

We're here to help

Macular Degeneration New Zealand (MDNZ) is dedicated to raising awareness of MD and enhancing the quality of life for people with the condition. We also promote research into the causes, prevention and treatment of MD.

Diagnosis

Early diagnosis is crucial. Detecting changes at an early stage allows you to take steps to slow the progression of MD.

Treatment

A number of treatments are available to help slow the progress of Dry MD. In the case of Wet MD, there are therapies to target the problems caused by abnormal growth of blood vessels into the retina. Early detection is vital.

Support

People with vision loss can continue to lead independent lives with the support of vision aids and low vision services. For more detailed information or to find out more about living with MD, please contact MDNZ.

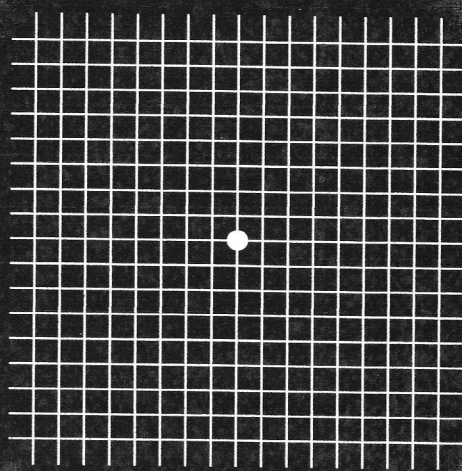


0800 MACULA (622 852)

www.mdnz.org.nz

PO Box 137070, Parnell, Auckland 1151

1 in 7 people over 50 will get Macular Degeneration



**This simple test could
Save Your Sight**



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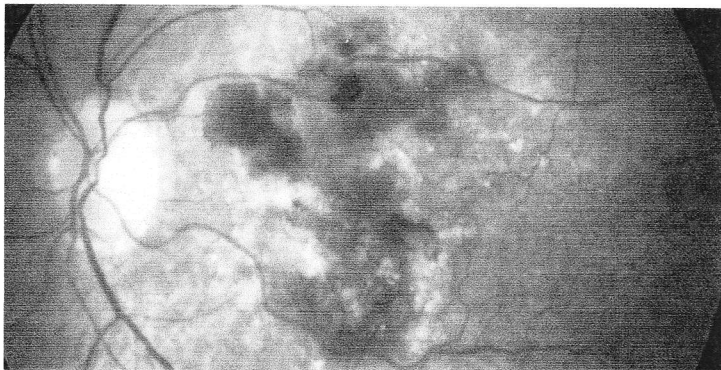
What is Macular Degeneration?

Macular Degeneration (MD) is one of the most common causes of vision impairment in New Zealand. It's particularly common in people over the age of 50, with one in seven people showing some signs. Also, people with a family history of MD have a 50 percent chance of developing the disease.

If left untreated, it can cause gradual loss of sight in the centre of your visual field. Reading, watching TV, driving, working on a computer and performing just about every common task become very difficult, or even impossible.

Macular Degeneration can only be diagnosed by examining the retina. This must be undertaken by an eye care professional.

If you notice any changes in your vision or have any concerns about your eye health, make sure you see your doctor or eye specialist without delay.



Wet Macular Degeneration

How can you tell if you have MD?

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- **Distortion**, where straight lines appear wavy or bent.
- **Difficulty in reading** or other activities that require fine vision.
- **Distinguishing faces** becomes a problem.
- **Dark patches or empty spaces** appear in the centre of your vision.

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Normal vision

How the world might appear if you had MD



Blurred and distorted vision



Central vision loss



Complete central vision loss

What is it caused by?

