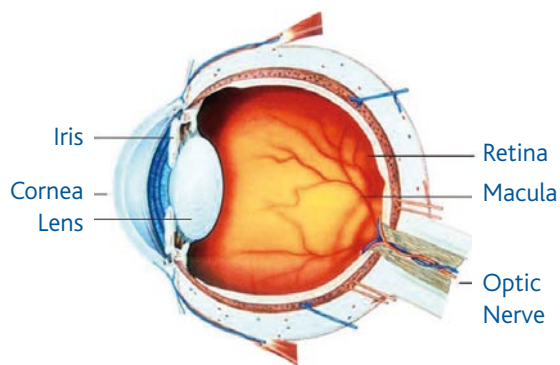


Age-related macular degeneration

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a degenerative disease that affects the central area of the retina called the macula, causing it to thin and in some cases bleed. The condition commonly affects both eyes at the same time, though not always to the same extent and can result in vision loss.

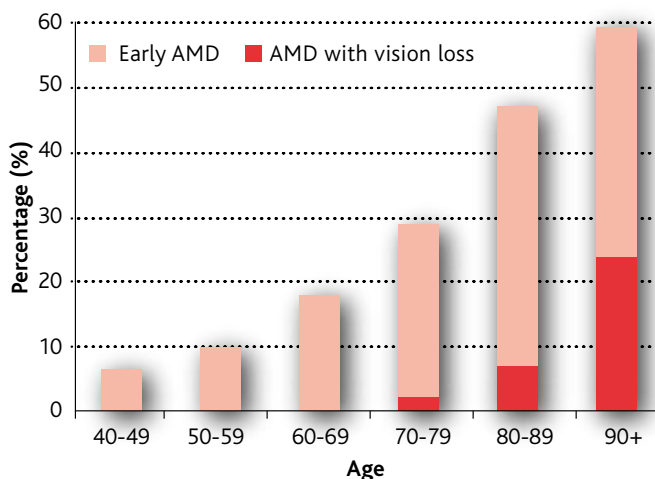
There are two forms of AMD:

- > 'Dry' AMD develops slowly and results in gradual vision impairment. It is the most common form of AMD.
- > 'Wet' AMD develops more rapidly and occurs when abnormal blood vessels develop beneath the retina and bleed.



How common is AMD?

Age-related macular degeneration is most prevalent after the age of 50 years. About 30% of the population are affected by AMD.



Two out of three people over 90 will develop AMD, and one in four in that age group experience significant loss of vision from it.

What are the symptoms?

- > Blurred or distorted vision
- > Slow recovery of visual function after exposure to bright light
- > Difficulty discerning colours
- > Reduced central vision

What are the causes?

The causes of age-related macular degeneration are currently not fully understood. Evidence suggests the condition has a genetic link. People with a family history of AMD have a 4-fold increased risk of developing AMD.

Other risk factors associated with AMD include ageing and smoking.

Can I prevent AMD?

A healthy diet with fresh fruit and leafy green vegetables, and not smoking may help reduce the risk of developing AMD.

- > A family history increases the risk of AMD four times
- > Smoking increases the risk three times

What treatment is available?

'Wet' AMD may be treated by sealing abnormal blood vessels, using laser treatment. Medication can also assist to slow the progression of 'wet' AMD.

Low vision aids and services offer support for people with age-related macular degeneration.

There is no effective treatment for 'dry' AMD at present.

AMD research

The Macular Research Unit at the Centre for Eye Research Australia is working on a wide range of projects to improve diagnosis and treatment for AMD and to progress towards a cure. Professor Robyn Guymer leads the unit and is a recognised world leader in research and clinical management of AMD. Information on work in progress is regularly updated at www.cera.org.au

To support our AMD research with a donation, please call (TOLL FREE) 1300 737 757.