

THE MAGNIFIER

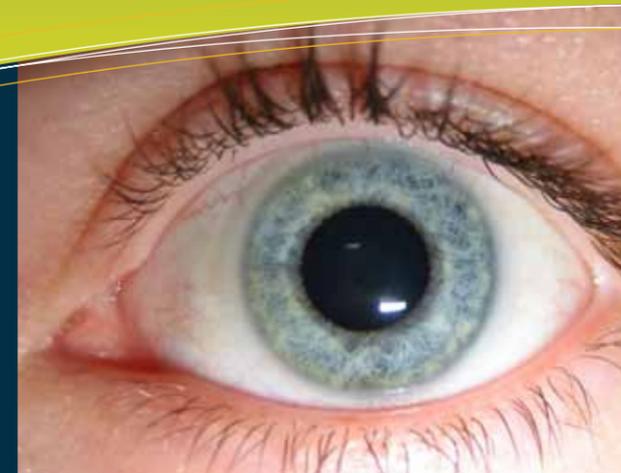
Macular Degeneration Foundation
P.O. Box 531313
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FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND

Macular
Degeneration
Foundation

The Magnifier

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iPhone Apps for the Vision Impaired

It has been said that technology has made the world smaller, but for the blind or those with poor vision, iDevices are opening up a whole new world. This iPhone AppList highlights some of the most innovative and entertaining apps available to the vision impaired.

Website Link

or type in <http://appadvice.com/applists/show/apps-for-the-visually-impaired>

Infection Risk from Repackaged Avastin

The FDA has alerted the public that repackaged intravitreal injections of off-label Avastin have caused a cluster of streptococcus endophthalmitis infections in twelve patients in the Miami, Florida area. Cases have also been more recently reported in both Tennessee and California.

Infections occurred in three Florida clinics following injection. Investigators traced the tainted drug to a single pharmacy in Hollywood, Florida. While all of the patients had previous visual deficits, some lost all remaining vision in the treated eye.

The FDA and health officials continue to investigate the cause of the infection, but they suspect that contaminations occurred during repackaging of the drug into smaller

amounts for off-label use as a treatment for wet AMD. This is a risk that Genentech, the maker of the drug, warned about when doctors began using the cancer drug Avastin in place of the approved drug, Lucentis.

Patients are encouraged to report any problems with Avastin to the FDA's MedWatch Safety Information and Adverse Event Reporting program by calling 1-800-332-1088.

Dan Roberts, Director
Intl MD Support Group



Clinical Trial Information

Call the National
Eye Institute at:

800-411-1222 or
301-496-5248

www.nei.nih.gov

NFB NEWSLINE

For all of the many benefits of the National Federation of the Blind's Newsline, call 866-504-7300 or visit www.nfbnewsline.org.

For example who would have thought you could get Target Ads and store advertisements on the NFB Newsline? Great news items read to you by selection. Take advantage of this wonderful service.

New iPhone Application

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing has launched a free downloadable application for the iPhone and iPod to assist the blind and visually impaired to denominate US currency.

EyeNote uses image recognition to determine a note's denomination and provides either an audible or vibrating response.

eyenote.gov

Resource Consultant

For assistance identifying agencies in a specific area, call Lee Boncher, Resource Consultant at 1-888-866-6148

Oxford University Scientists Prototyping Special Glasses

Using video cameras, position detectors, face recognition software, the team is working on a normal-looking pair of glasses that could help those who have just a small area of vision left, have cloudy or blurry vision, or can't process detailed images. They'd be suitable for common types of visual impairment such as age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.

"We want to be able to enhance vision in those who've lost it or who have little left or almost none," says Dr Stephen Hicks of the Department of Clinical Neurology. "The glasses should allow people to be more independent - finding their own directions and signposts, and spotting warning signals."

The glasses have video cameras mounted at the corners to capture what the wearer is looking at, while a display of tiny lights embedded in the lenses feed back extra information about objects, people or obstacles in view. Different colors could represent different people or objects, and brightness indicate how close an object is. A pocket computer recognizes objects in the video image or tracks where a person is, driving the lights in the display in real time.

