


OBSERVATORY

THE OPTICIANS

INDEPENDENT • EXPERIENCED • PROFESSIONAL

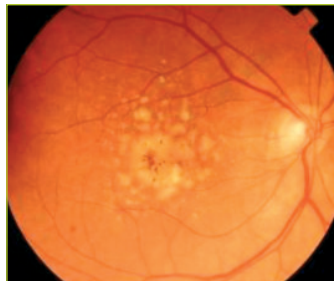
+ Share with a friend 

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

Age related macular degeneration (also known as AMD or ARMD) is the most common cause of visual impairment in the developed world. In the UK around 250,000 people are registered as visually impaired due to the condition.



'Wet' AMD



'Dry' AMD

The images above are taken using Retinal Imaging ([click here](#) for more information) which is very effective at helping to spot these signs early.

Left: 'Wet' AMD with blood leaking from abnormal blood vessels. Permanent loss of central vision can be caused by subretinal scarring.

Right: 'Dry' AMD showing patches of abnormal material deposited between the layers at the back of the eye causing slowly progressive atrophy and gradual impairment of central vision.

What is AMD?

AMD is an eye condition that affects a tiny part of the retina at the back of the eye called the macula.

AMD causes problems with your central vision, but does not lead to total loss of sight and is not painful. It affects the vision you use when you're looking directly at something, for example when you're reading or watching television. AMD may make this central vision distorted or blurry and, over a period of time can cause a blank patch in the centre of your vision.

There are 2 types of AMD – 'Wet' and 'Dry'

'Wet' AMD occurs when small, abnormal blood vessels begin to grow behind the retina toward the macula. They usually leak blood or fluid, damaging the macula and causing a rapid loss of central vision.

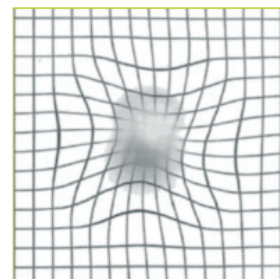
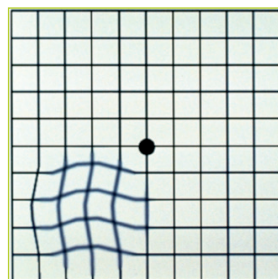
'Dry' AMD results from wear and tear to the cells of the macula rather than leaking vessels and causes a gradual deterioration of vision, usually over many years.

What causes AMD?

The exact causes are unknown, however risk factors include age, exposure to UV, smoking, poor diet and there is believed to be a hereditary link.

Is there a cure?

Currently there is no known cure, however some patients with recently diagnosed 'Wet' AMD may benefit from Lucentis injections (a drug that inhibits the growth of blood vessels). This treatment is currently available on the NHS.



Distorted vision found with AMD

Continued >>>

What can I do to protect my eyes?

Unfortunately you cannot change your age or family tree, but there are lifestyle changes you can adopt that will help protect your eyes:

- Eat a diet rich in fruit and green leafy vegetables, or take a supplement such as I-Caps (containing Lutein and Zeaxanthin)
- Ensure your spectacle lenses offer UV protection
- Stop smoking
- Visit your optician regularly for a comprehensive eye examination.

At Observatory we offer a fully comprehensive eye examination with retinal imaging which provides a digital image of the retina, blood vessels and optic nerve located at the back of the eye. This aids in early detection of diseases such as AMD and allows us to better manage your eyehealth with appropriate and timely treatment and referral to an ophthalmologist if required.

New technology called Optical Coherence Tomography ([click here for details](#)) enables changes in the cell layer to spotted even sooner than Retinal Imaging. The equipment used is very expensive and is normally seen only in eye hospitals, and also at our [Muswell Hill Practice](#).

Useful links:

www.armd.org.uk

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macular_degeneration#Age-related

<http://www.goodhope.org.uk/departments/eyedept/armd%20pathol.htm>

<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/Age-Related-Macular-Degeneration.htm>