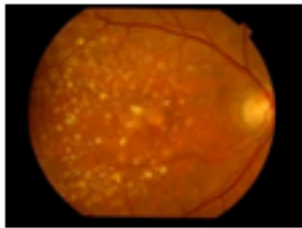


Macular Degeneration - Treatment & Surgery

What is macular degeneration?

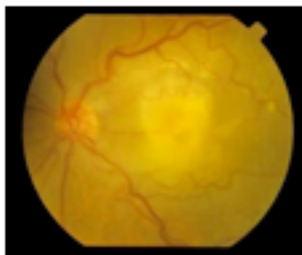
This is an aging change in the eye which damages the macula of the retina reducing central vision. Unfortunately it is common in the elderly and can cause irreversible central visual loss. Peripheral vision is maintained even when the patient has lost reading vision.

There are two main types:



Dry: Most patients with macular degeneration suffer from the dry form of the degeneration producing a gradual weakening of the retina. This can be seen as yellow deposits in the retina called Drusen or as areas of increased or decreased pigmentation of the retina. It is important to have the eye examined as for some types of dry degeneration (for example the eye on the right) special vitamin and antioxidant tablets have been found to reduce the risk of progression to visual loss.

It is useful to seek advice on the severity of your macular degeneration as the risk of progression to visual loss varies from 3% to 40% over 5 years depending on the appearance of the retina.



2. Wet: A few patients will produce a more severe form where a blood vessel membrane appears in the eye as shown on the left. This causes damage to the retina with severe loss of vision often in both eyes. In the early stages the vision distorts followed later by loss of central vision.

Anti VEGF Injections

Anti VEGF drugs, namely Ranibizumab (Lucentis), Eylea, restrict the growth of blood vessel membranes in wet ARMD. These block the action of a hormone in the retina called VEGF which makes blood vessels grow. The drugs are injected into the eye under local anaesthesia and have been extremely useful for maintaining or improving vision in this otherwise blinding condition. The use of these drugs may involve monthly injections and repeat injections over years.

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