

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

What is age-related macular degeneration?

This is a common condition affecting central vision. It causes changes to the macula, which is a small area in the retina (a nerve layer at the back of the eye that senses light).

AMD occurs increasingly with older age. People with this have difficulty seeing fine detail, such as when reading or looking at photos. The severity and rate of vision loss can vary. It can affect anyone and can sometimes come on quite suddenly.

Main forms of macular degeneration:

- **Dry.** The macula slowly becomes weaker and causes a gradual change in the central vision. Treatment involves taking vitamin supplements at present.
- **Wet.** Vision is lost due to the development of abnormal blood vessels under the macula, which may bleed and leak fluid. The rate of loss of vision may be quite rapid. Treatment is available for this.

Treatments

You will be assessed to see which treatment is best for you. These can include injections and laser treatment. You will need regular follow up appointments over a period of two years or more.

Please be aware that this condition is very aggressive and in some cases, despite the best treatment, patients' vision fails to improve.

If you ever develop sudden deterioration in your vision (whilst under our macula service care or even if we have discharged you) please contact us via the switchboard on telephone 01623 622515 and ask for the on-call eye team. If you have queries about your eye appointments please ring switchboard and ask for the macula patient pathway coordinator.

Can macular degeneration be prevented, or can I prevent it getting worse?

There are some other things that may help:

1. Stop smoking.
2. A normal blood pressure (your GP can check this).
3. Vitamin supplements from any pharmacy. The preferred ones to use are Viteyes 2 NEW AREDS Formula - betacarotene free, and Preservision AREDS2 formula.
4. A diet rich in vitamins C, E and zinc, and the naturally occurring macular pigments lutein and zeaxanthin may help. These are found in green leafy vegetables such as spinach and kale, and yellow coloured foods such as sweetcorn and yellow peppers.

What other help can be provided?

1. **Low Vision Aid Clinic (LVA).** This is run by specialists in helping you use your vision in the best ways, with use of magnifiers and artificial lighting. We run this clinic at King's Mill Hospital. Ask your eye doctor about this.
2. **Sight impairment registration.** This applies to some people with significant permanent vision damage and can generate support from your GP and social services. An eye clinic liaison officer (ECLO) is also able to support your visual impairment needs. Ask your eye doctor if you are eligible.
3. **Amsler Grid.** A quick test that helps you to monitor changes in your central vision. You can report any sudden changes to your eye doctor. Copies of this are available in clinic.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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