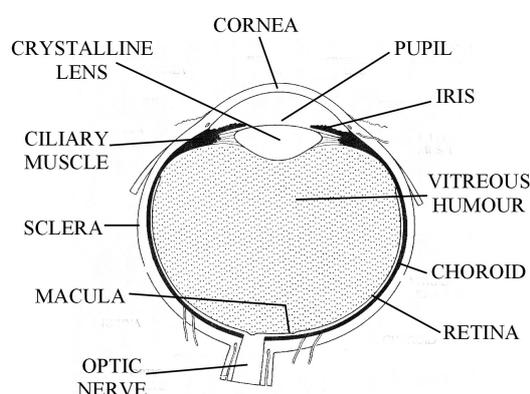


macular degeneration



What is the Macula?

The retina at the back of the eye contains millions of light-sensitive cells. In the centre of the retina is an area where the cells are closely packed together, enabling us to see fine detail. This is the macula.

What is Age-Related Maculopathy (Macular Degeneration)?

With age, the blood doesn't flow so well, causing a build-up of waste material around the light-sensitive cells at the macula. This can distort the vision. In worse cases new blood vessels can grow from underneath the retina. The new blood vessels can leak, which severely affects the central vision.

How Does It Affect the Vision?

At first the vision may seem a little hazy, or letters in words may seem to come and go. Later, straight lines may look curved or broken up, and in severe cases the central vision is totally blurred.

How is it Diagnosed?

The changes in the macula can usually be seen during an eye examination when the optometrist looks inside the eyes. Any distortion of the vision can be checked using a special grid of lines and squares, called an Amsler Chart.

How is Macular Degeneration Treated?

When a specialist decides to treat the degeneration, it is usually done with a laser. There are different types of laser treatment, and some types of Macular Degeneration can be treated better than others.

Will the Eye Go Blind?

Macular degeneration only affects the central area of the retina; the rest of the retina is not affected so the vision will not go completely.

Can Anything Else be Done to Help?

Hand-held magnifiers can be very helpful, and some can be put into spectacles.

Help for these can be obtained from the Macular Disease Society or the Hull and East Riding Institute for the Blind.

Can Macular Degeneration be Prevented?

Recent research has shown that a diet high in antioxidants (Vitamins A, C and E), lutein, zeaxanthin, zinc and selenium can be beneficial. These can come from vegetables such as kale, spinach, broccoli, peas and Brussels sprouts, or from vitamin supplements (Visionace, I-Caps, Preservision).

MEDICAL ADVICE SHOULD ALWAYS BE OBTAINED BEFORE TAKING ANY SUPPLEMENTS.

For further information, contact:

The Macular Disease Society
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