

END-OF-YEAR DUAL ISSUE

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Newsletter from the Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 531313 Henderson, NV 89053
<http://www.eyesight.org>

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HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN A CLINICAL TRIAL

For internet users, click on <http://www.nei.nih.gov//neitrials/participate.asp>. If you are interested in participating in any of the studies available that are currently recruiting patients, please contact the office of the study chair listed in the description. The NIH encourages you to share information about the study with your eye care professional. Your ophthalmologist or retinal specialist will be able to help you decide if a study is right for you and to provide the study researchers with details about your diagnosis and medical history.

If you are not an internet user and would like to contact the NIH Clinical Center Information Line, call 1-866-444-8805.

To learn more or to volunteer for the Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2, contact 1-877-273-3780 for a list of the national study centers, eligibility requirements, and other information. Internet users may click on <http://www.nei.nih.gov/AREDS2>.

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From: The Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide
“Drug Expiration Dates – Do They Mean Anything?”

This article is interesting because many of our subscribers face a dilemma when they notice an expiration date on an over-the counter drug or a prescription.

“It turns out that the expiration date on a drug does stand for something, but probably not what you think it does. Since a law was passed in 1979, drug manufacturers are required to stamp an expiration date on their products. This is the date at which the manufacturer can still guarantee the full potency and safety of the drug.

Most of what is known about drug expiration dates comes from a study conducted by the Food and Drug Administration at the request of the military. With a large and expensive stockpile of drugs, the military faced tossing out and replacing its drugs every few years. What they found from the study is 90% of more than 100 drugs, both prescription and over-the-counter, were perfectly good to use even 15 years after the expiration date."

In regards to eye vitamins and supplements that consist of minerals and natural vitamins, it has been suggested that these formulas may be even more molecularly stable than the regular over the counter remedies like aspirin. However, this information should be used with caution and your physician or pharmacist should be consulted if you have any questions.

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CAN REGULAR EXERCISE DECREASE THE RISK OF AMD?

From www.seniorjournal.com

The answer is YES! "By as much as 70% according to research published in the British Journal of Ophthalmology."

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MACULAR DEGENERATION FOUNDATION BECOMES A FINANCIAL SPONSOR FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MACULAR DEGENERATION SUPPORT GROUP

Providing information to MD patients so they can be effective self-advocates in their eye-care plan has been an important part of our mission. In a measure, this goal is met with our web site, packets of information sent on request, and our Magnifier Newsletter that reaches over 20,000 electronic subscribers and 1600 paper copies to our friends who do not have access to a computer. Still there is a void for many people with low vision who wish to become part of a support group or start a support group in their community. To help fill this gap, the Macular Degeneration Foundation has become a financial sponsor for the INTERNATIONAL MACULAR DEGENERATION SUPPORT GROUP.

Dan Roberts, the director of Macular Degeneration Support, Inc., designed a support-group program that has reached around the world with over 100 affiliate locations. The purpose of the program is to provide free information and support through presentations to groups of senior adults affected by macular degeneration and related retinal diseases. Live presentations are simulcast to

central computers at each affiliate's location on the 2nd Thursday of each month 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. (Central Time), year-round. Groups that are not able to attend the live webcasts may access the recordings from the Internet later at their convenience.

To learn more about becoming an affiliate of this International MD Support Group or how to find an existing support group in your area: go to <http://www.mdsupport.org/> and scroll down to the IMDSG icon. When you click on the icon, you will be guided through the necessary steps including the operating system and technical information you will need to host the presentation. All new affiliates are the recipients of a large "goodie" package free of charge. There are no charges for any support group services. If you are not an Internet user, please ask a friend, family member, or your local librarian for help in accessing this web site.

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FREE ONLINE VISION COURSE

From Vision AWARE.org newsletter

Rehabilitation: VisionAWARE.org is offering a free online course January 7 - February 1, 2008. The name of the course is, "First Steps in Vision Rehabilitation for Adults with Vision Loss, Families, and Community Workers." The course has four components: The Eye and Vision; Low Vision and Optical Devices; Vision Rehabilitation Services; Coping With Vision Loss; and How to Cope with Daily Tasks. To register, contact Maureen Duffy at Maureen.duffy@visionaware.org. An informative electronic VisionAWARE newsletter is available by clicking on the URL and registering. This organization is offering an incredible amount of on-line training for individuals with vision loss that extends to their friends and families. It takes a cooperative effort to create a safe and successful living environment for an individual with severe vision loss.

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GENE LINKED TO AGGRESSIVE 'WET' MD

Patients with HTRA1 SNP 10 times more likely to have wet MD

"A gene variant that increases the risk of developing the aggressive 'wet' form of MD is reported in two recent articles in Science by researchers at Yale School of Medicine.

Last year, Josephine Hoh, associate professor at Yale, identified a gene for dry MD and found that both wet and dry MD are associated with a variant in the complement factor H (CFH) gene on chromosome 1. Hoh now reports they have

found a single nucleotide polymorphism – a one-base change in the sequence – of the regulatory part of the HTRA1 gene on chromosome 10 that leads to greatly increased risk of developing the wet form of MD.

