

What to do to ward off Age-Related Macular Degeneration

(This is the last part of a three-part series discussing Age-Related Macular Degeneration, or AMD.)

AMD can impact the severity of the vision loss that is due to aging. In the previous articles, we discussed understanding AMD and its risks, and dealing with it.

There is currently no cure for AMD, although there are some treatments that can help halt the progression of the condition.

In the case of wet AMD, there is photodynamic therapy, or PDT. This treatment utilizes a light-sensitive medicine, which is injected into the blood stream.

Another treatment option for wet AMD is called laser photocoagulation. Doctors can determine if a patient is a good candidate for these treatments and may prescribe additional medicines that boost their effectiveness.

Another important recommendation for those who already have AMD is adding an Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) formula vitamin supplement. Some of those that are on the market include Bausch + Lomb Ocuvite PreserVision®, ScienceBased Health MacularProtect Complete®, and Alcon I-Caps®. Ask your doctor before taking an AREDS formulation supplement.

There have been clinical FDA trials of the Implantable Miniature Telescope (IMT) that have shown that this implant can help certain people with advanced stage AMD see better. The drug Lucentis, approved by the FDA in 2006, has been shown to help about one third of people with advanced AMD see better.

After knowing and understanding all the facts about AMD, an important question remains: Can AMD be prevented? Fortunately, there are a variety of things seniors can do to help ward off AMD.

All About Vision at www.allaboutvision.com offers these tips:

- Do not smoke.
- Improve your diet by eating dark leafy green vegetables, such as spinach; increasing intake of fish; and consuming nuts and fruits daily. Doctors also recommend reducing refined carbohydrates.
- Add supplements to your diet, including a multivitamin or multimineral supplement such as Centrum Silver®. Ask your doctor for a recommendation.
- Add a fish oil supplement if your diet lacks sufficient fish protein. An enteric-coated fish oil does not have a fishy aftertaste, nor does it cause belching.
- Get plenty of exercise.
- Keep cholesterol, blood pressure and weight all in check.
- When outside, wear sunglasses that block UV and blue-ray light, the type of sunlight that may cause eye damage.
- Get regular eye exams.

— This series has been brought to you by Ellen Smith, MA, LMFT, and Andy Smith, MS, of the local office of Comfort Keepers in Home Care, a world leader in senior care. Visit Comfortkeepers.com/Office-426 or call 805-494-9900 for more information.

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