

EYE HEALTHCARE

LOSS OF CENTRAL VISION

Could you be suffering from Macular degeneration (MD)?

So what is MD?

MD is a disease that damages the most central part of the back of the eye (the macula), required for specific vision such as reading and driving. Although painless, it is the primary cause of vision loss for over 50's in Northern Ireland.

What are the symptoms?

You may have blurred vision, (which often is not noticeable in brighter light) obscuring detail directly in front of you e.g. Words, faces – this is characteristic of the most common form, 'dry' MD. The other form ('wet' MD) tends to show straight lines being wavy but either form is easily detected by your Optometrist using tests e.g. Amsler Grid, Retinal imaging etc.

Who is at risk?

- Those over 50, particularly women.
- Those who smoke, drink excessively.
- Poor diet e.g. fatty foods.
- Bright Sun light exposure (UV).
- Family history

How is it treated?

With the 'dry' most common type, vitamins and minerals are often prescribed to prevent further progression e.g. I-Caps or Macushield which contain high amounts of Carotene (in carrots) and Lutein, as well as diet alteration to include a lot of fruit and vegetables, particularly Spinach.

The 'wet' type is generally addressed with differing 'Laser' therapies or 'injections' which prevent abnormal blood vessel production.

For those directly affected with central vision loss from MD, there are a lot of types of magnifying devices with inbuilt lighting, large print books, watches, microwaves, etc., as well as the talking newspaper, but your optician will happily advise you on the best route forward.

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