

# Daily living skills

**Support throughout central vision loss**

Advice, hints and tips on managing daily life with macular disease. This leaflet is available on audio CD.

**No one need face macular degeneration alone.  
For information and support call 0300 3030 111.**

If you have macular disease it can feel as though you are on your own. In fact there is a lot of support available.

Remember, even if you cannot be treated for your macular condition, you will not lose all your sight. Peripheral, side vision, is not affected. People with macular conditions often find things take longer than before but, by learning new tricks and habits, they are able to manage very well.

Many of the hints and tips in this leaflet are from our members – they are the experts

on living with macular disease!

- Make the lighting in your home bright and even. Reduce glare wherever possible. Use task lighting to highlight what you are working on. Plain, pale decor reflects light into the room. Often, improving lighting and reducing glare is enough. See our leaflet **Lighting**.
- Make the most of aids like non-slip mats, reading stands and magnifiers.
- Use ‘talking’ equipment such as microwaves, watches,

scales, timers and audible items like bath temperature alerts.

- Large face clocks, watches and mobile phones are easier to see.

Use contrasting colours to make it easier to differentiate items. For example:

- Paint window and door frames a different colour from the walls
- Use different coloured chopping boards for different food types
- Contrast crockery with tablecloths so they are easier to see



**Use task lighting and contrasting colour in the kitchen.**

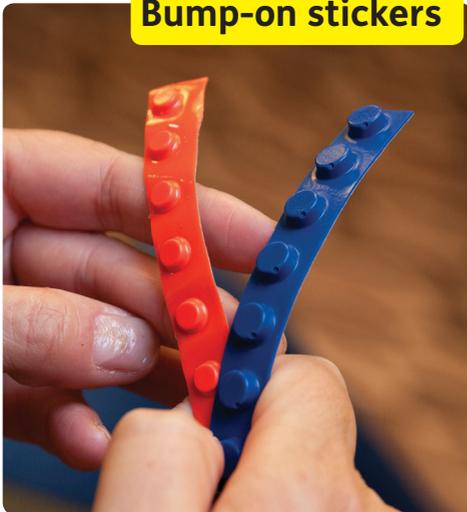
- Wrap brightly coloured tape around the handles of utensils and tools to make them easier to find
- Use raised coloured stickers to mark the most used setting on appliances like the oven and washing

machine or to find a keyhole or the buttons on the radio.

You can also use them to mark the central '5' on a telephone keypad so you can navigate to other numbers.

These bump-on stickers are widely available from organisations such as RNIB or the Partially Sighted Society.

**Bump-on stickers**



- Use a liquid level indicator when pouring drinks and put the cups on a tray to contain spills.
- An easy way to tell which is the shampoo bottle and which is the conditioner is to put an elastic band round one of them.
- Use a clothes peg to keep your shoes in pairs. It makes wearing one brown shoe and one black one less likely!
- Use a thick black felt tip pen and write in bigger letters to help you see your own writing. Try using yellow paper – some

people find this easier to see.

- A writing frame can help keep lines of writing straight and a signature guide helps when signing documents.
- Keep a pocket dictation machine by the telephone to record messages.
- Hi-tech equipment such as e-readers, smart phones, ipads, computers and closed circuit television readers can help you read, and manage your written work, access information and keep in touch with friends

and family. Large keyboards and audio software can help you make the most of your computer.

- Consider carrying a symbol cane. This is a short white stick which indicates that you have a visual impairment. Not everyone wants to carry one all the time but they fold up and are useful in situations where you might want help such as in a shop or at a bus stop.
- In general, telling people you have a visual impairment because of macular disease will help them understand more

about it and can make your life easier.

For example, people with macular disease often worry that they will accidentally walk past friends without recognising them, perhaps upsetting them. Letting people know will help avoid misunderstandings.

- There are ways to tell when it's safe to cross the road at a pedestrian crossing. Some crossings make a bleeping noise. Others have a small cone-shaped bump under the control button box that spins when it's safe to cross. Others have a

vibrating plate under the control box.

- You don't automatically have to stop driving if you have a macular condition. However, if you are diagnosed with it in both eyes you must inform the DVLA.  
  
