

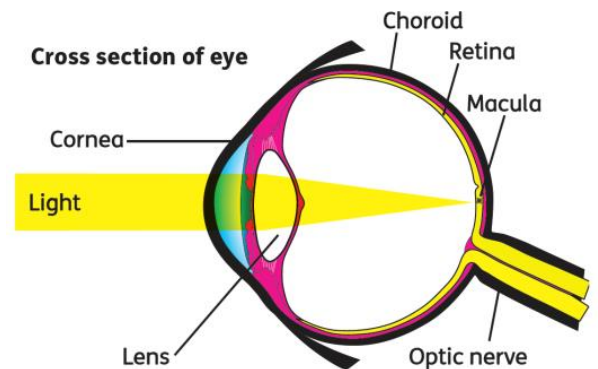
Macular Degeneration

Macular Degeneration (MD) is an eye health condition that typically affects individuals over the age of 60 and ranks among the leading causes of blindness in Australia today. We prioritize thorough investigations for any signs or symptoms of macular degeneration in patients of all ages. While the exact cause of MD remains unknown, certain factors increase the risk, including smoking, older age, female gender, and a family history of MD. Given the potential severity of this condition, early detection and proactive management are essential for preserving vision and maintaining ocular health.

What is the Macula?

The macula is the central portion of your retina responsible for processing fine detail such as faces and reading. Your central vision is a vital component of your overall vision.

Over time, the macula can degrade due to aging and exposure to light. When the macula becomes damaged, central vision loss can occur. Macular degeneration can sometimes develop without any noticeable symptoms, underscoring the importance of regular eye health check-ups, especially for individuals aged 50 and older. These check-ups help monitor for any changes in the macula and facilitate early detection and management of macular degeneration.

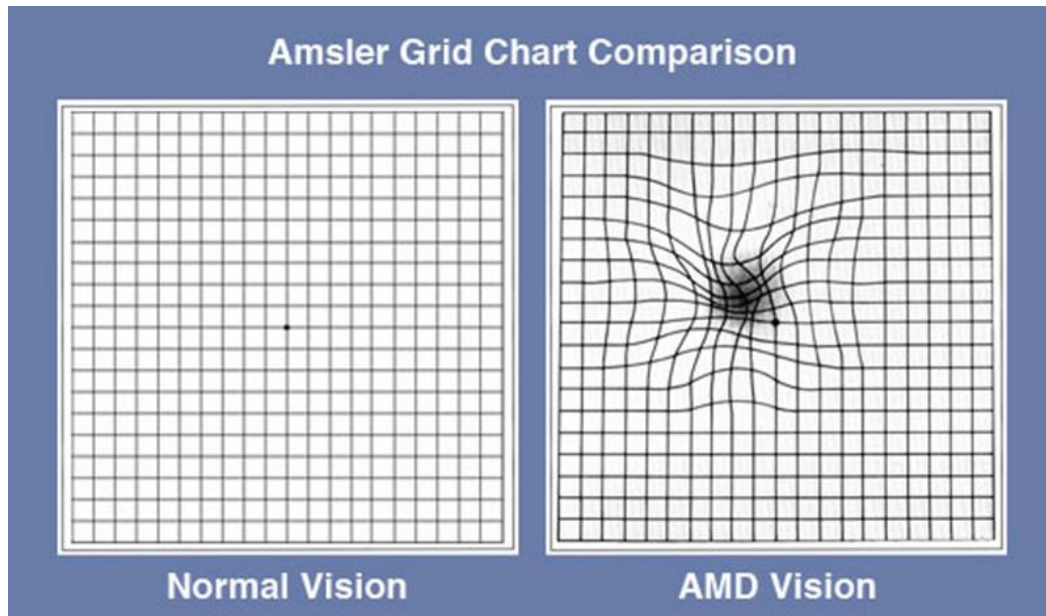


Common symptoms of Macular Degeneration:

- Central or detailed vision is blocked by dark patches or empty spaces.
- Straight lines appear wavy.
- Images become blurred, needing brighter light to read.
- Decreased night vision and colours become hard to distinguish.

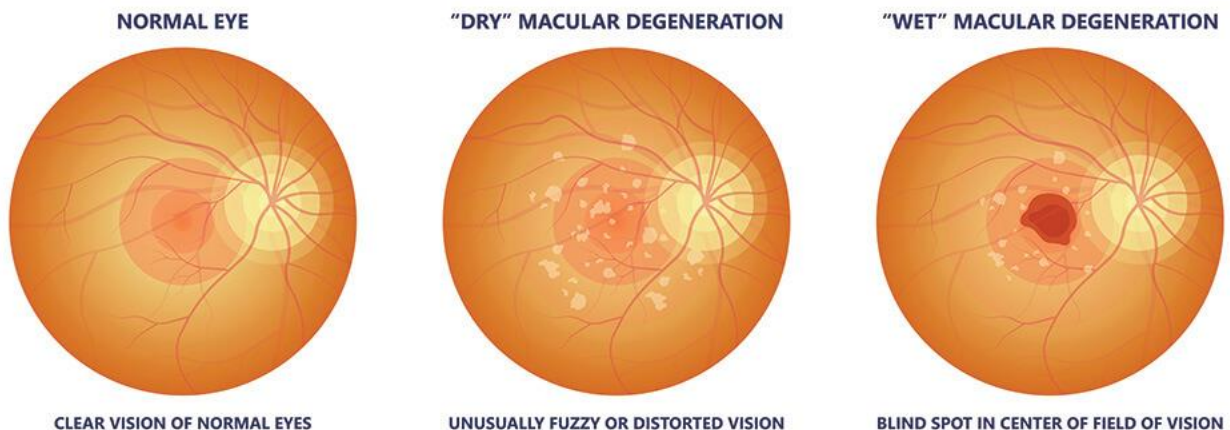
At Buck and Todd, we establish a dependable baseline of your macular health and diligently monitor for any changes during every visit. We achieve this using Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT), which allows us to capture detailed images of your macula, measuring its size, shape, and the quality of the retinal layers.

