

AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION: A FAMILY CONNECTION



Macular
Disease
Foundation
AUSTRALIA

What is age-related macular degeneration?

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the most common macular disease, accounting for 50 per cent of blindness in Australia. One in seven Australians over the age of 50 have some evidence of AMD.

AMD is a chronic, painless and progressive disease, that affects the macula, which is the part of the eye responsible for detailed central vision. There is no cure, but early action can save sight.

What causes AMD?

Age-related macular degeneration is caused by a range of genetic and environmental factors. Age, smoking and sunlight exposure are all risk factors. One of the strong risk factors is a family history of the disease.

If you have a sibling or parent with AMD you have a 50 per cent risk of getting the disease, too, but many people are unaware of the risk.

Did you know?

- In the general population, 63 per cent of Australians are unaware of the hereditary risks associated with AMD.
- Within the macular disease community itself, only half (50.1 per cent) of those living with AMD were aware of the hereditary risks.
- Of the people with AMD who were aware of the hereditary risks, only one third had informed their family members that they too were at risk.¹

Start a conversation with your family

If you have AMD, tell your family about their risk and encourage them to have regular eye exams, including a macula check.

If you have a sibling or parent with AMD, take action using the checklist below. Early action could save your sight.



Eye health checklist

- have a regular comprehensive eye exam, and ask about your macula
- use an Amsler grid weekly (daily if you already have macular disease) to check for symptoms and assist in monitoring your vision at home between visits to your eye health professional
- if you smoke, seek help to quit
- maintain an eye-healthy diet and lifestyle



Need more information?

You can find more publications on AMD, reducing your risk and living well with macular disease on our website: www.mdfoundation.com.au

You can also access our free, personalised support services and order information kits and Amsler grids by calling our National Helpline on **1800 111 709**.

M DFA has a free newsletter and you can sign up to receive invitations to education sessions and events in your area.

Macular Disease Foundation Australia is committed to reducing the incidence and impact of macular disease, by providing up-to-date information, advice and support.



National Helpline

☎ 1800 111 709

E info@mdfoundation.com.au

W mdfoundation.com.au

W checkmymacula.com.au

Reference: 'Knowledge of AMD among those with age-related macular degeneration', study conducted by YouGov Galaxy, commissioned by Macular Disease Foundation Australia, 20 March 2019'; 'MD Tracking', survey conducted by YouGov Galaxy, commissioned by Macular Disease Foundation Australia, 13-17 February 2019.

Disclaimer: Information in this publication is considered by Macular Disease Foundation Australia to be accurate at the time of publication. While every care has been taken in its preparation, medical advice should always be sought from a doctor and individual advice about your eye health should be sought from your eye health professional. Macular Disease Foundation Australia cannot be liable for any error or omission in this publication or for damages arising from it, and makes no warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied in relation to this publication.

February 2020