



MACULAR
DEGENERATION
NEW ZEALAND

Viewpoint

The MDNZ Newsletter

ISSUE 23 – March 2024

0800 MACULA (0800 622 852) | info@mdnz.org.nz

www.mdnz.org.nz

“A small group of people can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead



I take inspiration from this quote and how it relates it to our work at MDNZ. MDNZ has, for many years, advocated for free eye checks for

people over the age of 65 years. We aim for 80% of people over 50 years to be aware of macular degeneration. These are big goals that will take time to realise, and I take comfort in Margaret Mead’s words. To succeed we need to build solid foundations to stand on.

In 2024, MDNZ will continue to build on these foundations. MDNZ will increase our outreach to the public and community groups through education at seminars and awareness at expos. We plan to engage health professionals at conferences and offer them learning opportunities on macular degeneration.

We are delighted to reinvigorate MDNZ’s Professional Friends Programme. The Programme gives ophthalmologists and optometrists an opportunity to show their support for MDNZ’s work. You can see all

our Professional Friends listed on page 5.

We can’t achieve our goals alone; we collaborate with like-minded individuals and organisations to get there. In this issue, find out more about our work with Eye Health Aotearoa and Te Whatu Ora. Thank you also to Sight Support Trust for sharing some tips and tricks, and to Doreen for your volunteering work.

Finally, I would like to offer a massive thank you to the wonderful donors who contributed to our Christmas and Holiday appeal, your generosity means we can deliver more seminars and provide more information packs in 2024. We couldn’t have done it without you.

Sarah Berman
General Manager

We are most grateful to the Aotearoa Gaming Trust for funding the printing and distribution of this newsletter.



AOTEAROA
GAMING
TRUST

What is Geographic Atrophy?

Geographic atrophy (GA) is the scientific term for late stage dry age-related macular degeneration (MD). It is called geographic atrophy, as the damage to the macula tends to start as patches of damage (or atrophy) that look like islands on a map when a doctor looks at the back of the eye.

Age-related MD is a progressive disease which goes through different stages. Not everyone will reach late-stage age-related MD, as the disease develops at different rates for different people.

Age-related MD starts off as early AMD, when an optometrist may notice small fatty deposits called drusen when looking at the back of the eye. As age-related MD develops to the intermediate stage, often these drusen get bigger or more abundant, and small patches of the macula may change colour. With early AMD and intermediate AMD, sight is not usually

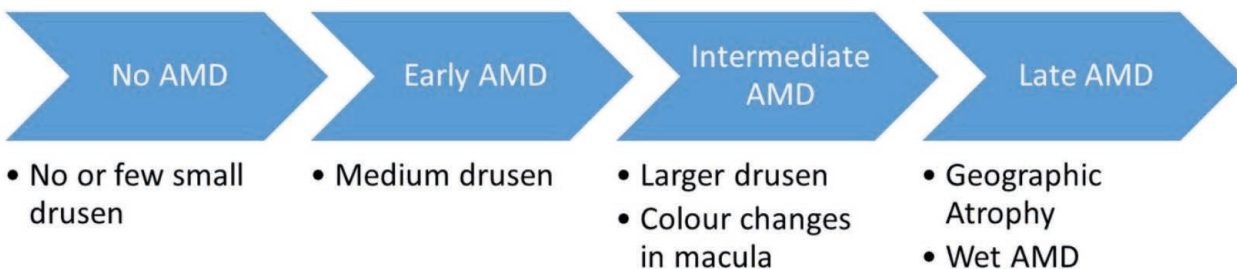
affected. However, with intermediate AMD you may start to notice issues such as having difficulty adjusting to changing light conditions. Late-stage AMD manifests in two ways, either wet age-related MD (also called choroidal neovascularisation) or geographic atrophy (often referred to as dry age-related MD). Wet and dry age-related MD can occur together.

In geographic atrophy cells in the macula become damaged and die which leads to sight loss.

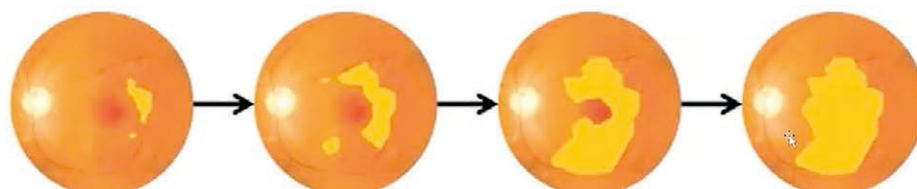
Treatments for dry macular degeneration are being developed and have featured in the two most recent issues of Viewpoint – issues 21 and 22. It is encouraging to note research and studies continue to be pursued in the search for effective and affordable treatments.



