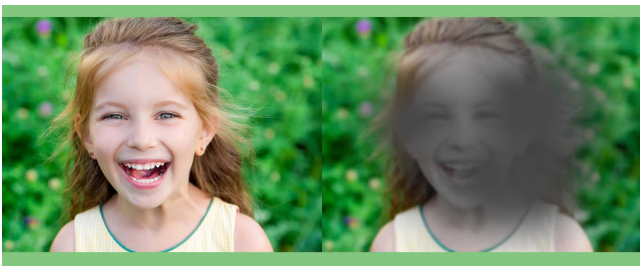


Your eyesight is precious. Let us help you to look after it.

Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

Age related macular degeneration, often referred to as ARMD or just AMD, is the most common cause of poor sight in the developed world.

AMD affects a tiny part of the back of the eye called the macula. This causes problems with your central vision but does not cause total blindness and is not painful. It affects the vision you use when you're looking directly at something, for example when you're reading or watching the television.



There are 2 types of AMD, "Wet" and "Dry".

"Wet" AMD occurs when small, abnormal blood vessels begin to grow behind the retina toward the macula. They usually leak blood or fluid which damages the macula and causes a rapid loss of central vision.

"Dry" AMD results from wear and tear to the cells of the macula rather than leaking vessels and causes a gradual deterioration of vision, usually over several years.

The exact causes of AMD are unknown, however, risk factors include increasing age, exposure to UV light (sunlight), smoking and poor diet. There may also be a hereditary link so if someone close in your family has AMD you may be more at risk of developing the disease.

Currently there is no known cure, however some patients with recently diagnosed "wet" AMD may benefit from injections of a drug called Lucentis that prevents the growth of new blood vessels in the eye. This treatment is available on the NHS but is dependant on the type and extent of your AMD.

In order to protect your eyes from developing AMD, you should stop smoking, wear UV protection whenever you are out in the sunlight and eat a diet rich in fruit and green leafy vegetables. There are many vitamin supplements for macular degeneration which may give some protection against this disease but research into the effectiveness of these preparations is still ongoing.

Regular eye examinations are also advised for everybody as this will check the health of your eyes as well as your need for glasses or contact lenses. Eye examinations are available on the NHS for those over 60.

