

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

MyHealthTALK

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Courtesy of Asset Health

WHAT IS MACULAR DEGENERATION?

While many conditions can affect the vision, AMD or ARMD, Age-related Macular Degeneration, is a chronic condition that affects millions of Americans, with more than 200,000 people diagnosed in the United States each year. AMD does not always result in complete blindness, but it can cause severe vision loss and is the leading cause of legal blindness in adults over 60. The older you are, the greater your chance of being affected by this condition.

AMD affects an area in the back of the eye called the macula. The macula is responsible for providing our sharp and detailed central vision. AMD destroys those clear images in the central vision area causing black holes or dim images in the "straight ahead" visual field leaving a person with only the outermost peripheral vision.

There are two types of AMD: "wet" and "dry." Responding to a lack of oxygen in the area, abnormal blood vessels begin to grow under the region of the retina in the wet form of AMD. These new blood vessels are very fragile and often leak blood and fluid. This raises the macula from its normal position at the back of the eye causing damage. In this type of AMD, considered advanced AMD, central vision loss can take place very rapidly.

Dry AMD is much more common and vision loss occurs gradually, in stages. The light-sensitive cells in the macula slowly break down causing blurring in the center of the visual field. Generally, the damage caused by dry AMD is not as severe as that of the wet form of this condition; however, it can progress

and over time can cause very profound vision loss.

While there is no cure for AMD, treatments are available that may help slow or prevent significant loss of vision associated with this disease. Wet AMD can be helped with laser surgery and other treatments, but none is a cure for AMD and the disease and loss of vision may progress despite intervention. Treatment can delay and possibly prevent an intermediate stage dry AMD from progressing to the advanced stage in which loss of vision occurs. Once dry AMD reaches an advanced stage, no form of treatment can prevent vision loss.

The exact cause of AMD is not known, but a number of risk factors that may play a role have been identified. Some of the same conditions that put a person at risk for heart disease and stroke may also place them at risk for AMD. Those risks include: High blood pressure, high cholesterol, being overweight and smoking. Age, family history, and being of female gender may also increase the possibility of developing this disease. Additionally, some studies have shown that low levels of certain nutrients, minerals and vitamins may factor into the risk of developing AMD.

The changes in vision may be subtle at first. Early detection is the key to avoiding vision loss. Regular eye exams are important for not only for good eye health but for maintenance of good overall health as well.

Sources: AMDAwareness.org, AMD.org



March: SAVE YOUR VISION MONTH

it's a good time to learn about
your eyesight

Have you ever considered how your life would change if you lost your precious gift of sight? No more driving a car, watching your children play soccer, watching a movie, or safely navigating stairs. Sometimes, even a small or moderate vision loss can impact the way we live.

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), approximately 11 million Americans could improve their vision by simply seeing an eye doctor for proper "refractive correction" (correction of vision through use of eyeglasses, contact lenses, or in some cases surgery) for near- and far-sightedness, as well as for reading.

You may not be able to avoid refractive correction, but here are some other tips for protecting your vision:

- Know your family's health history
- Have a comprehensive dilated eye exam yearly or as recommended by your eye doctor
- Monitor blood pressure and maintain a healthy weight
- If you smoke, quit
- Eat a well balanced diet to protect your eyesight and regularly include dark leafy greens and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids
- Wear protective eye wear while playing sports or performing activities that may result in eye injury both at home and in the workplace
- Wear sunglasses to protect against UV-A and UV-B exposure
- Always wash hands before handling contact lenses to prevent infections

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Health Benefits of Tea

Tea is the most commonly consumed beverage in the world, second after water. Among all varieties of tea - black, green, white - which one offers the most health benefits?

Green Tea

One of the most popular types of tea undergoes minimal processing. Its leaves are withered and steamed, not fermented like black teas.

Health Benefits

- More antioxidants than black tea, but less than white tea
- Fights against cancer and heart disease
- Good for lowering cholesterol
- Can be used to prevent diabetes and stroke, and staving off dementia

White Tea

Made from young leaves that have not yet turned green, this tea is the least processed tea and has the highest antioxidant levels. Antioxidants are nutrients that protect the body from damage by cancer-causing free radicals. It also has one of the lowest levels of caffeine.

Health Benefits

- Fights against different types of cancer, such as colon, prostate, and stomach cancers
- Good for lowering blood pressure and cholesterol
- Contributes to healthy teeth and gums, as well as healthy skin
- Reduces stress and increases energy

Black Tea

The most commonly used and the most popular tea in the West, black tea is originally green tea with the leaves further dried – this changes its color and taste. The extensive processing gives it a strong and slightly bitter taste. It has the highest caffeine level. *(Steep your tea twice, and most of the caffeine will be taken out)*

Health Benefits

- Helps prevent deadly clogging of arteries
- Tied to a lower risk of stomach, colon and breast cancer
- Boosts immune system and mental alertness

Floral Tea

While not technically “teas”, tea made of or infused with flowers, herbs and fruits can also provide health benefits for a multitude of needs. For instance, Jasmine tea can aid in relaxation, enhanced immunity, and blood sugar regulation, while tea made from Rooibos is safe for pregnant women. Seek out your doctor if you have specific questions over which tea is best for you.

Sources:

<http://www.livestrong.com>, www.healthcastle.com

10 Healthy Burger Tips

1. Use lean meat like ground sirloin or Bison; it's usually 90% lean and 10% fat.
2. Light seasonings like sea salt and black pepper help cut back on calories.
3. Make small patties that are in the 5oz to 7oz range.
4. Pick low fat cheese like mozzarella if you're a cheeseburger fan.
5. Use lots of veggies for the toppings like lettuce, tomato and avocado.
6. A 100% whole grain bun will help meet your daily fiber intake.
7. Whenever possible, grill your burger to reduce the amount of fat calories associated with frying.



8. Toasting your bun will give you a calorie free way of experiencing a restaurant quality burger.
9. Avoid high calorie condiments like ranch dressing or barbeque sauce and stick to ketchup and mustard.
10. Finally, use a small plate while enjoying your burger. It will give the perception of it being larger and provide the image of a big juicy restaurant quality burger.