



British and Éire Association of Medical Retina Specialists

Retinal diseases refer to a variety of conditions that affect the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye that captures images and sends them to the brain. These diseases can lead to vision impairment or blindness if not treated appropriately. Some common retinal diseases include:

1. Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD):

- A leading cause of vision loss in people over 50.
- Affects the macula, the central part of the retina, leading to blurred or reduced central vision.
- There are two types: dry AMD (gradual vision loss) and wet AMD (faster vision loss due to abnormal blood vessel growth).

2. Diabetic Retinopathy:

- Occurs as a complication of diabetes.
- High blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels in the retina, leading to vision problems.
- Can progress through stages, from mild non-proliferative to proliferative diabetic retinopathy, which can cause blindness if untreated.

3. Retinal Detachment:

- Occurs when the retina pulls away from its normal position, which can lead to permanent vision loss if not treated promptly.
- Symptoms may include sudden flashes of light, floaters, or a shadow or curtain in the field of vision.

4. Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP):

- A group of genetic disorders that lead to the gradual degeneration of the retina.
- Often starts with difficulty seeing in low light and progresses to peripheral vision loss, and eventually, central vision loss.

5. Macular oedema:

- Swelling or thickening of the macula, often due to conditions like diabetic retinopathy, retinal vein occlusion, or after cataract surgery.
- Can cause blurred or distorted central vision.

6. Retinal Vein Occlusion (RVO):

- A blockage of the veins in the retina, which can lead to bleeding, swelling, and vision loss.
- There are two types: central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) and branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO).

7. Uveitis:

- Inflammation of the uvea, the middle layer of the eye, which can affect the retina.
- Can cause pain, redness, light sensitivity, and vision changes.

8. Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP):

- A condition that affects premature infants, especially those who were born before 31 weeks of gestation.
- Can cause abnormal blood vessel growth in the retina, which can lead to retinal detachment and blindness if untreated.

Symptoms of Retinal Disease:

- Blurred or distorted vision
- Sudden vision loss or reduced field of vision
- Flashes of light or floaters (small spots or strands that float in the field of vision)
- Difficulty seeing at night
- Central vision loss or blind spots

Treatment Options:

- Laser Therapy: To treat abnormal blood vessels, such as in diabetic retinopathy or retinal vein occlusion.
- Anti-VEGF Injections: For conditions like wet macular degeneration, these injections help stop the growth of abnormal blood vessels in the retina.
- Surgery: In cases of retinal detachment, a surgical procedure may be needed to reattach the retina.
- Corticosteroids: To reduce inflammation in conditions like macular edema or uveitis.
- Vitrectomy: A surgical procedure to remove vitreous gel and blood from the eye in some retinal diseases.

If you suspect you have a retinal disease, it is essential to see an eye care professional for a thorough examination and early diagnosis, as some conditions can be treated more effectively when caught early.