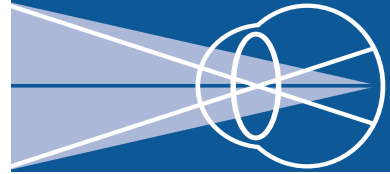




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Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration

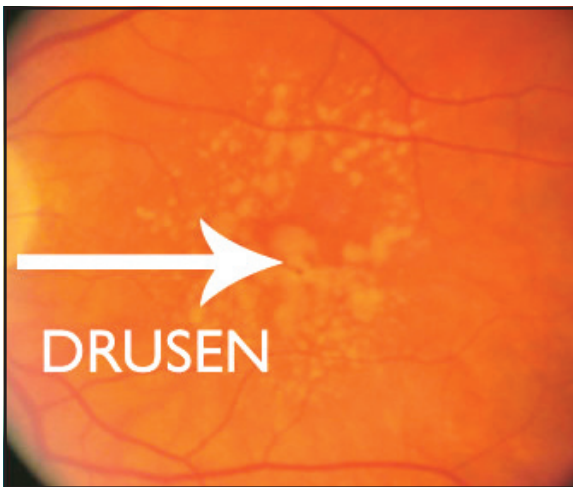


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What is Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration? The dry type of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) occurs in individuals greater than 50 years of age. It is characterized by the slow accumulation of waste material underneath the macula. These small yellow deposits, called drusen eventually merge together and damage the sensitive tissues of the retina. It is important to know that AMD patients will never become completely blind.

Below: Note the multiple yellow deposits and the center macula



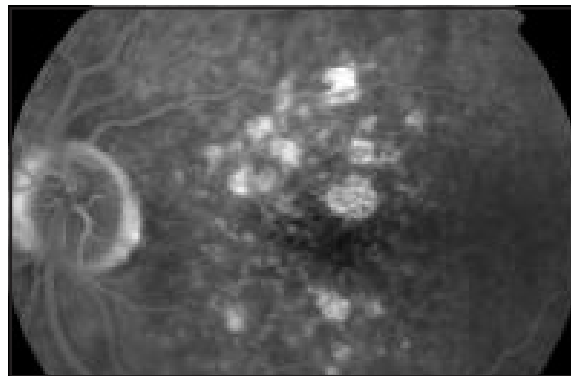
What causes Dry AMD? Although the exact cause of macular degeneration is unknown, there is a genetic tendency that emerges as a part of aging. Although anyone can develop AMD, it is found more commonly in people with light pigmentation.



Above: Typical view of the world in a patient with macular degeneration

How is AMD diagnosed? Several macular diseases can be confused with ARMD. An examination by an experienced physician can determine your condition.

What testing might be done? Computerized photographic tests such as a fluorescein angiogram and OCT help in evaluating the extent of damage. Home self-monitoring with an Amsler grid is often recommended (see reverse).



Above: Angiogram of dry AMD

What can make AMD worse? Studies have shown that a poor diet, smoking and uncontrolled high blood pressure can contribute to poorer vision. Smoking alone raises the rate of vision loss about 2 times!

There is no treatment for Dry AMD.

What about eye vitamins? The Age Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) found a slight reduction in the rate of vision loss in some patients taking a high potency combination of vitamins and minerals. The doses are quite high and your doctor should determine whether they are right for you. Smokers must avoid the very high concentrations of beta carotene.

AREDS (nonsmokers)

- Vitamin A (beta-carotene) . 28,000 IU
- Vitamin C 450 mg
- Vitamin E 400 mg
- Zinc 70 mg
- Copper 1.6 mg

What about other supplements? Research into nutrients such as Lutein and Zeaxanthin is actively underway, but there have been no definitive conclusions. Bilberry and certain herbs are probably not helpful in this condition.