

# Rapid Access AMD Service

## **Why have I been referred to the Rapid access macular clinic?**

You have been referred to the Rapid access macular clinic because we suspect that you may have changes related to wet age-related macular degeneration.

## **What is Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)?**

AMD is a condition that affects the central part of your vision, causing distortion, reduction of vision or a blank patch. This usually affects people aged over 60 but can happen earlier. In the UK, around 700,000 people are affected by AMD.

There are two main types of AMD – dry and wet.

*Dry AMD* is caused by a gradual wear and tear of the central retina.

If the eye were a camera, the retina would be the equivalent of a film/sensor which captures the images of what we see.

*Wet AMD* is caused by the growth of abnormal blood vessels under the central retina. Leakage from these blood vessels can lead to a rapid loss of central vision. For this reason, it requires prompt treatment.

## **How do I prepare for the hospital visit?**

You will be contacted by phone to be given the details of the time and date of your appointment at the hospital eye clinic. Please bring your up-to-date list of medications with you for the appointment. Please also bring your usual distance glasses.

## **How long will the appointment take?**

Your appointment may take an hour to complete.

## **What can I expect on the day?**

Upon arrival, your vision will be checked, after which you will undergo an OCT scan of your retina.

*Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) scan* is an imaging technique that reveals individual layers of your retina. This involves taking photographs with a flash, of the back of your eye.

## **What happens after the investigations?**

Following the eye tests, you would be sent home. Your results will be passed on to a doctor or trained allied healthcare professional who will perform a thorough assessment of the tests and determine whether you have wet AMD or not. Should you have wet AMD, we will make a treatment plan and contact you with a treatment date.

Should you have macular disease that is not wet AMD, you would be notified of that, including the plan for your next checkup.

If however, the professional who assesses your scans feels that you require further investigations (FFA, ICG – see below) to confirm the diagnosis, a separate appointment would be sent out to you.

*Fluorescein angiography (FFA)* is a procedure where a small amount of yellow dye (fluorescein) will be injected into a vein in your arm. This is followed by a series of photographs of the back of the eye. The dye travels along the blood vessels of the retina, highlighting any leaking blood vessels. You will require dilating drops to allow good quality images to be taken of your eye. The angiogram test typically takes between 10-15 minutes, though your appointment may take up to an hour, or sometimes longer.

*Indocyanine green angiography (ICG)* is similar to FFA. This involves an injection of indocyanine green dye together with the fluorescein dye.

### **How is wet AMD treated?**

Wet AMD is treated by injections into the eyeball. These work by controlling the growth of new blood vessels and reducing the risk of disease progression.

The eye would initially be made numb with eyedrops. After the surface of the eyeball has been made sterile using antiseptics, the drug is then administered by a very fine needle. [see link to resources at the end of this leaflet]

### **Where can I find more information about AMD?**

More information can be found at

- NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/age-related-macular-degeneration-amd/>

- Macular society

Advise or information service: 0300 3030 111 or email:

[help@macularsociety.org](mailto:help@macularsociety.org)

<https://www.macularsociety.org/age-related-macular-degeneration>

- Further information for patients who have been diagnosed to have wet AMD

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Making-a-decision-about-wet-age-related-macular-degeneration.pdf>