According to Hoh, buildup of abnormal blood vessels in caucasian patients is compounded by development of large waste deposits called drusen. Chinese patients, she said, develop little or no drusen and progress directly to wet MD.

This study demonstrates that these two major genes, CFH and HTRA1, in two different biological pathways, each affect the risk for a distinct component of the MD phenotype: CFH influences the drusen of dry MD, whereas HTRA1 influences blood vessel development, the hallmark of the wet disease type. When the two processes are combined, it leads to the composite characteristics that are seen in some cases of MD.”

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RHEOPHERESIS STUDIES SUSPENDED

A recent announcement made on November 1, 2007 from OccuLogix, Inc. stated that in light of the Company’s current financial position, it has indefinitely suspended its RHEO System clinical development program. This decision followed a comprehensive review of the respective costs and development time-lines associated with the products in its portfolio. The URL for OccuLogix, Inc <http://www.rheo.com/> can describe how this therapy is intended to work. You may also call 1-877-263-3937.

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TAKING TIME TO SAY “THANKS” MEANS A LOT TO US!

“Dear Liz, I am very grateful to you and the MDF foundation. The two booklets arrived yesterday afternoon and I have learned so much. The color brochure from the NIH was so well organized and could not have been better written. It filled a great gap. The ophthalmologist I saw recently was minimally informative and it was only that night and the next morning that I thought of questions I should have asked. Your kindness and just knowing that the foundation is there for me has lifted my spirits enormously.” With heartfelt thanks, Marilyn from Sacramento, CA.

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SIGHTCONNECTION

www.sightconnection.com

MDF just received a catalog of "must have" products for living with vision loss from the SightConnection. There are featured products for individual use or for gifts. To get your catalog call 1-800-458-4888 and ask for the Winter 2007-2008 catalog. For internet users, you may go to www.sightconnection.com and order products directly.

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NEED A LARGE PRINT WALL CALENDAR?

Guild for the Blind (www.guildfortheblind.org)

Call (312) 236-8569 and you can order a large print wall calendar along with a 20/20 pen for only \$12.00. The large print date book is only \$10.00. A handling fee of \$3.00 will apply to each order. To order online: email Brian Hollandsworth at brian@guildfortheblind.org.

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BETA-CAROTENE PROS AND CONS

It has been more than 6 years since the NIH has issued a warning about the supplement, beta-carotene, an ingredient included in many eye supplements. That warning was directed specifically to smokers and ex-smokers. Several published articles suggest that the form of beta-carotene used in vitamin supplements can be toxic to the human body. The Institute of Medicine states "beta-carotene supplements are not advisable for the general population." For individuals who want to buy foods that will put more beta-carotene in their diet, these are some suggestions from www.whfoods.org: sweet potatoes, carrots, kale, spinach, turnip greens, winter squash, collard greens, cilantro and fresh thyme. These foods may be eaten raw, lightly steamed, or fully cooked. However, carrots are actually more nutritious when cooked whole (cutting them before cooking may compromise the protein and soluble carbohydrate value).

Do foods high in beta-carotene present a risk factor? No, current studies suggest that it is the supplement, beta-carotene, rather than the natural beta-carotene from your diet that causes the risk factor.

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MDF IS ANNOUNCING A NEW SERVICE

With a death in the family, many times family members are looking for a place to donate electronic readers that provide magnification needs for MD patients with severe vision loss. These machines are very expensive and many individuals simply cannot afford the cost. With a simple phone call to 1-888-633-3937, we will pay for the packing and shipping through UPS. We will also send a tax-deductible receipt. We have a screening process in place that ensures the contribution of these devices go to individuals with a low, fixed income and will truly make a difference in their lives. We have been able to place several "recycled" machines this year and we are hoping our program will expand to help many more individuals next year.

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CONTACTING MDF

To speak to a support representative directly, you may call 1-888-633-3937. If you reach our voice mail, please speak slowly and distinctly.

ORDERING BOOKS & TAPES

When purchasing items from Amazon.com, please remember to use the MDF search box located at <http://www.eyesight.org/Books/books.html> . By simply originating your search from our website, Amazon rewards the Foundation with a small commission from each product you order. Thank you.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS:

Please make checks payable to Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 531313, Henderson, Nevada 89053, or you may use your credit card on our web site <http://www.eyesight.org/Donations/donations.html> . Your contributions make our services available as a support system for macular degeneration patients in the following ways:

1. We provide toll-free lines for personal contact assistance.
2. We mail brochures and other printed materials upon request.
3. We support an award-winning web site that provides the latest up-to-date information.
4. We fund research proposal grants to provide therapies for both the wet and dry form of AMD. Contributions marked "research" are used 100% for research.

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MDF was founded in 1992 by Edmund J. Aleksandrovich Ph.D (a victim of macular degeneration). It provides MD patients and their families with the

information necessary to understand the disease, the latest news concerning ways to cope with the disease, and supports the efforts of researchers to find a cure.

Subscribers who wish to cancel their subscription or change their email address may visit: <http://www.eyesight.org/Newsletter/newsletter.html> .

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