

## Early Detection Key to Managing Age-Related Macular Degeneration

(NAPSA)—Seeing an eye doctor regularly can help you keep seeing well as you get older. One reason is age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a chronic condition that causes central vision loss, affects millions of Americans and is the leading cause of blindness in adults 60 and older.

Early detection is key to avoiding vision loss.

AMD occurs when the macula—the central portion of the retina that is important for reading and color vision—becomes damaged. AMD is a single disease, but it can take two different forms: dry and wet. Wet AMD is the more serious form, with more than 200,000 people in the United States diagnosed every year. Without treatment, patients can lose their central vision over time, leaving only peripheral, or side, vision. Symptoms include wavy lines, hazy vision and blurriness. An eye exam is crucial if you experience any of these symptoms, as an early diagnosis is vital to maintain healthy eyes. If you are diagnosed with wet AMD, it's important to see a retina specialist for the most appropriate care.

The exact cause of AMD is not known but a number of risk factors may play a role. These include: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and smoking. Risks that cannot be controlled include: age, family history, gender and race (AMD is more common in women and Caucasian people).



**To manage age-related macular degeneration, older adults are urged to have regular eye exams and talk with a doctor about new treatments and low vision resources for vision loss.**

### Managing AMD and Low Vision

Low-vision tools and resources are available and can help those affected by this disease maintain independence and preserve quality of life. For example:

- A downloadable magnifier tool allows you to enlarge any part of your screen by rolling over it with your mouse. It will work with any Web site or application on your computer.
- Use a stand magnifier to help with reading, writing, knitting or any other similar project.
- Look for large-print books and publications.
- Get large-print checks and billing statements.
- Talk to a low-vision specialist about other low-vision devices.

Learn more about wet AMD by visiting [www.amdawareness.org/asrs/](http://www.amdawareness.org/asrs/).