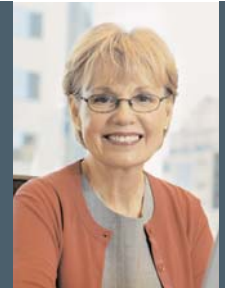


UnitedHealthcare Vision

Macular Degeneration



Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) affects the vision of more than 15 million Americans and is the leading cause of visual impairment of those 55 years and older.

Types

Dry AMD occurs when dry, yellowish deposits accumulate beneath the macula. It is the less destructive type and accounts for 85-90 percent of the cases. While Dry AMD usually does not cause a total loss of vision it must be closely monitored because it can lead to the second, and more serious type of AMD, Wet AMD. Wet AMD occurs when tiny abnormal blood vessels begin to grow behind the retina and leak.

Risk Factors

The main risk factor for developing AMD is age. Other risk factors are diet and nutrition, over exposure to sunlight, smoking, heredity, gender, race, high blood pressure, and diabetes. The American Optometric Association and Prevent Blindness America recommend the following to reduce your risk of developing AMD:

- Maintain a nutritionally balanced diet
- Eat foods or take supplements that contain antioxidants
- Avoid trans-fats
- Control your blood pressure and cholesterol
- Stay active and exercise
- Protect your eyes from the sun by wearing sunglasses to limit ultraviolet light exposure.
- Sunglasses should block out 100% of UV light.
- Avoid smoking - AMD is twice as common in people who smoke.
- Receive routine eye exams from your optometrist or ophthalmologist

We cannot prevent AMD, but the effects of AMD can be minimized through early detection and treatment. Regular eye exams are the only means of detecting macular degeneration, as symptoms often go unnoticed until it is too late for treatments to be effective.

*www.allaboutvision.com, Feb 2009

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