

Guide to essential care for dry age-related macular degeneration (dry AMD)

Keep this checklist so that you know what care you should have at each stage of your AMD.

1. If you or your GP suspect you have any form of AMD you should have an urgent appointment with an optometrist at your local optician's practice.
2. If your optometrist diagnoses dry AMD you will not need to be referred to a retinal specialist at a hospital to confirm the diagnosis.
3. If your vision can no longer be improved with spectacles alone you should be referred to a low vision service. In some areas you will need to be referred to the low vision service by your ophthalmologist and so will need a hospital appointment. This should happen before you lose a lot of vision as it is much easier to learn how to make the most of your sight while it is still reasonably good.
4. You should be offered certification of visual impairment as soon as you become eligible. You will need to be referred to hospital to be registered as sight impaired or severely sight impaired because only a consultant ophthalmologist can issue the Certificate of Visual Impairment which is needed for registration.
5. If you have low vision you should be referred to your local social care team for a low vision assessment to find out what you need to help support you in your home and get about safely.
6. If you smoke you should be advised to stop and signposted to services which can help you. Smoking makes AMD worse.
7. Your eye care professional should advise you on how to protect your eyes from uncomfortable glare, for example by the use of anti-glare glasses or by adjusting the lighting in your home.

8. Your eye care professional should advise you on good diet and the possible benefits of AREDS2 nutritional supplements.
9. You should have regular eye tests at your optometrist. If you are over 60 or registered as sight impaired this test is free.
10. If you need help with everyday tasks your because of sight loss, your eye care professional should consider referring you for eccentric viewing training to help you make the best use of your remaining sight.
11. You should be provided with information in accessible formats to take away at your first appointment, and then when you ask for it covering:
 - Information about AMD and how you will be treated, including likely timescales
 - Key contact details – for example, who to contact if appointments need to be altered
 - Advice on how to self-monitor your AMD
 - Advice about what to do and where to go if vision deteriorates, particularly how to get an urgent appointment
 - Available support (including transport and parking permits)
 - Links to local and national support groups.
12. Your eye care professional should encourage and support you if you are concerned about self-monitoring. If you are not able to self-manage your AMD, monitoring techniques should be discussed with your family members or carers.
13. Your eye care professional should allow enough time to discuss your concerns and questions about your diagnosis, treatment and prospects for your vision.
14. Your eye care professional should promote peer support.

15. Your eye care professional should provide you and your family members or carers (as appropriate), with information that is:

- Available on an ongoing basis
- Relevant to the stage of your condition
- Tailored to your needs
- Delivered in a caring and sensitive fashion.

16. Your eye care professional should provide opportunities to discuss:

- What AMD is; how common it is; tests; types of, and causes of, AMD
- Stopping smoking and other lifestyle advice
- How AMD may progress and possible complications
- The possibility of developing visual hallucinations associated with your loss of vision (Charles Bonnet syndrome)
- Vision standards for driving
- Who to contact for practical and emotional support
- The benefits of being registered as sight impaired or severely sight impaired
- Other sources of information available

You can join the Macular Society for regular updates on research into macular disease, new therapies and information on living well with AMD.

For more information about all aspects of AMD contact our Helpline 0300 3030 111

These guidelines are drawn from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Age-related macular degeneration: diagnosis and management clinical guideline, January 2018

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng82/resources/agerelated-macular-degeneration-large-print-version-pdf-4723369165>