



Age-Related Macular Degeneration - Macula Risk - Foresee Home

The Following Information has been Prepared for You:

Age-related Macular Degeneration (ARMD) is the leading cause of vision loss in the United States for people over 65 years of age. It is the result of a deterioration of the center of the retina, an area called the "macula." A healthy macula allows you to have sharp central vision and the perception of colors. Risk factors for the development of ARMD include tobacco use (and possibly vaping), excess sunlight or electronic blue light exposure, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, poor nutrition, fair complexion and genetic patterns.

There are three types of ARMD:

Dry ARMD is characterized by yellow globular cellular waste material, called "drusen," which accumulates under the retina. Drusen causes deterioration of the retina's pigmented cells and photoreceptor cells. Patients with Dry ARMD may notice that there is a blurred spot directly in the center of their vision. In early stages, this will affect night vision. As the disease progresses, activities such as driving, reading, computer and television may be affected.

Wet ARMD starts out as Dry ARMD. However, with Wet AMD, the body attempts to repair itself by growing new blood vessels under the retina. Unfortunately, these new vessels are very weak and typically rupture, causing bleeding under the retina. Wet ARMD comprises about 10% of ARMD cases. Patients with Wet ARMD will see wavy, distorted lines and shapes in the early stages, and large dark or empty spots in their vision in the later stages.

When Wet ARMD is detected, immediate intervention is required to preserve vision. Laser treatments can be used to seal vessels to prevent further leaking. Medications can be used to prevent the formation of additional leaky blood vessels within the macula.

Geographic ARMD is a form of ARMD which does not typically have the drusen or leaky vessels that are associated with the more common Dry and Wet forms. It tends to spread out over a larger surface on the retina, causing very large dark spots in the vision. There are new medications that are available for this form of ARMD.

There are no cures for ARMD. Studies have shown that high doses of anti-oxidant vitamins and minerals can stabilize the retinal damage seen in ARMD. You may obtain these vitamins without a prescription. We recommend the MaxiVision Brand. Other brands include ICaps and Preservision. Be cautious with the vitamins you choose - high doses of Vitamin A & Beta Carotenes are not safe for patients who use tobacco or have recently quit use. Protecting the eyes from sunlight and electronic-produced blue light is strongly recommended. Controlling high cholesterol or blood pressure is advised. Exercising regularly and good nutrition to include generous amounts of green leafy vegetables and orange / red fruits and vegetables is advised. However, if you take Coumadin, Warfarin or other blood thinners, green leafy vegetables are contraindicated.

Zinc supplements can slow the progression of ARMD in some individuals, but can speed up the progression in others. If you have been newly diagnosed with ARMD, we recommend a genetic analysis to see which category you fall within. In this way, you can receive the best treatment for your genetic composition. Macula-Risk is a test offered at our office that not only checks for Zinc-sensitive genes, but also analyzes your risk for progression over the upcoming 10 years. You will receive an "MR" score. The higher the score, the higher the risk. Your doctor will use this information to tailor your exam intervals and treatment recommendations, to include which vitamin supplements you should take.

Patients with moderate visual loss from ARMD can benefit from "low vision" eye examinations that result in prescriptions for visual aids such as magnifiers and telescopes to increase the size of viewed images, allowing them to be seen despite the central blind spot that exists. Other devices such as specialized headsets or computer-attached cameras can provide magnified views. There are small, hand-held devices to help with reading - when you point them at printed material, they will read it out loud to you, or you can move them over printed material and they will magnify the print. Many books are available as audio versions. Kindle devices are very helpful, because they provide magnification, reverse contrast (white letters on a black background), and auditory options. Special colored lenses help with visual contrast and light sensitivity. Finally, other devices such as talking

watches and large-button calculators are available to improve a person's independent daily living. We can assist in ordering these devices.

Your doctor may recommend a simple at-home visual testing with a grid of straight lines (called the "Amsler Grid") that can help detect early vision changes which require intervention.

For advanced forms of DRY ARMD, your doctor may prescribe a home-monitoring device called "Foresee Home" which can help detect the development of WET ARMD in its earliest form. This can ensure you get prompt attention and treatment before severe and permanent vision loss occurs. Early detection saves vision!

Please make time to have a complete eye and vision examination annually.

Contact our office with any significant vision changes or emergencies that you feel require immediate attention.

Please Rate the Information You Received

	☐ Very helpful - all questions are answered ☐ Somewhat helpful - I still have questions ☐ Not helpful – none of my questions were answered
Comments / Questions / Typos:	

Provider Contact Information

Family Eye Care & Pediatric Vision Center, PLLC
Melissa Holliman, OD
David Holliman, OD
Brandon Holliman, OD

1203 N. Eastman Rd
Kingsport, TN 37664
Phone: (423) 274-3321
Fax: (423) 247-3631
FamilyEyecareKingsport@gmail.com
Website: DrHolliman.com