"The glasses must look discreet, allow eye contact between people and present a simplified image to people with poor vision, to help them maintain independence in life," says Hicks. "These guiding principles are important for com-

ing up with an aid that is acceptable for people to wear in public, with eye contact being so important in social relationships."

The team is also working on including optical character recognition, allowing everything from newspaper headlines to barcodes to be read. Hicks reckons the glasses could cost as little as £500. The team is planning a year-long feasibility study starting later this year.



Red Raspberries

"Angela Ginn, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, says red raspberries are full of antioxidant phytonutrients, particularly tannin, which gives them their purplish hue. (White and black raspberries, she says, are nutritious but don't have tannin.) Tannin may help protect against some cancers and macular degeneration, she says.

Ginn adds that raspberry seeds provide fiber. And the berries themselves, she says, are an "excellent" source of Vitamin C.

One cup of raspberries has 60 calories, a third of the fiber you need in a day and more than half your daily Vitamin C.

Ginn likes to add raspberries to her morning oatmeal

and to yogurt. She recommends you toss some into a salad or "cook them down on the stove to make a glaze for chicken or pork tenderloin." And be sure to freeze some for winter. Frozen berries are just as nutritious, Ginn says."

from:
Washington Post

OHR Pharm Announces Eye Drop Drug Delivery for Wet AMD

Squalamine, as a drug for wet AMD, has been in the news for several years.

Originally it was tested as an IV infusion which was not practical for patient use.

OHR now has a clear pathway to Phase 2b clinical trials with Squalamine as an eye drop formulation.

This delivery system is currently still in animal trials.

We Appreciate Your Support

Donations

The Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc. is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization.

Please visit our website at eyesight.org to make a tax deductible donation. Checks may be mailed to:

Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc.,
P.O. Box 531313,
Henderson, NV 89053

Call: 888-633-3937 (USA)
Call: 702-450-2908 (Intl)
Email: liz@eyesight.org

Self-Help Guide

People who are in the intermediate to late stage of vision loss may consider making the transition from visual to nonvisual practices in some daily activities.

A free guide is available from MD Support that features a self evaluation of 21 personal daily living activities.

It is available for download at www.mdsupport.org/guide.pdf



Astaxanthin the Super Antioxidant

Slice an apple and set it on the counter for 10 min ... the pulp of the apple turns brown. The oxygen in the air caused the cells of the apple to start to rot right before your eyes. That's oxidation.

When the cells of your eyes use oxygen in normal respiration, certain byproducts are formed, like hydrogen peroxide (the same stuff in your medicine cabinet). When you have an eye disease such as macular degeneration, these byproducts have a damaging oxidative effect on the cells of the retina. Antioxidant substances fight against oxidative damage by replacing the stolen electrons as fast as they are taken.

The continual quest of the researchers is to find the most powerful anti-oxidant to combat this terrible destruction.

Very recently a super-antioxidant called Astaxanthin (pronounced astazan-thin), was discovered. Research has shown it to be 5 times stronger than Lutein, 10 times more powerful than beta-carotene, and 100 to 500 times more effective than Vitamin E.

Dr. Mark Tso of the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins University has clearly demonstrated that astaxanthin is the winner when it comes to protecting your eyes. He discovered that astaxanthin easily crosses into the tissues of the eye and

exerts its effects safely and with more potency than any of the other carotenoids, without adverse reactions.

Specifically, Tso determined astaxanthin could ameliorate or prevent light induced damage, photoreceptor cell damage, ganglion cell damage, and damage to the neurons of the inner retinal layers. Thus, it could be effective in preventing or treating a whole host of eye diseases.

Astaxanthin, has now been incorporated into an eye vitamin called Eye Health Formula. For information on Eye Health Formula call 1-800-924-4393.

Product Review by Low Vision Specialist

Dr. Joe Fontenot - Director of Community Services for Vision Rehab

Today, the cost of the standard desktop CCTV (\$2,500 to \$3,000) is out of the price range for the average consumer on a fixed income. However, there are now affordable hand-held or "mouse" CCTVs that cost less than \$100. Plugging into a standard television set, they offer white-on-black,

black-on-white, color and freeze frame modes. The image produced is not quite as crisp as with the standard desktop CCTV, but is adequate for reading. With a \$30 USB connector, a computer screen may be used rather than a TV. A 1-year warranty is standard. For more information con-

tact Community Services for Vision Rehabilitation (CSVR) at 1-251-476-4744 or e-mail visionrehab@bellsouth.net. You may also call Optogon at 1-800-924-4393 for more information

Miniature Telescope

The Implantable Miniature Telescope developed by VisionCare Ophthalmic Technologies, Inc. has been approved by the FDA to improve vision in patients with end-stage age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Eligible patients must either have associated central vision blindness that has stopped responding to AMD medications, or have a form of the disease for which no treatment is available. Medicare/Medicaid has granted a new billing code, C1840, enabling reimbursement for covered procedures.

