

# Natural Help 4...

# Macular Degeneration



## What is Macular Degeneration?

Macular degeneration is a disorder that affects central vision – what you see directly in front of you as opposed to your peripheral or side vision. The macula is the central portion of the retina, the paper-thin tissue at the back of the eye where light-sensitive cells send visual signals to the brain, and is responsible for detailed vision.

Macular degeneration occurs when the central part of the retina deteriorates. **Age-related macular degeneration** (AMD or ARMD) is the most common **eye disease** and is in fact the leading cause of visual impairment and blindness in the United States in people over the age of 50.

Damage to the macula results in the development of blind spots and blurred or distorted vision and can hamper your ability to perform basic activities of daily living such as reading and driving.

## Types of Macular Degeneration

### Dry Macular Degeneration

Dry macular degeneration is the early stage of the disease. It may be caused by the aging and thinning of the macular tissues, the deposition of pigment in the macula, or by a combination of the two processes. Yellowish spots known as drusen begin to accumulate from these deposits or from the debris from deteriorating tissue, and this occurs primarily in the area of the macula. **Loss of central vision** may occur very gradually but can be as serious as the wet neovascular form of AMD.

### Wet Neovascular Macular Degeneration

Approximately, 10% of dry AMD cases will progress to a more severe, advanced form of eye disease known as wet macular degeneration. **Wet macular generation** occurs when new blood vessels grow (neovascularization) beneath the retina and leak blood and fluid into the surrounding tissue.

The leakage of blood and fluid causes permanent damage to the light-sensitive retinal cells. These cells then die off and blind spots are created in the central vision. During the process of neovascularization, the body attempts to create a new network of blood vessels to supply more nutrients and oxygen to the eye's retina. This process fails and instead creates scarring that leads to a **loss of central vision**.

**Wet forms of macular degeneration** are further classified into two general

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sub-types – classic and occult. Classic choroidal neovascularization (CNV) is usually associated with severe vision loss. It occurs when blood vessel growth and scarring has very clear, delineated outlines observed beneath the retina. Occult neovascularization produces less severe vision loss and new blood vessel growth beneath the retina is not as distinctive and leakage is less obvious.

## Diagnosing Macular Degeneration

The **diagnosis of macular degeneration** is based on an examination of the eye by an eye specialist or ophthalmologist. The initial tests include an examination of the retina as well as measurement of the sharpness of vision. A brief test using an Amsler grid that measures your central vision may be performed. A doctor may ask you about any **symptoms of macular degeneration** you are experiencing.

## Tests to Diagnose Macular Degeneration

- Fluorescein angiography

This procedure involves a special dye that is injected into the arm and an ophthalmologist photographing the retina as the dye passes through. Fluorescein angiography examines the **retinal blood vessels** surrounding the [macular](#) and will determine whether laser treatment is necessary

- Indocyanine green angiography

During this procedure infrared wavelengths are used to view the retina in order to help identify [symptoms of macular degeneration](#) that may not be detected with fluorescein angiography

- Optical coherence tomography (OCT)

This is a noninvasive examination technique that produces a cross-sectional image of the posterior retina.


- Microperimetry

This procedure uses the Rodenstock scanning laser ophthalmoscope and is used to quantify [macular](#) sensitivity and fixation pattern.

## Symptoms of Macular Degeneration


- Slow, or in very rare cases a sudden, painless loss of vision are common [symptoms of macular degeneration](#)
- Blurred or shadowy areas in your central vision
- Blind spots
- Straight lines that when viewed look irregular or bent
- Objects appearing in a different color or shape (when viewed with each of the eyes)

## What Causes Macular Degeneration?



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

The exact **cause of macular degeneration** is unknown but it is believed that aging, genetics as well as environmental factors all contribute to the onset of **symptoms of macular degeneration**.

## Common Causes of Macular Degeneration

- Age – [macular degeneration](#) increases with age
- Race – although [macular degeneration](#) occurs in all races, it is more common in Caucasian individuals
- Gender – women have been found to be at higher risk of [macular degeneration](#)
- Family history – it has also been found that [macular degeneration](#) tends to be hereditary
- Exposure to sunlight
- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Drug side effects

## Help for Macular Degeneration

There is no **cure for macular degeneration** but some treatments may help to improve vision or delay the progression of **symptoms of macular degeneration**. Treatment does depend on the stage of the disease – whether [macular degeneration](#) is in the early stage, dry form or more advanced wet form.

