
Living With Age-Related Macular Degeneration

A Personal Perspective on Diagnosis, Treatment, and Adaptation



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Understanding AMD

AMD affects the **macula** — the part of the retina responsible for sharp central vision used for reading, recognizing faces, and detail work. Peripheral vision may remain, but the center becomes unreliable.

GRADUAL ONSET



Dry AMD

- More common form — accounts for the majority of AMD cases
- Progresses more slowly over months and years
- Requires ongoing monitoring with regular eye exams
- May convert to wet AMD over time

MORE URGENT



Wet AMD

- Less common but significantly more aggressive
- Abnormal blood vessels grow under or near the retina
- Vessels leak fluid or blood into the macula
- Can damage central vision rapidly if untreated



The macula is only ~5mm across, yet it governs central vision clarity.

♥ Treatment & Ongoing Management

The treatment cycle for wet age-related macular degeneration

1



Diagnosis & Referral

Optometrist identifies signs of AMD during routine exam. Patient is referred to a **retina specialist** for advanced evaluation and treatment planning.



2



Anti-VEGF Injections

Medication injected into the eye to reduce abnormal blood vessel leakage. The eye is **numbed beforehand** — the procedure is quick and typically well-tolerated.



3



Monitoring Cycle

Regular appointments with **vision tests and retinal scans (OCT)**, comparison to previous results, and decisions on treatment intervals.



4



Ongoing Adaptation

Treatment is not a cure — it **slows progression** and preserves remaining vision. This is a **lifelong management** commitment.

” *The injections are not a cure. They are a treatment strategy intended to slow progression, reduce leakage, and preserve vision.*

Impact on Quality of Life

AMD is not just an eye-chart problem. It is a quality-of-life problem affecting independence, work, relationships, and emotional well-being.



Reading & Work

Text distortion, difficulty with documents and fine print, constant font enlargement needed for everyday tasks.



Technology Use

Requires larger fonts, high contrast, zoom tools, dictation, and brighter screens to stay productive.



Driving & Independence

Central vision loss affects driving ability and confidence in navigating daily tasks independently.



Recognizing Faces

Can see a person is present but struggle with facial detail, expression, and recognition at a distance.



Emotional Toll

Grief over lost visual ease, uncertainty about the future, and shifts in identity and confidence.



Uncertainty

Will it stabilize? Will it worsen? No guarantees — constant vigilance and adaptation required.



Key Takeaways & Recommendations

1

Act on Symptoms Immediately

Distortion, blank spots, sudden blur, or changes in central vision should never be ignored — early treatment preserves more vision.

2

Treatment Works but Requires Commitment

Anti-VEGF injections slow progression; consistent appointments and monitoring are critical to maintaining results.

3

Leverage Assistive Technology

Larger screens, zoom tools, dictation, high-contrast settings, and better lighting significantly reduce daily strain.

4

Genetics Can Override Lifestyle

AMD can be inherited regardless of diet, exercise, or healthy living. Family history matters — screening is essential.

5

Perspective Is Everything

A diagnosis changes how you operate, but it does not define who you are. Adaptation and support preserve independence and purpose.



Age-related macular degeneration has changed my life. It has not ended it. There is still work to do, people to love, stories to tell, and light to follow. —

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