

Dry Macular Degeneration

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Dry macular degeneration is a slowly progressive disease of the retina which causes loss of central vision. This is usually age related. The retina is like a camera film at the back of the eye which processes pictures and sends them to the brain. In dry macular degeneration, the centre of the retina called the macular area has undergoes wear and tear changes. This may result in central visual distortion or even blank patches in the centre of your vision. Your peripheral (outer) vision is likely to remain OK unless there are other problems as well.

There is no cure for dry macular degeneration but some aids like stronger glasses, magnifying glasses, telescopic lenses and illuminated magnifiers may help with vision and reading etc. These are sometimes called low visual aids.

Usually large print books or electronic devices (like e-readers or computers) may help in reading by enlarging the font.

There is some evidence that high dose vitamin supplements may help to retard or stabilise the progression of macular degeneration. Approximately 1 in 5 people in high risk groups of dry macular degeneration may benefit from high dose vitamins in a combination called the AREDS formula. Some people may benefit from these vitamins, some may not and a few people may come to harm because of high dose vitamin supplements. If you do decide to take these vitamin supplements, please contact your GP for advice. The NHS usually does not supply these vitamins.

Examples of these vitamins are I-caps, presser-vision, macu-shield, Ocu-vite and others.

Groups of people who should not take high dose vitamins are smokers, who may have a higher risk of lung cancer. There is a suggestion that diabetics and people with certain heart conditions may be at an increased risk of heart failure with high doses of vitamin E.

We recommend a balanced diet to everyone, especially people with dry macular degeneration.

Please contact your optician for further assessment.

Recommended patient groups

Macular disease society

Contacts

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