

# Info sheet:

## Aged-related macular degeneration (AMD)

### What is AMD?

AMD is a disease associated with ageing that affects the central vision. Central vision is needed to see detailed objects clearly and is important for everyday tasks such as reading and driving.

Some forms of AMD advance slowly so people may not notice their vision getting worse until the later stages of the disease. Other forms progress faster and can lead to sudden loss of vision.

Effective treatments exist for some types of AMD. Early detection may therefore prevent vision loss.



Normal vision



Example of how AMD may affect vision

### What are the symptoms?

AMD does not usually cause pain. It often has no symptoms in the early stages.

People with AMD may have some or all of the following symptoms:

- Distorted vision: straight lines may appear bent or wavy.
- Difficulty with reading or clearly seeing faces that does not improve with prescription glasses.
- Dark patches or empty spaces ('blindspots') in the centre of vision.

## Who is at risk?

- People aged over 40. The risk also increases sharply with age. It is estimated that around one in seven people aged over 50 have AMD. For each decade after 40, the risk trebles.
- People with a family history of AMD (parent or sibling).
- Smokers.

## What can be done?

- Have regular eye tests with an eye health professional (optometrist or ophthalmologist). These should include a check of the macula at the back of the eye.
- Visit an eye health professional without delay if vision changes.
- Stop smoking.
- Eat a healthy diet including fish, nuts, fresh fruit and leafy green vegetables.

Early diagnosis and treatment can slow AMD or stop it from getting worse. Don't wait for symptoms, have regular eye tests. **Save Your Sight – Get Tested**

## For more information

- Speak to an eye health professional or GP.
- Contact the Macular Disease Foundation Australia on 1800 111 709 or visit [www.mdfoundation.com.au](http://www.mdfoundation.com.au)
- Visit [www.visioninitiative.org.au](http://www.visioninitiative.org.au)

A Medicare rebate is available for most optometry services. You do not need a referral to see an optometrist. If required, your GP or optometrist can refer you to an ophthalmologist.

There are services and supports to help people adjust to vision loss, remain independent and continue to take part in their chosen activities. Speak to an eye health professional or your GP to find out more.



A partnership promoting eye health and vision care



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