

February is Age-Related Macular Degeneration Month

In This Issue

- Your Brain May Be Disguising A Blinding Eye Disease
- Risk Factors For AMD
- What Can I Do?

Contact Us

2311 W. Hayes Ave,
Fremont
Ohio 43420
(419) 334 8121

622 Parkway Drive,
Fostoria
Ohio 44830
(419) 435 3482

www.eyecentersofnwo.com

info@eyecentersofnwo.com

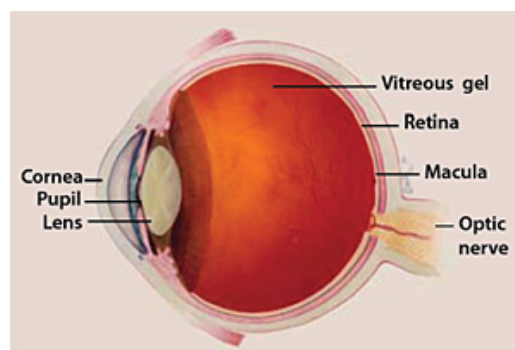
Your Brain May be Disguising a Blinding Eye Disease

Even though Marlene Klein was having trouble recognizing familiar faces and began to mistake her fingers for carrots as she chopped vegetables, she had no idea she was slowly losing her vision to a leading cause of blindness, age-related macular degeneration (AMD). That's because her brain was compensating for the developing blind spots in her vision. Marlene is not alone. According to a recent Harris Poll survey, most Americans are unaware that people do not always experience symptoms before losing vision to eye disease. During February, The Eye Centers of Northwest Ohio and the American Academy of Ophthalmology are urging people to protect themselves from vision loss from AMD by getting a baseline eye exam by age 40.



More than 2 million Americans are living with the most advanced forms of AMD, a number that is expected to reach 4.4 million by 2050. It is the leading cause of blindness among white Americans over 40, and it's a leading cause of irreversible vision loss throughout the world.

AMD happens when part of the retina called the macula is damaged. It's the part of the eye that delivers sharp, central vision needed to see objects straight ahead. Over time, the loss of central vision can interfere with everyday activities, such as the ability to drive, read, and see faces clearly.



No Vision Insurance, No Problem, Join our Membership Program today!

www.eyecentersofnwo.com/members-portal

Courtesy: The American Academy of Ophthalmology

www.aao.org/

Because AMD often has no early warning signs, getting regular comprehensive eye exams is critical.

Eye Doctors have more tools than ever before to diagnose AMD earlier, and to treat it better. But these advances cannot help patients whose disease is undiagnosed, or patients who are unaware of the seriousness of their disease.

More needs to be done to elevate eye health as a priority. According to that same Harris Poll, while 81 percent of respondents say they do everything they can to protect the health of their eyes, only 11 percent say eye appointments top their list of the most important doctor appointments to keep.

Risk Factors For AMD

Age is a major risk factor for AMD. The disease is most likely to occur after age 60, but it can occur earlier. Other risk factors for AMD include:

- **Smoking.** Research shows that smoking doubles the risk of AMD.
- **Race.** AMD is more common among Caucasians than among African-Americans or Hispanics/Latinos.
- **Family history and Genetics.** People with a family history of AMD are at higher risk. At last count, researchers had identified nearly 20 genes that can affect the risk of developing AMD. Many more genetic risk factors are suspected. You may see offers for genetic testing for AMD. Because AMD is influenced by so many genes plus environmental factors such as smoking and nutrition, there are currently no genetic tests that can diagnose AMD, or predict with certainty who will develop it. The American Academy of Ophthalmology currently recommends against routine genetic testing for AMD, and insurance generally does not cover such testing.

What Can I Do?

There are some things you can do to decrease your odds of losing vision from AMD. Stop smoking and maintain a healthy weight. Monitor your blood pressure to keep it within a normal range and exercise. Eat a diet high in green leafy vegetables. Lastly, have your eyes evaluated with a dilated eye exam by your Eye Doctor.