



**Covid-19  
Important  
Information**

# Helping you manage your **Wet** (neovascular) **Age-related Macular Degeneration** (wAMD) during **Covid-19**

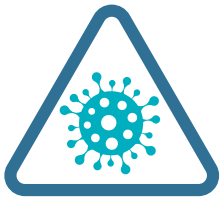
**Your eye health is important.**

**If you notice a sudden change or distortion  
in your vision, please contact your eyecare  
professional immediately and make sure to keep  
up with your eye appointments.**

**Keep an eye on your  
vision, visit [amd.ie](http://amd.ie)  
for more information.**

**we'll   
see you**





The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected people living with Wet AMD. Alongside changes to your eye clinic care arrangements, your daily life and interactions with your support network may be noticeably different. This information is designed to help answer some questions that you might have at this time.

## About wet (neovascular) age-related macular degeneration (wet AMD or nvAMD)



Wet AMD is the leading cause of severe vision loss and legal blindness in people over the age of 65 in North America, Europe, Australia and Asia<sup>1</sup>. However, effective treatments for managing the progression of wet AMD are available.

Wet AMD is treated with injections of anti-VEGF medications into the eye. The injections are administered by your ophthalmologist (eye doctor) on a continuing basis and the frequency may vary. Your treatment plan for wet AMD should be discussed thoroughly with your ophthalmologist.

Similar to other chronic diseases, it is important to be proactive and closely monitor your vision as advised by your eye doctor.

# What is wet AMD?

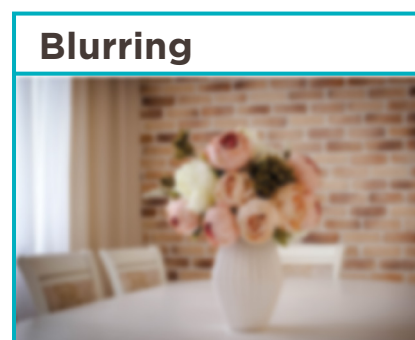


Wet age-related macular degeneration (wAMD) develops when abnormal blood vessels grow into the macula.<sup>2</sup> These leak blood or fluid which leads to scarring of the macula and loss of central vision<sup>2</sup>. Wet AMD can develop very suddenly but it can now be treated if caught early.<sup>2</sup> A prompt referral to an ophthalmologist is essential.

# What are the symptoms of wet AMD?

Macular disease affects people in different ways<sup>2</sup>

- Gaps or dark spots (like a smudge on glasses) may appear in your vision, especially first thing in the morning
- Objects in front of you might change shape, size or colour or seem to move or disappear
- Words might disappear when you are reading and digits difficult to determine
- Straight lines such as door frames and lamp posts may appear distorted or bent.



# I have wet AMD, can I still see my eye doctor?



At the time of publication, all routine appointments in eye clinics have been, and will likely continue to be, postponed. However, treatment injections for wet AMD, and other conditions, which could cause severe visual loss if not treated, are still going ahead. These appointments are happening at a reduced rate, on a case by case basis. Please get in touch with your hospital regarding this if you are worried.

However, if you are experiencing symptoms of the coronavirus infection it's important you do not go to your local hospital. Should you have an appointment, call your eye clinic and they will rearrange your treatment for when any symptoms have subsided.

If you do not have any reason to suspect that you may have coronavirus infection, you should attend your scheduled appointment, unless advised otherwise by your hospital eye clinic.

For more information please see the Irish College of Ophthalmologists website <https://www.eyedoctors.ie/press-release/April-8-2020/ICO-Statement-Important-Advice-for-the-Public-and-Eye-Care-Patients-during-COVID-19/124.html>

# Is it safe for me to attend my wet AMD injections during this C-19 pandemic?



Yes, your safety is a priority and all hospitals and healthcare professionals are taking the necessary safety precautions as outlined by the HSE.

However, your experience may be different now as follows;

- Staff members could be wearing masks and gloves
- Ophthalmologists could be wearing eye and mouth shields to prevent virus transmission during close examinations
- You may be asked questions about fever, cough, travel history, and the travel history of family members
- Reduced number of patients in the waiting room
- You may have to wash your hands immediately upon arrival
- Surfaces are regularly disinfected
- The ophthalmologist will speak as little as possible during parts of the examination, and may request that the patient also refrain from talking in these moments
- Positioning chairs in the waiting room at a recommended social distance
- Online consultations

The above changes may be implemented in your eye unit in order to maximise care and safety during your visit. For individual hospital enquiries please visit the hospital or eye unit website.

# How can I manage my wet macular degeneration at home during Covid-19?

You should continue to monitor any changes in your vision and notify your eye care specialist by phone, in the first instance, if you notice any changes.

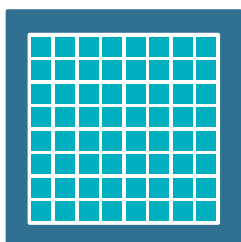
However, at home, an **Amsler Grid** can be used to monitor changes to your central vision; you can download this at [www.amd.ie](http://www.amd.ie) or ask your eye doctor for one.

An Amsler Grid is a simple test that checks for signs of fluid leakage in the central area of the retina<sup>3</sup>. It works by identifying any distortion in your central vision. If you have been advised to monitor your vision for signs of distortion, you should test yourself with this grid regularly.

Of course, as at any time, you should continue to adhere to general health advice to reduce the risk of macular degeneration progression. This includes:

- Stop smoking
- A healthy, balanced diet
- Avoid excess UV exposure by wearing appropriate sunglasses when outside on very sunny days

Also, as you may be staying at home more often now, it's important you keep your home safe. For tips and advice on how to adapt your home and maintain your independence visit [www.amd.ie](http://www.amd.ie).



**Download your own copy  
of the Amsler Grid at [www.amd.ie](http://www.amd.ie)**

## Where can I find out more information about support and resources available?



The following is a list of support services and organisations that may help you;



NCBI is the national sight loss organisation, working for people with sight loss.

They provide practical and emotional support, rehabilitation services, technology supports and other training designed to help people with sight loss to live independently and confidently.

**Tel:** 1850 33 43 53

**Website:** [www.ncbi.ie](http://www.ncbi.ie)

**For C-19 related podcasts on vision loss visit**  
<http://www.ncbi.ie/ncbi-podcast/>



Fighting Blindness is a patient-led charity with a vision to cure blindness, support people living with sight loss and empower patients. They are the only Irish charity funding research into treatments for sight loss – giving people, both young and old, hope for the future.

**Tel:** +353 1 678 9004

**Website:** [www.fightingblindness.ie](http://www.fightingblindness.ie)



INFORMATION ON  
AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION

Maintaining good eye health is important so you keep your vision to see the things you love.

**www.amd.ie** provides you with information and resources to help you monitor your sight at home such as the AMD Symptom Checker and downloadable Amsler Grid, as well as helpful articles on well-being and tips for a safer home for those living with AMD and for their carers.

**Website:** [www.amd.ie](http://www.amd.ie)

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## References

1. Schmidt-Erfurth U, et al. Guidelines for the management of neovascular age-related macular degeneration by the European Society of Retina Specialists (EURETINA). Br J Ophthalmol. 2014;98:1144-1167.
2. <https://www.macularsociety.org/wet-amd>. Accessed May 2020.
3. Schwartz R, Loewenstein A. Early detection of age related macular degeneration: current status. Int J Retina Vitreous. 2015;1:20.