Conventional treatments for **dry macular degeneration** may include nutritional supplementation such as Vitamin C, Vitamin E, beta-carotene with zinc and antioxidants to prevent free radicals or unstable oxygen from damaging the retina. The **wet form of macular degeneration** can lead to serious vision loss but there are various laser treatment options such as photodynamic therapy available to lessen the vision loss in the early stages.

## Natural Remedies for Macular Degeneration

**Natural and holistic treatments** can also help to promote healthy vision and reduce symptoms including blurred vision, hemorrhaging of the eyes, and disorders of the retina. Treatments such as **herbal and homeopathic remedies** can provide a gentle alternative to conventional drugs, and at the same time address overall health and wellbeing.

Natural [macular degeneration supplements](#) may include herbs such as Vaccinium myrtillus (bilberry) which has well known anti-oxidant properties, ensuring the health of all cells and tissues of the body, including the eyes, and also assist with circulation. Bilberry also helps to facilitate delivery of essential oxygen and nutrients to the eye and has been the subject of numerous research studies related to ocular health.

Other [macular degeneration supplements](#) include Aspalathus linearis (Rooibos) which is an effective all round tonic for the immune system and helps to **maintain digestive health, liver functioning and promote healthy blood**

## Ask Our Experts a Product Question

If you have a question about one of our products, its usage or dosage, ask Michele and her team of experts about about it [HERE!](#) We will do our best to get you an answer within 24 hours.

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**sugar levels.** Sutherlandia frutescens is also commonly used in [macular degeneration supplements](#) for its adaptogenic properties as well as anti-oxidant effects. Remember to always ensure your natural remedies are sourced from reputable companies for maximum safety, therapeutic dosage and effectiveness.

## More Information on Macular Degeneration

There are no proven methods to prevent [macular degeneration](#) but there are helpful ways to care for your eyes and to ensure good visual health.

### Eye Care Tips

- Consult an ophthalmologist or eye specialist immediately if you experience any signs of vision loss.
- Use of the Amsler grid can help you to detect slight changes in your vision – this test helps you to monitor your vision daily in the comfort of your home.
- Stop smoking naturally, as smokers have a higher risk of developing [macular degeneration](#).
- Eat a healthy balanced diet packed with leafy green vegetables.
- Protect your eyes from sun exposure by wearing sunglasses to block ultraviolet sunrays.
- Increase your intake of **nutritional supplements** such as antioxidants and zinc.
- People over 65 years should have regular vision exams that include screening for age-related [macular degeneration](#).


## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine)



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which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of

1) All Native Remedies products are manufactured according to the highest pharmaceutical standards - using only the best quality raw ingredients from nature's medicine chest.

2) Native Remedies and our suppliers are registered with the FDA as accredited suppliers and manufacturers of health supplements. Our products are sold all over the world and are manufactured to strict international standards in a GMP accredited manufacturing plant.

3) All our remedies are manufactured in an FDA registered pharmaceutical facility under close supervision.

This includes formulation, acquiring and testing of raw ingredients as well as final manufacturing. This gives us the confidence to say that when you are buying a Native Remedies product, you are buying the safest and the best! We know what goes into our remedies - which is why we know what you will get out of them!

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extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

## **Related Natural Remedies:**

**Vizu-All Plus**: Natural remedy for visual and circulatory health.

Vizu-All Plus is a 100% safe, non-addictive natural herbal remedy formulated by our team of natural health experts. Vizu-All Plus can be used consistently to safely **support visual health and encourage circulation to the eyes** while promoting overall systemic and immune system health.

Vizu-All Plus supports the healthy functioning of the eye, thereby helping to maintain routine visual health both day and night, as well as encouraging blood flow to the optical nerve and surrounding tissues. Vizu-All Plus can make all the difference, without compromising health and **without serious side effects**.

The ingredients in Vizu-All Plus have been selected for their ability to **help support circulatory and tissue health**, particularly of the feet and hands, while encouraging the maintenance of healthy blood flow to the brain to prevent age-related absent-mindedness and to support healthy levels of oxygen and nutrients to the brain.

The formula remains true to the **whole spectrum method** of herbal extraction, ensuring the bio-availability and balance of all the active ingredients contained in the remedy. This method of manufacture also significantly reduces the likelihood of side effects and maintains all active ingredients in perfect balance – exactly as nature intended!

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