

# Age-Related Macular Degeneration

## What is it?

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the most common cause of sight loss. AMD occurs when the macula at the back of the eye begins to deteriorate. The macula is the part of the eye responsible for our central vision.

## What are signs of AMD?

When there is a problem with our central vision, we may experience difficulty seeing fine detail, such as reading, watching TV or recognising faces.

### More signs of AMD

- A blurred or distorted area in your central vision, often described as a blob or a smudge.
- Seeing straight lines as wavy or crooked.
- Colours seeming less bright than they used to be.

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## Types of AMD

There are two types of AMD; Wet AMD and Dry AMD.

Wet AMD occurs when the cells in the macula change, and new blood vessels start to grow. These blood vessels can bleed, which is why it is referred to as “wet”. The formation of the new vessels can cause scarring and have a significant effect on vision. Wet AMD can affect the sight rapidly and a deterioration can happen overnight.

Dry AMD is caused by a build-up of a fatty substance called drusen, which gradually damages the macula. Dry AMD usually causes a gradual deterioration in vision, which can be very subtle. Because of this, it can be months or years before Dry AMD has an impact on your daily life.

Dry AMD can progress into Wet AMD, so it is important to keep up to date with your eye appointments.

# Diagnosis




AMD can sometimes be found during a routine eye test before you have symptoms. If you do notice changes in your vision, we encourage you to make an appointment with an optometrist. It is important that AMD is diagnosed as early as possible to effectively control it.

# Risk factors

Factors that can increase the risk of developing AMD include smoking, having an unhealthy diet, and high blood pressure. The risk of developing the condition increases with age: the majority of people diagnosed with AMD are aged 50 and over. AMD can also be hereditary.

# Treatment

There is currently no treatment for Dry AMD. However, a balanced diet and stopping smoking can help slow the disease. Wet AMD can be treated with a series of injections into the eye. These injections cannot reverse sight loss; however, they can help to stop blood vessels growing and subsequent scarring and slow progression of the disease. Your ophthalmologist would determine the right treatment plan for you.



# How we can help



## We can help you

- Understand your eye condition and the importance of treatment.
- Maintain your independence and continue to do what you enjoy.

Contact Sight Scotland on 0800 024 8973 for support for all ages living with visual impairment.

Contact Sight Scotland Veterans on 0800 035 6409 if you are a veteran with vision loss, or you know a veteran with vision loss, for specialist support.

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“Our Family Wellbeing Service starts from a position of just wanting to help – help with information and advice, together with the practical and emotional support so many people with sight loss need.”



Colin, Head of Community Services

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## [sightscotland.org.uk](https://sightscotland.org.uk)

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