Thank you to the Macular Society, UK for this content.



The yellow areas in this illustration show the progression of geographic atrophy.



Handy hints for living with Low Vision

Hello fellow VIPs (Vision Impaired People). We often get asked “How do you keep safe in the kitchen and still turn out edible food?!”

We have compiled some tips and hints we have found invaluable. Of course, like most things, it will depend on your level of vision as to what suits you.

1 The first and most important thing to consider is to create CONTRAST.

In other words, have a few different coloured chopping boards, knives, potato peelers, and any other item you use regularly. It's easier to see a white potato if it is against a red chopping board and you are using a brightly coloured peeler and/or knife.

2 The next hint will help you manage boiling water. If, for example you want to drain a pot of potatoes, we suggest putting a colander in the sink and draining them into that. The same principle works for draining any liquid. When making tea or coffee always put the cup in the sink, so if you overfill the cup, there is no mess to clean up. Better still, if you have guests, tell them where everything is and let them make the drinks!

3 Another item we have found to be helpful is a dinner set with an

upturn on the rim. These are readily available and stop that horrible feeling of losing your food over the edge of your plate and onto the table.

4 Various helpful devices are also available from Blind Low Vision NZ (BLVNZ) such as a liquid level indicator for the side of a mug, talking scales, and a talking thermometer.


5 Lastly, do try and keep your sense of humour if like me, you make Cardamon scones instead of Cinnamon. I saw a C, and instead of smelling to ensure the right ingredient, I guessed! Brown Sugar and Cardamon is not a good mix, and the scones were inedible. Lesson learnt.


Have a safe time and see you in the next newsletter.

Sue and Deb
Sight Support Trust
0800 55 55 77

www.sightsupport.org.nz



 **To watch a short video on low vision aids and how best to use them, go to www.mdnz.org.nz/videos-to-watch-online**

 **To browse the BLVNZ shop and order equipment go to <https://shop.visionaustralia.org.nz/>**

Meet volunteer extraordinaire, Doreen



After a successful career as a dental nurse and in management roles at the New Zealand School Dental

service over a period of 50 years, Doreen found the adjustment to retirement a challenge. She missed the demands and camaraderie of being in the workforce. She needed something to do. Doreen had been diagnosed with macular degeneration, and a friend suggested she contact Macular Degeneration NZ, who were looking for volunteers to help in the office.

Fast forward to 2024, and Doreen has been volunteering in the Parnell office for around 8 years. Doreen says she is keen to contribute wherever she is needed. Her specialty is preparing Patient Information Packs. MDNZ's General Manager, Sarah says "Doreen is the queen of Information Packs, she will prepare 200 packs in a couple of hours then ask what else there is to do today". This is no mean feat, and a key job at MDNZ, as we send out thousands of packs a year.

Doreen has found volunteering to be a useful transition from full time work to retirement and she enjoys being part of the MDNZ team. Doreen is happy that her contribution helps provide information and support for people with macular degeneration and their families.

Doreen is a great advocate for eating a healthy diet, keeping fit and active. In recent years, her vision has deteriorated a bit, but she does not let that stop her. Making adjustments in her daily life, such as watching where she steps when out on her walks, Doreen says "The curbs that are the same colour as the path can be tricky, but I manage".

Doreen has recently started using a small magnifier, that is very useful when shopping, a pair of fit-over sunglasses that reduce the glare, and a wonderful light to help her when reading. Doreen has not let her vision loss get in her way. She still plans to come into the office each week to catch up with the team and to get more Patient Information Packs prepared.

Thank you so much, Doreen!

Volunteer Vacancy

MDNZ is a small team operating from an office in Parnell. There is currently a vacancy for a volunteer with computer skills.

If you are interested or would like further information please send an email to the General Manager, Sarah Berman, on sarah@mdnz.org.nz. Please provide your contact details and a brief description of your skills.

Professional Friends of Macular Degeneration NZ



MACULAR
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NEW ZEALAND
PROFESSIONAL
FRIEND

MDNZ is delighted to acknowledge the following Optometrists and Ophthalmologists who are our Professional Friends.

By joining the programme, the Professional Friends listed below have shown their commitment to MDNZ's work for people with macular degeneration, as well as those at-risk of the disease. Thank you!