Additionally, you can take an active role in monitoring your macular health at home by using an Amsler Grid chart. This chart helps you test your central vision by detecting any distortions or changes. Keeping the chart on the fridge at eye level makes it convenient for regular self-monitoring.



Age-related macular degeneration (ARMD) manifests in two common types: Wet and Dry. Dry ARMD is more prevalent and typically less severe. It leads to reduced or fuzzy central vision due to the breakdown of the inner layers of the macula. Total blindness is rare as peripheral vision remains unaffected. Dry ARMD can affect one or both eyes, and when only one eye is impacted, visual changes may not be readily noticeable since the unaffected eye compensates.

The exact cause of dry macular degeneration remains uncertain, although research indicates genetic and environmental factors such as diet and smoking may play a role.



Wet ARMD can develop through various pathways. In some cases, irregular blood vessel growth from the choroid (the eye's outer white layer) can extend under and into the macula, a condition known as choroidal neovascularization. These blood vessels may leak fluid or blood into the macula, leading to vision loss. Symptoms of wet ARMD can arise suddenly, with vision deteriorating within days due to this leakage.

Some preventative measures include:

- Quit smoking.
- Wear sunglasses when outside, driving etc.
- Annual eye health checks.
- Supplementing your diet with Antioxidants and Zinc.
- Diet changes.

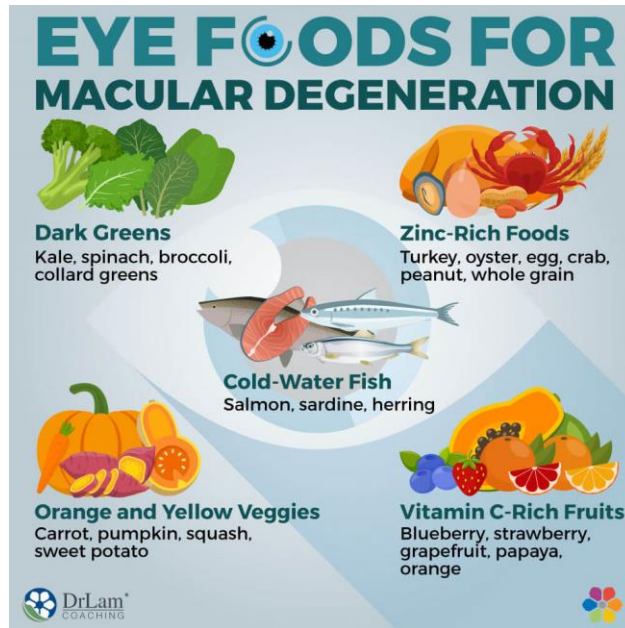


Making dietary changes can significantly benefit your eye health. It's important to aim for the recommended intake of 5 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit per day. When cooking, opt for pure virgin oil instead of vegetable oils, as it's considered the healthiest cooking oil with the lowest risk. Avoiding hydrogenated fats like margarine is also advisable.

Incorporating fish and fish oils into your diet is highly beneficial for eye health. Adding fish to your meals at least once a week can nearly halve your risk of developing macular degeneration (MD). Additionally, taking fish oil capsules is highly recommended to ensure an adequate intake of omega-3 fatty acids, which support eye health.

Sources of Antioxidants.

- Vitamin C: Citrus fruits, broccoli, potatoes, tomato, and capsicum.
- Vitamin E: Nuts (peanuts, hazelnuts, almonds), Wheat germ, Green leafy vegetables, corn, and sunflower seeds.
- Zinc: Meat, seafood, oysters, seeds, nuts, and whole grains.
- Selenium: Brazil Nuts, seafood, meat, grains, and seeds .
- Lutein & Zeaxanthin: Corn, Capsicum, Spinach and Egg Yolks.
- Beta-carotene: Carrots, Apricots, and green leafy vegetables.
- Bioflavonoids: blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, fruits, vegetables, citrus pith, tea, broccoli, and tomato.



Simple preventive measures such as dietary adjustments, wearing sunglasses, taking supplements, and scheduling annual eye check-ups can effectively manage and monitor MD, preserving your central vision and macular health. If you observe any changes in your vision, particularly wavy or distorted vision when using the Amsler chart, don't hesitate to contact our friendly team at Buck and Todd Optometrists to schedule an eye test. We are dedicated to macular health monitoring and ensuring thorough investigation of your eye health.