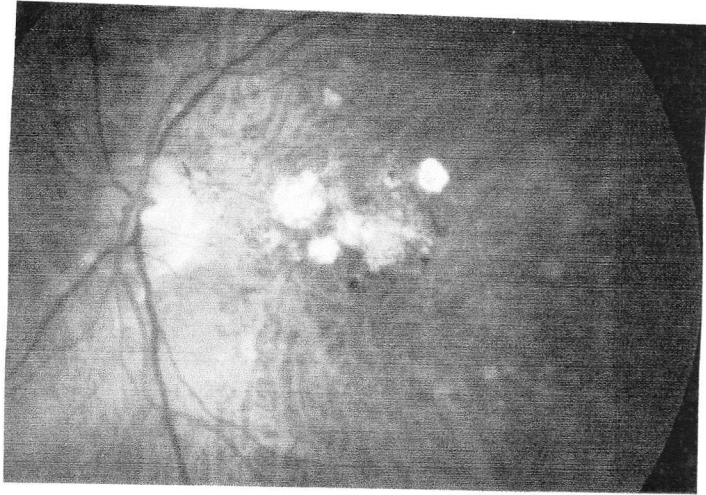
The macula is the name given to the very centre of the retina at the back of your eye. This is responsible for detailed central vision and most colour vision. A healthy macula lets you read, recognise faces, drive a car, see colours clearly and handle any activity that requires fine vision. MD is a degenerative disease that affects a special layer of cells in the macula. Waste products from the retina start to build up and affect the ability of the eye to work properly.

There are two types of MD – known as Dry MD and Wet MD. The Dry form results in a gradual loss of central vision. The Wet form is characterised by a sudden loss of vision and is caused by abnormal blood vessels growing into the retina. Immediate medical treatment is essential if symptoms occur.

What are the risk factors?

MD is caused by genetic and environmental factors. People over the age of 50 are particularly at risk.

If you smoke or have a family history of MD, your risk of developing the disease is much greater. Other risk factors include diet and lifestyle factors. You can't change your genes or your age – but you take some smart steps to reduce your risk of developing MD.

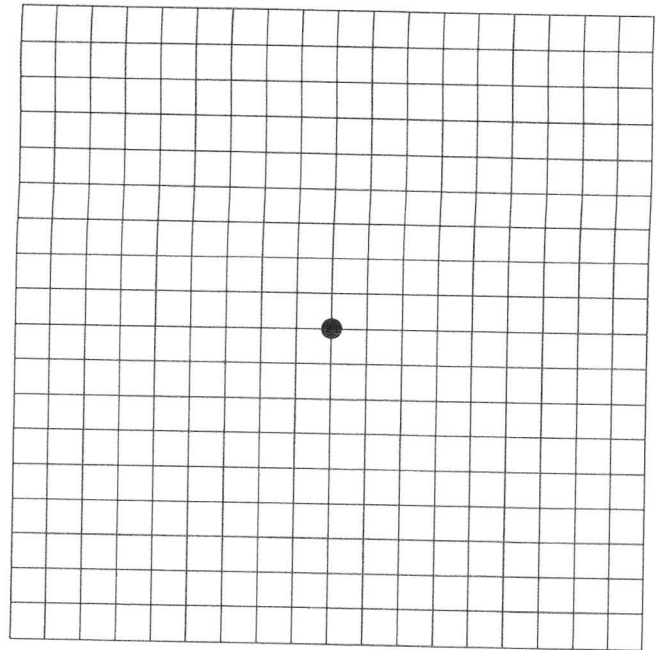


Dry Macular Degeneration

Six tips to boost your eye health

- ① Have your eyes tested and make sure you ask for the macula to be checked.
- ② Don't smoke. Smokers are more than three times more likely to develop MD and they may also get the disease 10 years earlier than non-smokers.
- ③ Keep a healthy lifestyle, control your weight and exercise regularly.
- ④ Limit your intake of fats, eat fish two to three times a week, eat dark green leafy vegetables and fresh fruits daily, plus a handful of nuts a week.
- ⑤ If your diet is low in leafy green vegetables or you have a family history of MD, talk to your doctor about taking a lutein supplement.
- ⑥ Protect your eyes from strong sunlight, especially when young.

Do you have Macular Degeneration?



Take this simple test

- ① Do not remove glasses or contact lens you normally use for reading.
- ② Hold this grid at eye level, about 35cm (14 inches) from your face.
- ③ Cover one eye with your hand and focus on the centre dot with your uncovered eye.
- ④ Repeat with the other eye.
- ⑤ If you see wavy, broken or distorted lines, or blurred or missing areas of vision, you may be displaying the symptoms of Macular Degeneration. Contact your doctor or optometrist immediately.