Ophthalmologist Individual Members

Dr David Worsley
Dr Steve Mackey
Dr David Dalziel
Dr Rachel Barnes
Dr Andrew Thompson
Dr John Ah-Chan
Dr Sean Every
Dr James Borthwick
Dr Brian Kent-Smith
Dr Nicholas Johnston
Dr Narme Deva
Dr Muhammad Khalid
Dr Oliver Comyn
Dr Ainsley Morris
Dr Peter Ring
Dr Monika Pradhan
Dr Bheema Patil
Dr Logan Robinson
Dr Andrew Watts
Dr Jo Sims
Dr Jo Koppens
Dr Logan Mitchell

Ophthalmology Practice Members

Auckland Eye
Rotorua Eye Clinic

Optometrist Individual Members

John Mellsop
Jagrut Lallu
Peter Walker
Richard Lobb
Danielle Winstone
Richard Newson
Robert Dong
Moira Ironside
Niall McCormack
David Lee
David Haydon
Jayesh Chouhan
Claire McDonald
Ian Finch
Darryl Eastabrook
Phil Donaldson
Philip Walsh

Kristine Jensen
Callum Milburn
Troy Cassidy
Nigel Somerville
Grace Lang
Suney Cheung
Jeremy Wong
Mike Jowsey
Phillipa Charteris
Keith Miller
Hunter Hill
Kent Napier
Melinda Nordin
Michael Ferguson
Vanessa Cumming
Cullen Szeto
Tui Horner
Michael White
Angel Garner
John Adam
Vivian Edgar
Ryan Mahmoud
Naomi Meltzer
Helen Heyns
David Anderson

Optometry Practice Members

McCellan Grimmer Edgar

***Please note:** Membership of the MDNZ Professional Friends programme is not an endorsement or recommendation by MDNZ of the individual member or practice.*

Awareness and Education in 2024


In 2024, MDNZ plans to promote Awareness and deliver Education of Macular Degeneration across New Zealand through seminars, expos and conferences.

Public seminars

Public seminars are scheduled around NZ as funding permits, and when a local ophthalmologist and/or optometrist is available to deliver the presentation. We aim to hold 8 to 10 seminars per year when circumstances allow.

Planning is underway to hold seminars in these locations in 2024:

Timaru	Queenstown
Whangarei	Gisborne
Whakatane	Hawkes Bay
Hamilton	Masterton
Pukekohe	Orewa

 Please register your interest at <https://www.mdnz.org.nz/seminars>

Your registrations will help make a stronger case for support to funders.

Once the seminars are confirmed, we will update the website and send you a

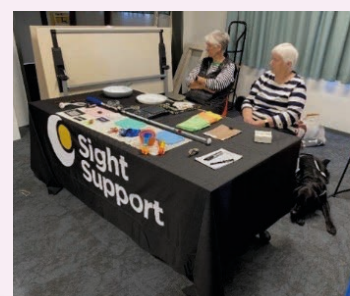
notice if the seminar is in your area. There is no cost to attend these seminars.

In November 2023, seminars held in Wellington and Waikanae (Nov 2023) were fully subscribed, with over 80 attendees at each. Participants found the seminars to be excellent and very helpful.

"I thought Dr Leong was a brilliant presenter – clear, obviously very knowledgeable and thoroughly engaged (and engaging). I'll be sticking my new Amsler Grid on my fridge and checking far more frequently than previously!!"

"Information very useful and targeted to audience. Dr Avery was very clear and he answered questions specifically. Thank you, I have learnt a lot."

Thank you, Drs Leong and Avery, for your excellent presentations.




Community Seminars and Expos

MDNZ's Community Educator can deliver a presentation on Macular Degeneration to your group, society, village. We are currently offering presentations in English and Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese).

We will do our best to come to you, but sometimes funding and the educator's availability can make this challenging. If an in-person presentation is not possible, then a presentation via Zoom could be an option too.

 **Contact us** if you would like to arrange a speaker for your meeting via the website. <https://www.mdnz.org.nz/community-seminars> or via email info@mdnz.org.nz

MDNZ will host an information stand at the Seniors & Travel Expo at Baypark in Mount Maunganui on 2nd and 3rd March. This expo attracts over 3,000 visitors over the two days and is a great opportunity to provide information to the Bay of Plenty public.

 **We would love to see you there,** and it's free to attend. <https://www.seniorsandtravelexpo.com/>

Information and education for health professionals

With thanks to Bayer Pharmaceuticals, MDNZ will be able to host trade stands at GP, ophthalmology, and optometry conferences. Our goals at the conferences are to raise awareness, provide information such as GP online learning opportunities,

and showcase the resources and supports we can offer their patients.

