

Beckman Classification

The Beckman AMD classification system provides guidance for broad clinical pheno-type.¹ Consensus was achieved in generating this basic clinical classification system based on fundus lesions assessed within 2 disc diameters of the fovea in persons older than 55 years. The Beckman Initiative for Macular Research Committee agreed that a single term, age-related macular degeneration, should be used for the disease.

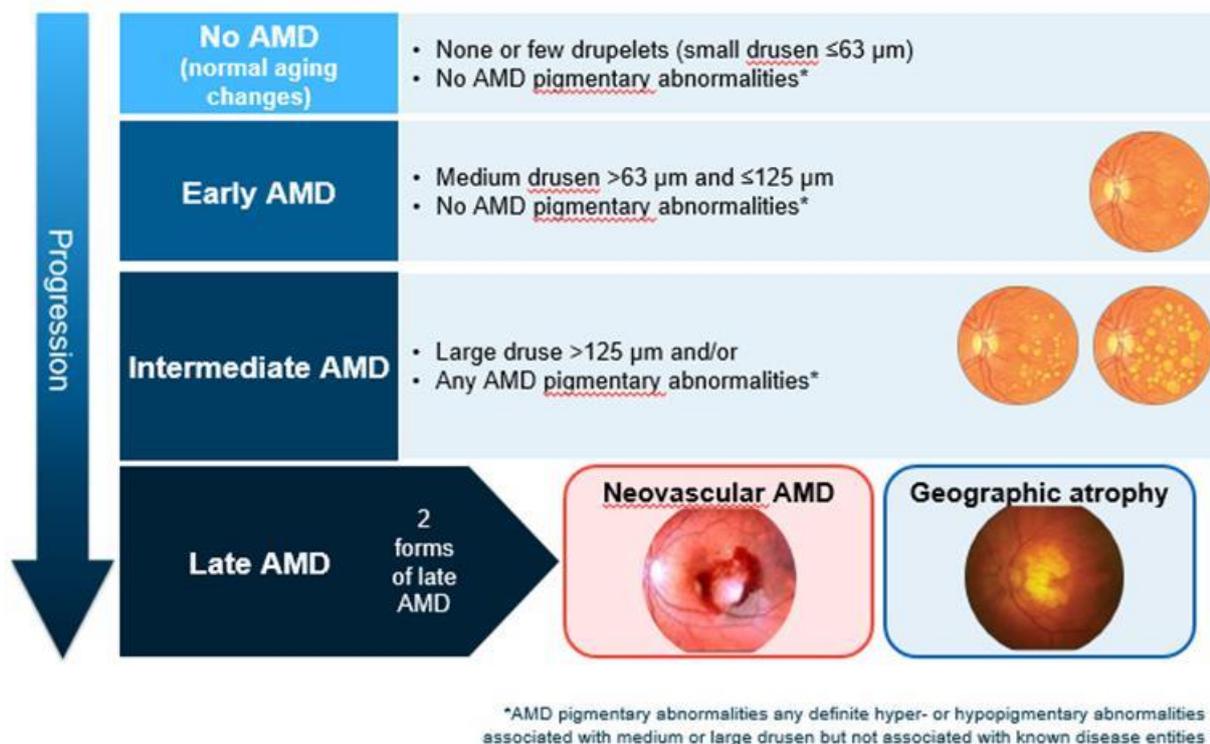


Figure 1: The Beckman Initiative for Macular Research Committee: AMD classification.

Normal aging changes: Small drusen particles ($\leq 63 \mu\text{m}$) can appear in the retina as part of the normal aging process, and are not associated with an increased risk of progression to late-stage AMD.

Early AMD is diagnosed based on the presence of medium-sized drusen (>63 and $\leq 125 \mu\text{m}$), but is not usually associated with any loss of visual function or other symptoms.²³

Intermediate AMD is characterised by the presence of large drusen ($>125 \mu\text{m}$), abnormalities in the retinal pigment, or both. Intermediate AMD also tends to be asymptomatic. People who develop intermediate AMD are at an increased risk of developing late-stage AMD.

¹ Ferris FL, 3rd, Wilkinson CP, Bird A, Chakravarthy U, Chew E, Csaky K, *et al.* Clinical classification of age-related macular degeneration. *Ophthalmology*. 2013;120(4): 844-851.

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Late AMD is associated with central vision loss that occurs as a result of damage to the macula. Late-stage AMD is further classified into two clinical forms:

- **Geographic atrophy (GA)** (also known as ‘dry’ or ‘non-exudative’ AMD) is characterised by the progressive, irreversible loss of the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE), photoreceptor cells, and underlying choriocapillaris layer of the macula, resulting in a decline in visual function. There are currently no approved treatments that either prevent or delay the progression of GA.
- **Neovascular AMD** (also known as ‘wet’ or ‘exudative’ AMD) is defined by growth and invasion of immature blood vessels from the underlying choroid into the retina (a process known as ‘choroidal neovascularization [CNV]’). Leakage from these fragile blood vessels can cause build-up of blood and fluid under the retina leading to detachment of the RPE or retina and scarring. This can result in rapid vision loss that can take place within weeks or days if left untreated.