

Macular Edema

This material will help you understand macular edema, its causes, and how it is treated.

What is macular edema?

Macular edema occurs when the macula swells or thickens. The macula is the central part of the retina and is responsible for your most precise vision. It allows you to read small print, thread needles, and read street signs from far away. The retina is the thin layer lining the back of your eye that senses light. It is like the film of the eye, capturing the images we see. When the macula is swollen, it does not work properly. This may result in blurry vision and vision loss

What causes macular edema?

Macular edema is caused by the tiny blood vessels under or in the retina breaking and leaking blood or fluid. The leaking of these fluids may cause the macula to swell. Certain conditions can lead to the development of macular edema. These include age-related macular degeneration, diabetes, uveitis (inflammation), and retinal vein occlusions (blocked blood vessels).

How is macular edema treated?

Different treatments are used for macular edema, depending on the cause.

- **Anti-VEGF (anti-vascular endothelial growth factor) Therapy:** Your eye doctor injects these drugs into your eye. It can shut down the leaky blood vessels and stop the growth of abnormal blood vessels that break easily. This will slow the amount of leakage in the macula and can help to prevent vision loss. These injections may need to be repeated.

- **Anti-inflammatory eye drops or steroid injections:** These may help stop the leaky blood vessels. Not all conditions can be treated this way, however.
- **Laser surgery:** In this treatment, the doctor focuses tiny laser pulses on the areas near the macula where the fluid is leaking. This seals the vessels that are leaking and causing the macula to swell. The main goal of laser surgery is to prevent more vision loss. You may need more than one treatment over time to seal all the leaking vessels.

You and your doctor will discuss the treatment that is best for you and s/he will answer any questions that you may have.

For more information, scan this code with your smartphone or visit the website listed.



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/macular-edema.cfm>

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Last Revised 02/2015