In 2024 we plan to be at the following conferences:

MARCH

Goodfellow Symposium

Primary health care professionals
Manukau, Auckland

MAY

Royal Australian and NZ College of Ophthalmologists

Auckland

JUNE

GP CME North Conference

Rotorua

JUNE

Field Days

Hamilton

JULY

Royal NZ College of General Practitioners

Wellington

AUGUST

GP CME South Conference

Christchurch

OCTOBER

New Zealand Association of Optometrists

Wellington

NOVEMBER

RANZCO Congress (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists)

Adelaide

World Sight Day October 2023



University's School of Optometry and Vision Science.

Eye Health Aotearoa collaborated with MDNZ and Blind Low Vision NZ (BLVNZ) to

International World Sight Day is held each year in October. The focus for 2023 was The Importance of Eye Care in the Workplace. MDNZ participated in two events to celebrate this day and bring attention to important eye health messages.

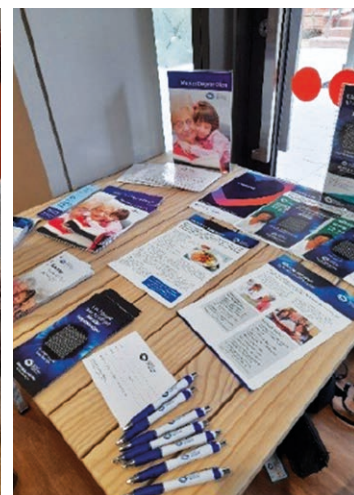
Te Whatu Ora's Greenlane Eye Clinic hosted displays at the Greenlane Clinical Centre and Auckland City Hospital. These displays promoted regular eye checks to the public and staff.

Macular Degeneration NZ participated in this event with both Deborah Gibson-Hardie, Client Services Manager, and Doreen Morrison, volunteer, talking to the staff and public at the Greenlane Clinic and Auckland Hospital about macular degeneration and the importance of eye health.

Others in attendance were Kāpō Māori Aotearoa, Glaucoma NZ, Auckland

celebrate World Sight Day at BLVNZ's Parnell premises with the theme "love your eyes in the workplace". The objective was to raise awareness of how to care for eye health at all stages in life.

BLVNZ staff were interested in learning more about macular degeneration to help their clients and for themselves. Staff tried out the Amsler Grid on the day and left feeling better informed about how to care for their eyes.



6 WAYS TO REDUCE DIGITAL EYE STRAIN

Make simple changes to your workstation today to #LoveYourEyes and reduce digital eye strain.



WEAR YOUR GLASSES

If you've been advised to use prescription glasses to correct your vision, make sure you wear them as recommended. Attend your routine eye checkups and ask your eye care practitioner if you would benefit from adaptations to reduce discomfort and strain.

TAKE FREQUENT BREAKS



Follow THE 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.

ADJUST YOUR COMPUTER SCREEN



Most people benefit if the computer screen is 15 to 20 degrees below eye level (about 10cm or 12cm) as measured from the centre of the screen and 50cm to 70cm away from the eyes.

BLINK OFTEN



Train yourself to blink more often. If needed, use lubricating eyedrops to keep your eyes moist.

ADJUST SCREEN DISPLAYS



Adjust screens for your comfort. Consider adjusting brightness (which should be like your surroundings), contrast (e.g., black on a white background), colour temperature and text size.

USE PROPER LIGHTING AND MINIMIZE GLARE



Position your computer screen to avoid glare and try antiglare screens or screen protectors to avoid discomfort.

We encourage you to learn more about ergonomics from your organisations Occupational Health and Safety Officer.

Thank you, Dame Kate Harcourt, DNZM



Dame Kate has served as a voluntary Ambassador for Macular Degeneration NZ since the charity's inception. She has generously spoken out about the challenges she has encountered living with macular degeneration.

Dame Kate has faced losing her vision with a positive attitude. Her stories have provided inspiration and encouragement to others facing uncertainty and worry, following a diagnosis of macular degeneration.

Working extensively in radio, television, film, and the theatre, Dame Kate has toured nationally and internationally, appearing in many well-known and highly acclaimed productions. In 1996 she received acknowledgement for her contribution to the theatre by receiving a Queens Birthday honour of Dame Companion of The New Zealand Order of Merit (DNZM).

At the age of 96, Dame Kate is taking a well-earned retirement from her role as Ambassador for MDNZ. Thank you, Dame Kate, for so generously sharing your macular degeneration story with others and providing inspiration and hope to those diagnosed with the disease.

