



RETINA VITREOUS ASSOCIATES  
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## **Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)**

### **What is AMD?**

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a condition in which the central portion of your retina tissue, the macula, deteriorates. This causes your central vision to be blurry and distorted. There are two major types of macular degeneration called “**dry macular degeneration**” and “**wet macular degeneration.**” Both forms can cause vision loss, but the wet type is more rapid and aggressive.

### **How is AMD diagnosed?**

To help distinguish dry from wet AMD and to develop a treatment plan, your doctor may obtain a test called a fluorescein angiogram in addition to your eye examination. A small amount of dye is injected into an arm vein, and special photographs are taken of your retina’s blood vessels as the dye courses through them. A simple scan called an optical coherence tomography (OCT) may also be done in order to determine if fluid has accumulated abnormally in the macula. These tests can provide very important information about the severity of your problem and the best treatment approach for your eye(s).

### **What is Dry AMD and how is it treated?**

In dry AMD, tiny mounds of material accumulate in the macula, and the sensitive nerve cells of the retina become damaged. These mounds are called drusen. In many cases, the drusen only cause mild vision loss, but this can progress slowly over many years. Antioxidant vitamins and minerals have been found to reduce the rate of damage from dry AMD. This has been well studied by the Age Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS), and these antioxidants have been formulated and are available for purchase.

### **What is Wet AMD and how is it treated?**

In wet AMD, abnormal blood vessels grow in areas previously damaged by dry AMD. These blood vessels leak under the retina and cause more severe damage to the nerve cells and can sometimes bleed. Over the past few years, major advances in drug therapy have replaced laser as the standard of care in most cases of wet macular degeneration. Drugs such as Avastin, Lucentis, and Eylea can halt the growth and damage from these vessels. For many patients, vision can be stabilized and even improved in some cases.

### **Does everyone need treatment?**

Some patients with AMD have advanced macular atrophy or scarring from longstanding blood vessels. No medical or surgical treatment currently available will be helpful in such advanced cases. However, an evaluation by a low vision specialist might help to allow that person to maximize his/her visual potential.