



Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration

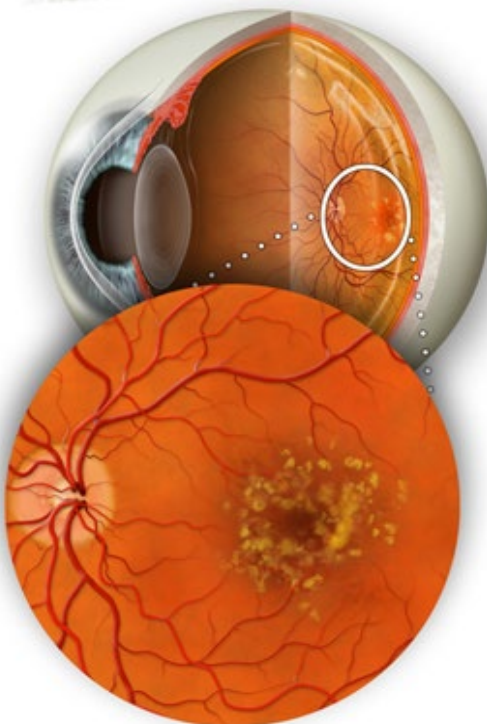
You have been diagnosed with Dry age -related macular degeneration

Age-related macular degeneration is a condition affecting the light sensitive portion of the eye - the retina. The central portion of the retina is called the macula. This portion of the retina is responsible for close or fine vision. When you read, or look at something, you use your macula to see.

Description

Dry age-related macular degeneration occurs when the light –sensitive cells in the macula slowly breakdown, which gradually causes blurring to the central vision in the affected eye. Over time you may see a blurred spot in the centre of your vision as the macula loses its function and the central vision can be lost gradually.

Dry Macular Degeneration



Causes of Macular Degeneration

There is no single cause of age-related macular degeneration. Age is the single biggest factor. The number of people with age-related macular degeneration increases with age. For those over 90, almost one third have some degree of macular degeneration. There are factors which increase the likelihood of developing the disease. These include genetic and environmental influences. Smoking increases the likelihood of developing the disease.

Symptoms

Blurred vision in the central vision and reading become more difficult. You may have difficulty recognizing faces. You may need more light for reading and other tasks. Dry AMD generally affects both eyes, but vision can be lost in one eye while the other eye seems unaffected.

Diagnosis

This is made by a comprehensive eye examination and may involve a number of tests in the ophthalmic out patients department

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for dry age-related macular degeneration. It is possible to modify risk factors. An important action is to stop smoking.

Long Term Outlook

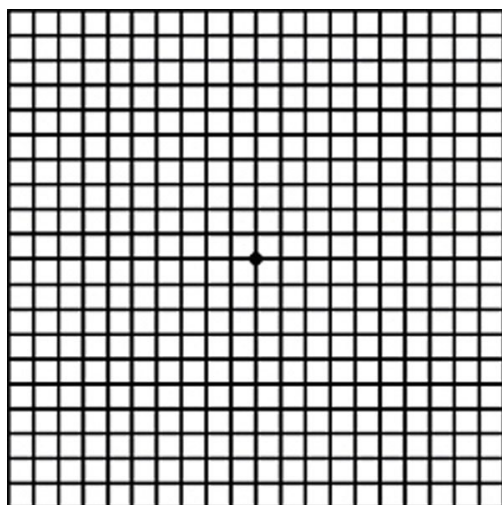
Dry age-related macular degeneration may remain dry for the rest of your life. However you may develop wet changes. If you develop wet changes, your symptoms will change.

The typical symptoms which develop are:

- wavy lines,
- worsening of fine vision
- Central areas of vision appear dark or you may have patchy vision.

The changes can be rather sudden. If these occur, you need to have an urgent assessment. You can monitor your vision on a regular basis with an Amsler grid. The pattern of the grid resembles a checkerboard. You can use a door frame / vertical blinds or a surface with a straight line to check for that everything is straight.

Any change should be viewed with suspicion and you should be checked to ensure that wet changes have not developed.



Amsler grid

Will I be able to drive?

Some people with dry age-related macular degeneration can drive for the rest of their life. Some people however cannot continue to drive, as vision is too poor and below the legal limit.

Can I have some help with reading?

As the condition advances, reading may become more difficult. In this situation, you may require:

- Stronger reading glasses.
- have a bright light, ideally situated behind you

If stronger glasses and a bright light do not help:

- Magnifying glass may help.
- Talking books may be an option for you, depending on your vision.

The Ophthalmology department have opticians who are trained in dispensing low vision aids such as magnifying glasses. The department also has an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer based at the Solihull site who can refer you to the appropriate support services to assist in maintaining your independent living or Focus Birmingham based at Birmingham heartlands hospital who can provide rehabilitation services to enable people to regain confidence and lead their lives as independently as possible

Will I go blind?

In dry age-related macular degeneration, the central portion of the retina is affected. The remainder of the retina, responsible for out and around vision is not affected. This remaining retina will give you sideways vision, not straight ahead vision. This means that you will be able to get around but reading may be difficult and faces may be difficult to recognise.

Dry age-related macular degeneration does not usually cause severe visual loss. **You will not lose all of your vision.**

Contact Us: 8.30am - 5.30pm

Emergency number: 0121 424 2000 ask for Bleep no 2489 (Macular Nurse)

Eye clinic Solihull 0121 424 4094

Eye clinic Heartlands 0121 424 0543

Eye clinic Good Hope 0121 424 9608

After 5pm and at weekends: Please Contact 0121 507 6780

After 7pm Monday to Friday and after 6pm Saturday/Sunday 0121 554 3801

**Eye Emergency Department
Birmingham & Midland Eye Centre
City Hospital
Western Road
Birmingham
B18 7QH**

Good hope site:

Appointments: 0121 4249651

Nurses answer phone: 0121 4249667

Solihull site:

Appointments: 0121 4244463

Nurses answer phone: 0121 4244456

Information for Patients

Heartlands site:

Appointments: 0121 4240545

Nurses answer phone: 0121 4241536

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