

## **Age-related macular degeneration**

Many people in the UK are affected by this visual impairment.

### **What causes it?**

As you get older, the circulation in your eyes can become poor and lead to a build-up of waste products in the macular region of the retina.

The result of this build-up is that your eyes will not work as well as they once did.

### **What is the macular region of the retina?**

The retina is at the back of the eye. Pictures of things it sees are sent to the brain.

The macula is a special part of the retina, which picks up the fine detail.

### **How does macular degeneration affect sight?**

- Things you see may be blurred, especially in the centre. This might make it difficult to read bus numbers or recognise people's faces.
- Straight lines may look curved.
- You may notice blank areas when looking at the TV or reading.

### **Is this the start of blindness?**

The macula is the part of the eye that sees detail, so fine vision will be affected. However, the rest of your vision will be unaffected.

### **Is there a cure?**

For most people who get this condition, the answer is no.

However, some people have the same symptoms of macular degeneration but for a different reason. They have leaking or swelling blood vessels in the macula. Different forms of laser treatment may help them.

### **Can I be helped to see better?**

Your GP or optometrist can refer you to the Low Vision Clinic at the hospital, which offers a choice of magnifying aids.

### **Low-vision aids**

Many optometrists have some low-vision aids you could buy.

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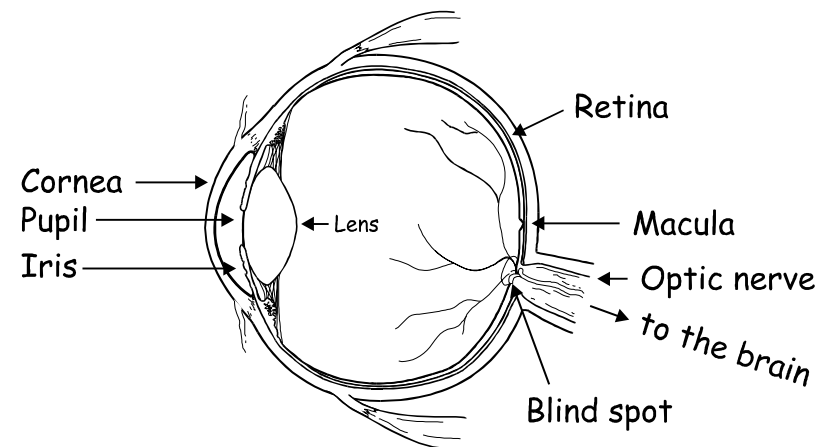
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## Patient Information Leaflet



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