

# Age-Related Macular Degeneration

**Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)** is the leading cause of severe vision loss in adults over age 50. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 1.8 million people have AMD and another 7.3 million are at substantial risk for vision loss from AMD. Caucasians are at higher risk for developing AMD than other races. Women also develop AMD at an earlier age than men. AMD is a loss of central vision that can occur in two forms: “dry” or atrophic and “wet” or exudative.

Most people with macular degeneration have the dry form, for which there is no known treatment. The less common wet form may respond to laser procedures, if diagnosed and treated early.

## Common symptoms of AMD are:

- gradual loss of ability to see objects clearly
- distorted vision
- gradual loss of color vision
- dark or empty area appearing in the center of vision

If you experience any of these, contact your doctor of optometry immediately for a comprehensive examination. Central vision that is lost to macular degeneration cannot be restored. However, low vision devices, such as telescopic and microscopic lenses, can be prescribed to maximize existing vision.

## Importance of Good Nutrition

Researchers have linked eye-friendly nutrients such as lutein/zeaxanthin, vitamin C, vitamin E, and zinc to reducing the risk of certain eye diseases, including macular degeneration. These nutrients are found in the following foods:

- **Lutein & Zeaxanthin** - found in green leafy vegetables, as well as other foods, such as eggs.
- **Vitamin C** - an antioxidant found in fruits and vegetables.
- **Vitamin E** - in its most biologically active form is a powerful antioxidant found in nuts, fortified cereals and sweet potatoes.
- **Zinc** - found in red meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, wheat germ, mixed nuts, black-eyed peas, tofu, and baked beans are essential to good nutrition. Daily intake of zinc through diet, nutritional supplements, or fortified foods and beverages is important for the maintenance of good eye health.