ALCON Sponsors Assistance Program for ICAP Vitamins

It is not unusual for subscribers to confess they cannot afford eye vitamins.

Folks on a fixed income must choose each month what purchases they can afford.

If you qualify, Alcon will provide ICAPS, an eye supplement, to AMD patients.

You may call 1-800-222-8103 for more information.

MDSupport.org has the world's largest source of free information with a 850 page website; internet discussion groups; large audio/visual library; and most importantly, telephone support groups.

For more information call Dan Roberts at 816-761-7080 or visit this incredible website at mdsupport.org.

A Message from the Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology

Support groups have been a tremendous success. This has been confirmed over and over with such diverse groups as Alcoholics Anonymous, Breast Cancer patients, etc.

The concept of a group acting together allows individuals to achieve a level of acceptance and assistance they might not achieve on their own. We believe this strongly at the Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology relative to persons of any age who lose some, or most, of their central vision.

To the best of our

knowledge, we run the largest support groups for patients with macular degeneration in the United States. Some of this success is a result of our creating a system which provides these services free of charge to our members for the meetings.

Additionally, because all of these people have lost their driver's license, our transportation system delivers members to each meeting. These factors help explain our success.

Recently, our support group leader, Nancy Pilorget,

has completed A Guide to Starting a Support Group for the Visually Impaired manual. It will assist others working in the low vision field in creating support groups which will truly lift a portion of the burden of our fellow men suffering from loss of vision. The Guide, available in the near future by accessing the DIO website (www.eyeson.org), will be of great value to support group leaders and members.

Philip Hessburg MD

President
Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology

College of Optometry Receives Study Grant

The MD Foundation has funded a \$10,000 grant to Pacific University's College of Optometry in Forest Grove, Oregon. The grant will be used to study (1) the association between cholesterol levels and lipofuscin accumulation in people with AMD and (2) to determine if yellow filters (which protect the eye from bright exam lights) impair diagnostic judgement.

Hallucinations are Often Misdiagnosed as a Psychotic Disorder!

Free video explains hallucinations brought on by low vision

What many psychiatrists, psychologists, and neurologists don't know, but many low vision patients do, is that hallucinations are not all psychotic.

Identified over 250 years ago, Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) remains virtually unknown by most physicians. It is characterized by visual hallucinations ranging from simple patterns, faces, and landscapes to complex motion pictures of strange and sometimes disturbing scenes. Sometimes compared to phantom limb syndrome, CBS affects individuals with diminished eyesight whose

brains attempt to compensate for the loss of normal input. Those who are affected report that the syndrome can be irritating, but it is harmless.

The Macular Degeneration Foundation (eyesight.org) offers a free 40 minute video online in an effort to draw the attention of the professional community and to educate and reassure the visually impaired that they aren't "going crazy". The video features a TED Talks (www.ted.com) presentation by renowned author/scientist Dr. Oliver Sacks, followed by an interview with 93-year-

old retired educator Marge Louer, who tells her personal story of coping with Charles Bonnet Syndrome. If you do not receive an electronic newsletter, you may call 888-633-3937 to order the DVD for your home or support group use.

The MDF hopes this will help bring awareness of a condition that is often tragically misdiagnosed and mistreated by otherwise well-meaning professionals who work with the human mind. ([Link to Video](#))

Tips for Reconnizing Faces

1. Say "Hello" to elicit a response that may help you to identify the person
2. Get closer to make your blind spot smaller thereby covering less of their face
3. Engage in small talk and listen for clues
4. Move to get the light behind you and more on their face
5. Feel free to ask, "What is your name?"
6. Use a white-tipped cane to make it obvious why you don't recognize them