We thank you for your service and we wish you all the best!



Smoked salmon & zucchini muffins (makes 12)

Ingredients

- 1½ cups buckwheat flour
- ½ cup polenta
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp mustard powder
- 100g hot smoked salmon, finely chopped
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2-3 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 cup grated zucchini
- ¼ cup light olive oil or melted butter
- 1¼ cups milk
- 2 eggs

Method

Sift buckwheat flour, polenta, baking powder and mustard powder into a bowl. Stir in the salmon, cheese, parsley, and make a well in the centre.

In a separate bowl or jug, mix together the zucchini, oil or melted butter, milk and eggs. Gently stir into the dry ingredients.

Divide evenly among 12 well-greased muffin tins. Bake at 180°C for 15 minutes.

Thank you to Macular Disease Foundation, Australia



Thank you to all our generous donors who have responded so positively to our requests for support.

New Zealanders can thank you for ensuring MDNZ continues its valuable work saving sight and providing support for people with macular degeneration. Without you many people would not get the help they need.

We can and will continue raising awareness, educating, and supporting those with macular degeneration.

With your continued support you will be assisting others as follows:

\$50	information packs posted out to 10 people
\$150	information packs for 36 seminar attendees
\$500	one week of the 0800 Save Sight Helpline
\$2,000	an Awareness and Education Seminar in your community
\$10,000	help fund a Community Educator

Saving the sight of another is such a wonderful gift to give.

Gifts in Wills

Have you thought about leaving a gift to support the future work of MDNZ? Contact us to find out more.

- Email info@mdnz.org.nz or phone
- 0800 MACULA (0800 622 852)**



Please donate to support those with MD

Title

First name

Last name

Name to appear on tax receipt

Street address

Suburb

City Postcode

Email

Phone (home)

Phone (mobile)

I would like to give a gift (choose one)

Single Monthly Annually

Amount \$200 \$150 \$100 \$50 or \$

I would like to pay by (choose one)

Credit card VISA MasterCard

Card number

Cardholder's name

Amount \$ Expiry date /

Signature

For online donations visit www.mdnz.org.nz
For donations by online banking, please email or call MDNZ.

Thank you

- I would like to receive information about MD
- I would like to receive the MDNZ newsletter
- Please send me more information about leaving a gift/ bequest for MDNZ in my will

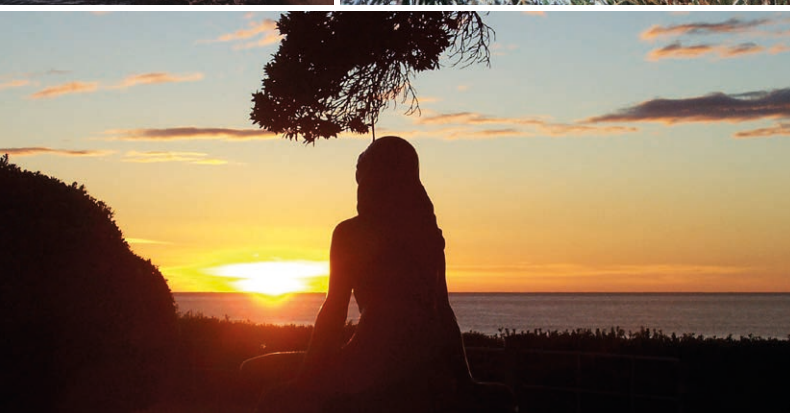
Please complete this form and return to:
Macular Degeneration New Zealand,
PO Box 137070, Parnell, Auckland 1151

For assistance phone
0800 MACULA (0800 622 852)

Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.
 We take great care with your personal information. Please see our Privacy Policy which is published on our website. See: www.mdnz.org.nz/privacy

It's Summer!

Enjoy a selection of glorious summer images entered into our *Beautiful NZ Views* competition.



ISSUE 23 – March 2024



Podcast of
this newsletter
is now available

We are very pleased to announce that *Viewpoint* is available on our website as a Podcast, and those who are Blind Low Vision NZ members can also access it on Blind Low Vision NZ platforms.

Click on this link to head to the podcast on Macular Degeneration NZ website www.mdnz.org.nz/viewpoint-podcasts

To access it on BLVNZ platforms please search for Macular Degeneration New Zealand Viewpoint.

If you would like, in the future, to receive the *Viewpoint* Newsletter by email only please do email info@mdnz.org.nz informing us of this, or call 0800 622 852.

For further information contact MDNZ



www.mdnz.org.nz



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