three times weekly have less chances of developing advanced AMD, compared to inactive people.



Age-related Macular Degeneration signs and symptoms

AMD usually produces a slow, painless loss of vision. Yet in rare cases loss of vision can be sudden. Early signs of vision loss from AMD include shadowy areas in your central vision or remarkably blurred or distorted vision.

Treatment for Macular degeneration

There is no absolute cure for AMD. However, some interventions may delay AMD progression or even improve vision. Management for macular degeneration depends on whether the disease is in its early stage (dry form) or more in its advanced stage (wet form) that can lead to serious vision impairment. For early stage macular degeneration nutritional intervention such as green leafy vegetables and fish may help prevent progression of the disease to the advanced stage.

For late macular degeneration interventions such as laser surgery, photodynamic therapy, and vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) are available. Please consult your ophthalmologist.

REFERENCES

1. Beijing Baicao Jisheng Research Center of Macular Degeneration. Website: <http://www.senile-macular-degeneration.com/knowledge.asp>
2. National Eye Institute (NEI). Website: http://nei.nih.gov/health/macularden/gen/armd_facts
3. All About Vision. Website: <http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/amd.htm>
4. Momentum Multiply. Website: www.momentum.co.za/multiply

CONCLUSION

Macular degeneration may cause significant impairment in one's life if not managed early and properly. If you experience any of the symptoms do not hesitate to consult your health care professional as early intervention can be beneficial. Most of all love yourself and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Multiply is Momentum's wellness and rewards programme that can help you live well by rewarding you for doing preventative tests. Did you know that you can get 15 points for having an eye test done on **Multiply Premier**? More points mean a higher status and a higher status gives you greater discounts and rewards. For more information on *Multiply* visit www.momentum.co.za/multiply or call our client service centre on **0861 886 600** or to join call **0861 100 789** or SMS 'Join' to **40717**.