

## Age-related Macular Degeneration: Ways to maintain eye health

As we get older, many of us experience changes in our vision. Age-related macular degeneration, or AMD, is a common age-related eye condition and leading cause of vision loss in adults over the age of 50. It causes damage to an area of the eye that is needed for sharp, central vision. Early stages of AMD often do not affect vision. However, as AMD progresses a blurred area near the center of your vision may appear.

Smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and a family history of AMD increase the risk of developing AMD. Everyone should visit their eye doctor each year and get a dilated eye exam to check for AMD. Exercising regularly and eating nutritious foods such as leafy, green vegetables and fish may also reduce the risk and severity of AMD.

If your eye doctor has diagnosed you with AMD, they may recommend an over-the-counter supplement to slow the progression of this disease. AREDS and AREDS2 are the most common supplements used for AMD. AREDS contains vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene, zinc, and copper. AREDS2 does not have beta-carotene, but does add lutein, zeaxanthin, and omega-3 fatty acids. Lutein and zeaxanthin are related to beta-carotene and act as natural antioxidants in the eye. Omega-3 fatty acids, normally found in fish oils, may promote retinal development and repair.

Both supplement formulations have demonstrated reduced progression of disease, but not prevention of developing AMD. AREDS2 may be more appropriate for people who do not get enough leafy, green vegetables in their diet, or for current smokers or those who have recently quit. Some research has shown that beta-carotene, found in the original AREDS formulation, may increase the risk of developing lung cancer in people who are also smokers.

For more information, please visit:

- [https://nei.nih.gov/health/macularden/gen/armd\\_facts](https://nei.nih.gov/health/macularden/gen/armd_facts)
- <https://nei.nih.gov/areds2/PatientFAQ>

Or you can also ask one of our pharmacists here at Dexter Pharmacy to help you.



Rebecca Sarkozi,  
PharmD Candidate 2017

