



HEALTH AWARENESS

Seeing The Facts About Age-Related Macular Degeneration Can Help Prevent Blindness

(NAPSA)—Opening your eyes to a few facts about sight could help you avoid blindness.

For one thing, you should know age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in those over 50 and affects more than 10 million Americans. A study conducted by the AMD Alliance International (AMDAl) revealed that a lack of knowledge and concern are preventing people from taking critical steps that can halt or slow the disease's progression.

The research reports that among those at high risk of losing their sight from AMD, only about half reported seeing an eye doctor once a year or more, as is recommended, and nearly 90 percent of the general population will visit an eye doctor only after noticing symptoms such as loss of vision or blurriness. By then, it may be too late to take advantage of strategies and treatments.

Fortunately, when it's identified early, the progression of AMD may be slowed or halted with a variety of treatments prescribed by doctors and with lifestyle modifications, such as a diet rich in leafy green vegetables and quitting smoking.

What Can You Do?

Everyone needs to understand his or her own individual risk of being diagnosed with AMD. Those at high risk and anyone over the age of 50 should get a yearly eye exam.

There are five questions everyone over 50 should ask the eye doctor:

1. What is AMD and what are the factors that determine who is at highest risk?

2. What symptoms should I watch for and how should I notify you if they occur?



Photo credit: NEI

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3. What causes AMD and can the condition be treated?

4. How does this condition affect vision?

5. Will getting AMD affect my lifestyle?

"This study clearly indicates that there is a low level of concern about AMD and many people aren't seeking adequate eye care until the disease has reached more of an advanced stage," says David Herman, chair AMDAl. "It is imperative for people to see their eye doctors regularly and understand their risk factors so that AMD can be halted or its progression can be slowed."

In addition to blindness, AMD affects quality of life and often leads to depression. And while the causes of AMD are complex, several factors have been identified that appear to increase the risk, including gender, age, genetics, smoking, nutrition, hypertension, sun exposure, light skin or eye color and severe farsightedness.

Learn More

To learn more about AMD, its risk factors, prevention and treatment options, visit www.amdaliance.org.