

Macular Degeneration: What to ask your Eye Care Professional

The diagnosis

When diagnosed with any disease or condition, it is important to obtain as much information as possible. Knowing and understanding this information helps you to manage your health and any treatment or lifestyle changes you may need to undertake.

It can be overwhelming when you first learn of your diagnosis of macular degeneration (MD) and you may not recall all the things your doctor tells you. The following list of questions will help you to remember what to ask and taking notes or having a friend or family member attend and take notes for you can be very helpful.

When visiting an Eye Care Professional

- If you are not sure of your eye care professional's responses, ask him or her to explain until you feel confident of the answer.
- Ask the eye care professional to write down your diagnosis and any instructions you need to follow.
- Take notes or get a friend or family member to take notes for you.
- Ask for any relevant printed materials on your condition.

Suggested questions

It may be helpful to review the following questions, mark which ones apply to you, and be sure to receive and understand the responses provided by your eye care professional.



About your MD

- What type of MD do I have? Is it wet MD or dry MD?
- At what stage is my MD?
- If BOTH eyes are affected, are they at the same stage?
- If ONE eye is affected, is the other eye likely to develop MD?
- How will my MD affect my vision now and in the future?

About treatment for wet MD

- Can my wet MD be treated?
- What are my treatment options?
- When will treatment start and what does it involve?
- How many treatments may be needed?
- What are the benefits and how successful is it?
- Are there any risks or side effects?
- What is the cost (in time and money)?
- What rebate will I get from Medicare and/or private health insurance?
- Will I need assistance to get home after the treatment?
- Will I need assistance at home after the treatment?

About diet and lifestyle

- Should I change my diet?
- Should I take a supplement? Which one?
- Where can I get help to cease smoking?
- Should I use an Amsler grid?

About low vision support services

- When should I next see my optometrist for new glasses?
- Do I need a low vision assessment and low vision aids?
- Where should I go for these low vision aids and services?

Contacting the Eye Care Professional

- When should I contact you as a matter of urgency?
- What number? What about on weekends?

Important information about wet MD treatment

- Appointments with the eye specialist should not be missed, even if there does not appear to be any problem with vision.
- Treatment should not cease unless on the advice of the eye specialist.
- Even if vision has stabilised or improved, treatment may still need to be continued.
- Any sudden changes in vision should be reported to the eye specialist immediately as a matter of urgency, regardless of whether or not injections are being received. Do not wait for the next appointment.

- If there are any concerns regarding coping with injections or any difficulties after the injection it is important to raise these concerns with the eye specialist, given the critical nature of the treatment.
- Vision should continue to be monitored every day using an Amsler grid, one eye at a time.

Eye Health Checklist*

- **Have your eyes tested and make sure the macula is checked.**
- **Don't smoke.**
- **Keep a healthy lifestyle, control your weight and exercise regularly.**
- **Eat fish 2-3 times per week, dark green leafy vegetables and fresh fruit daily and a handful of nuts per week. Limit your intake of fats and oils. Choose low GI carbohydrates.**
- **In consultation with your doctor, consider taking an appropriate supplement.**
- **Use an Amsler grid daily to check for symptoms of macular degeneration.**
- **Protect your eyes from the sun, especially when young.**

* Any changes in diet or lifestyle should be undertaken in consultation with your doctor

Remember that Macular Disease Foundation Australia offers information, guidance and support so please phone us on the Helpline 1800 111 709 if you have any concerns or require more information.



Our focus is your vision

For further information and support, or a free information kit, call the Foundation's Helpline 1800 111 709 or visit www.mdfoundation.com.au

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