If you need to stop driving and are registered as sight-impaired you may be entitled to travel discounts. Find out more from our Driving leaflet (MS005).
- Books, newspapers and magazines are available in large print or audio formats.

- Adapting the way you watch TV or upgrading your set might improve your viewing.
- In Touch is a BBC Radio 4 programme. It features items on many aspects of dealing with sight loss including benefits, new treatments and special events. Tune in every Tuesday at 8.40pm.

### Support and rehabilitation

Sometimes you need more than just everyday tips. There are many services offering advice tailored to your personal needs and we strongly recommend

that you make use of them.

### Health services

Some eye clinics have an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) or similar role. They work with people coming to terms with sight loss and their family or friends who also need to adjust to this change.

ECLOs can give invaluable advice on all matters relating to sight loss, from information about your condition to helping you identify support services to suit you.

ECLOs give you the chance to talk things through with someone who is not directly involved in your changing situation. Some are seen by appointment, others you can see by just dropping in.

It is a good idea to have a low vision assessment. This will help you decide whether things like optical magnifiers will be useful to you and help you learn to use them. You can be shown how to use your vision more effectively.

In some areas you can refer yourself to a low vision service for an

assessment, in others you will be referred by your consultant, optician, ECLO or GP.

### **Sensory Services**

Sensory teams are part of your local council's Adult Services. They specialise in helping people with sight and/or hearing loss to remain independent and safe. They may visit you at home to assess your individual needs and can advise you about benefits, lighting and low vision equipment.

They can also suggest techniques to help you get around in and out

of the home, taking care of your appearance, preparing food and taking medicines.

### **Local sight loss societies**

Many areas have local societies that offer help and advice to people with sight loss. They may have a resource centre where you can try out and buy aids and equipment.

The RNIB has leaflets about daily living skills and a catalogue of helpful products.

0303 123 9999

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

The Partially Sighted Society has information and products to help with daily living.

0844 477 4966

[www.partsight.org.uk](http://www.partsight.org.uk)  
[info@partsight.org.uk](mailto:info@partsight.org.uk)

AbilityNet runs computer training courses for people with a visual impairment.

0800 269 545

[www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)  
[enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk)

## How we can help

We are the national charity for anyone affected by central vision loss. We provide free information and support to improve lives today. We fund research so that one day we can overcome macular disease.

You don't have to be a Society member to use our services. We provide:

**Helpline** – confidential advice and information on all aspects of macular disease, including diagnosis, treatment and living with central vision loss.

**0300 3030 111**  
**Monday to Friday**  
**9am – 5pm**  
**help@**  
**macularsociety.org**

**Counselling** – It's natural to feel upset or angry when you're told you have a macular condition. Many people find it helps to talk, in confidence, to a professional counsellor.

**Support Groups** – we have a network of almost 300 local groups.

**Befriending** – Having a macular condition can leave you feeling isolated especially if it's hard to get out and about. Your

dedicated befriender will telephone regularly for a friendly, social chat about anything you like including, but not always, macular disease.

**Advocacy** – help accessing treatments.

**Skills for seeing** – training to make best use of remaining sight.

**Treatment buddy** – chat to people who've had treatment by injection for support and advice.

**Charles Bonnet buddy** – chat to others who've experienced visual hallucinations as a result of a macular condition.

## Join us

Many people join the Macular Society so that they can make a difference.

Your support now will give desperately needed help to people losing their sight.

To join today call

**01264 350 551**

**info@  
macularsociety.org**

and be part of a campaign for better care and fund research to find a cure.

AMD causes more than half of all blindness in Britain. 600,000 people have AMD and another 200 people are diagnosed every day.

We urgently need to find a cure and you can help today. We are the only UK charity dedicated to funding research into macular disease.

To make your vital donation and move us closer to a cure call us today or go online.

**Macular Society**

**Support throughout central vision loss**

**Macular Society**

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**01264 350 551**

**[www.macularsociety.org](http://www.macularsociety.org)**

**[info@macularsociety.org](mailto:info@macularsociety.org)**



**@MacularSociety**



**[www.facebook.com/macularsociety](http://www.facebook.com/macularsociety)**

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