

Retinal Consultants

Wet Age Related Macular Degeneration

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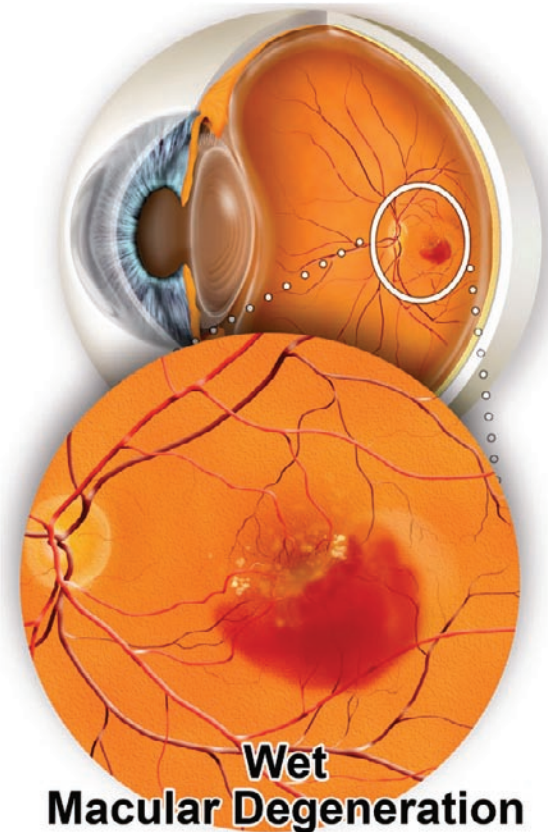
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eyes are
irreplaceable.
And there
is no
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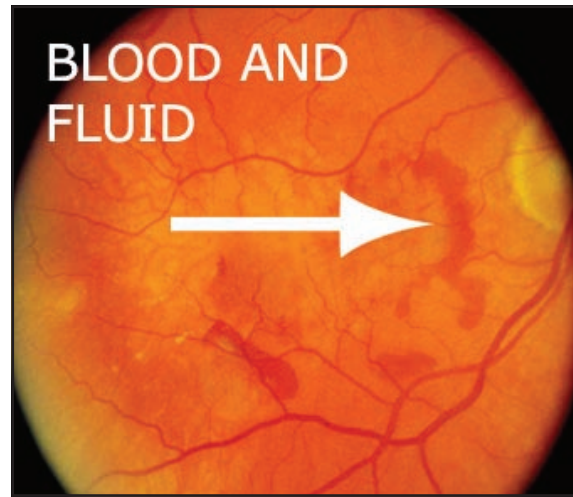
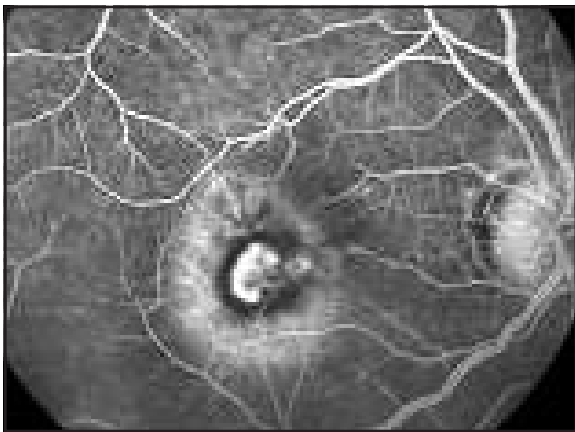
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What is Wet Age-Related Macular Degeneration? The wet form of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is characterized by the development of abnormal blood vessels underneath the macula. (see illustration on front cover) They are termed choroidal neovascular (CNV) membranes and can produce tissue swelling, hemorrhage and scarring. The damage to the macula can lead to legal blindness. Many of today's modern treatments work to control CNV.

What testing might be done? Computerized photographic tests such as a fluorescein angiogram and OCT help in evaluating the extent of damage.

Below: A safe fluorescein dye injected into a vein of the arm produces this angiogram. Note the leaking CNV in the center macula



Above: Color photo of wet AMD

What causes wet AMD? Most research points to the role of a blood vessel forming molecule known as Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF).

What about laser treatment? High intensity laser was the only option in the past and often left a blind spot in the treatment zone. More recently, however, a lower intensity laser has been devised which is used in conjunction with a specially formulated photoactive dye called Photodynamic Therapy (PDT). This treatment option can only help to reduce the amount of vision loss, not restore it. Today, PDT is frequently used in combination with the newer, injectable medications.

What about the injections? Since VEGF is an important component in the development of CNV, the recent development of anti-VEGF medications have become an exciting advance in the treatment of wet AMD. Bevacizumab and ranibizumab are two very useful drugs. Your physician will help you decide what's right for you.

Does the injection hurt? The procedure is quick and practically pain free. A sterile lid speculum helps keep the eye open and an anesthetic kills any germs.

Will it help my vision? Most patients will hold on to the vision they have and many regain lost vision after these treatments.



Medication reaches the macula through an injection.