

## Patient Information

# Macular Degeneration

## Eye Unit

### What is Macular Degeneration?

Dry macular degeneration is an eye disease that usually affects people over sixty years of age. Damage occurs in the central part of the retina (muscle) used for fine detailed vision. In most people the eyesight gets worse slowly, over many months or years.

In some people with wet macular degeneration bleeding occurs behind the retina. This causes a sudden drop in central vision over a few days.

### What are the symptoms?

The first symptom may be difficulty in reading. Letters appear to run into one another or become jumbled. Some people notice distortion, for example straight lines look bent. Later a blank patch may appear in the central vision. This makes it hard to recognise faces and unsafe to drive.

### Will I go blind?

No. However bad the central vision becomes the peripheral or side vision remains. This allows you to find your own way around in familiar surroundings.

### What treatment is available?

For most people with dry macular degeneration there is no medical treatment available.

Currently the most effective treatment for wet macular degeneration are a course of injections administered into the eye. They act to slow or stop the growth of the abnormal blood vessels and leakage that causes wet macular degeneration delaying progression of the disease. Your eye specialist will discuss the options available.

### How can I get the most out of my remaining sight?

1. Make sure that your glasses are checked regularly by an optician.
2. Use low vision aids such as magnifying glasses. Your **eye specialist** can arrange an assessment for these.

3. Use a bright light for close work.

### **Can I be registered as partially sighted or blind?**

If your central vision is very poor your eye specialist may suggest that you be registered as practically sighted or even blind. A separate leaflet is available dealing with this.

**“This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**