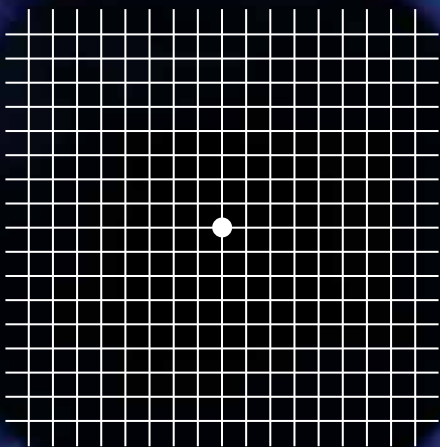


1 in 7 people
over 50 will get
**Macular
Degeneration**



This simple test could
Save Your Sight



MACULAR
DEGENERATION
NEW ZEALAND

0800 MACULA (622 852)
www.mdnz.org.nz

What is Macular Degeneration?

Macular Degeneration (MD) is the most common cause of vision impairment in New Zealand. One in 7 people over the age of 50 are affected. People with a family history of MD have a 50% chance of developing the disease.

If left untreated, MD can cause gradual loss of sight in the centre of your vision. Reading, watching TV, driving, working on a computer and performing almost every common task becomes very difficult, or even impossible.

MD can only be diagnosed by examining the retina. This must be undertaken by an eye care professional.

If you notice any changes in your vision or have any concerns about your eye health, make sure you see your optometrist, doctor or eye specialist without delay.

What are the risk factors?

MD is caused by genetic and environmental factors. People over the age of 50 are particularly at risk.

If you smoke or have a family history of MD, your risk of developing the disease is much greater. Other risk factors include diet and lifestyle factors. You can't change your genes or your age but you take some smart steps to reduce your risk of developing MD.



Normal vision

How the world might appear if you had MD



Blurred and distorted vision



Central vision loss

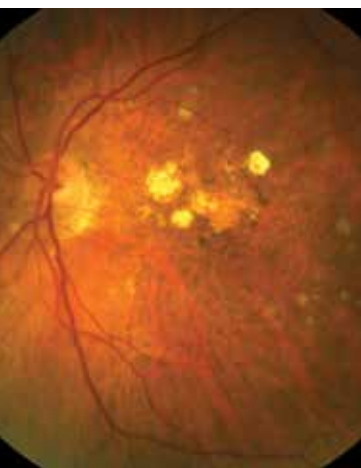


Complete central vision loss

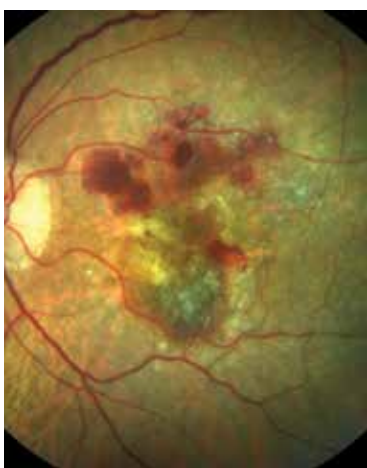
What is MD caused by?

The macula is the name given to the very centre of the retina at the back of your eye. It is responsible for detailed central vision and most colour vision. A healthy macula lets you read, recognise faces, drive a car, see colours clearly and handle any activity that requires fine vision. MD is a degenerative disease that affects a special layer of cells in the macula. Waste products from the retina build up and affect the ability of the eye to work properly.

There are two types of MD, Dry and Wet. Dry MD causes a gradual loss of central vision. Wet MD is characterised by a sudden loss of vision and is caused by abnormal blood vessels growing under the retina. Immediate medical treatment is essential if symptoms occur.



Dry MD



Wet MD

How can you tell if you have MD?

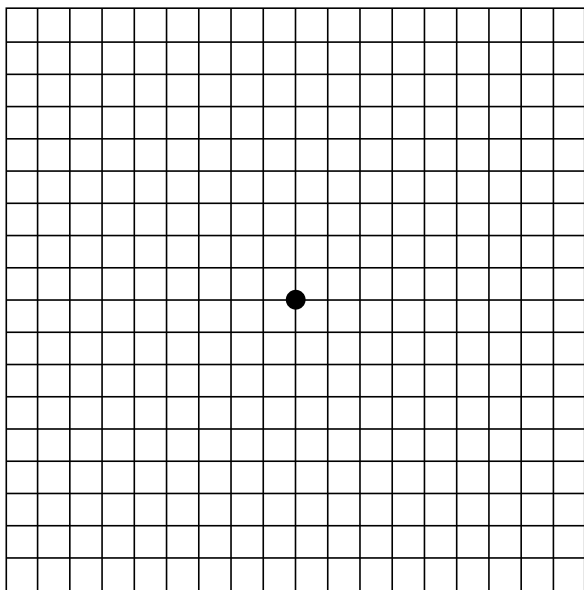
Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- **Distortion**, where straight lines appear wavy or bent.
- **Difficulty reading** or with other activities that require fine vision.
- **Distinguishing faces** becomes a problem.
- **Dark patches or empty spaces** appear in the centre of your vision.

Six tips to boost your eye health

- 1 Have your eyes tested and make sure you ask for the macula to be checked.
- 2 Don't smoke. Smokers are more than three times more likely to develop MD and may also get the disease 10 years earlier than non-smokers.
- 3 Maintain a healthy lifestyle, control your weight and exercise regularly.
- 4 Limit your intake of fats, eat fish two to three times a week, eat dark green leafy vegetables and fresh fruits daily, plus a handful of nuts a week.
- 5 If your diet is low in leafy green vegetables or you have a family history of MD, talk to your doctor about taking a lutein supplement.
- 6 Protect your eyes from strong sunlight, especially when young.

Do you have Macular Degeneration?



Take this simple test

- 1 Do not remove glasses or contact lens you normally use for reading.
- 2 Hold the grid at eye level, about 35cm from your face.
- 3 Cover one eye with your hand and focus on the centre dot with your uncovered eye.
- 4 Repeat with the other eye.
- 5 If you see wavy, broken or distorted lines, or blurred or missing areas of vision, you may have Macular Degeneration. Contact your doctor or optometrist immediately.

We're here to help

Macular Degeneration New Zealand (MDNZ) is dedicated to raising awareness of MD and enhancing the quality of life for people with the condition.

Diagnosis

Early diagnosis is crucial to prevent vision loss.

Treatment

A number of treatments are available to help slow the progression of Dry MD. In the case of Wet MD, there are therapies to target the problems caused by the abnormal growth of blood vessels under the retina.

Support

People with vision loss can lead independent lives with the support of vision aids and low vision services. For more detailed information, or to find out more about living with MD, please contact MDNZ.



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www.mdnz.org.nz

PO Box 137070, Parnell, Auckland 1151

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For online donations visit www.mdnz.org.nz

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For assistance phone **0800 MACULA (0800 622 852)**

Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.