

AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION

ONE OF THE LEADING CAUSES OF VISION LOSS IN PEOPLE 50 YEARS OR OLDER

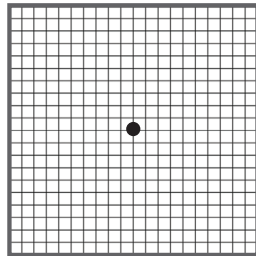


MACULAR DEGENERATION

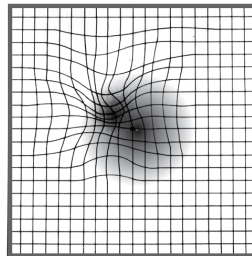
Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is one of most common causes of poor vision after age 50 and is the leading cause of blindness in this age group in developed countries.

AMD involves the loss of central vision. Residents may lose the sharp, straight-ahead vision necessary for driving, reading, recognizing faces, and looking at detail. These vision changes are often gradual. Peripheral (side) vision is unaffected.

Vision changes in AMD can be detected using an Amsler grid. Patients should test one eye at a time, covering the other eye and looking at the grid.



Normal:
Lines are straight



Abnormal:
Lines are shaded or distorted

If the lines of the grid appear wavy, distorted or missing, the test is abnormal and the finding should be investigated by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. Resident complaints of blurred vision or vision loss should also prompt ophthalmologic evaluation.

There are two types of AMD:

- › **Dry (atrophic)** - more common and less severe
- › **Wet (exudative)** - less common but more severe

While the specific cause is unknown, age is the most significant risk factor for developing AMD. Heredity, blue eyes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and smoking have been associated with an increased risk of developing AMD.