

Macular Edema

Macular edema is swelling of the macula, the small area of the retina responsible for central vision. The edema is caused by fluid leaking from retinal blood vessels. Central vision, used for reading and other close detail work, is affected.

Because the macula is surrounded by many tiny blood vessels, anything affecting them, such as a medical condition affecting blood vessels elsewhere in the body or an abnormal condition originating in the eye, can cause macular edema.

Retinal blood vessel obstruction, eye inflammation, and age-related macular degeneration have all been associated with macular edema. The macula may also be affected by swelling following cataract extraction, though typically this resolves itself naturally or is treated with eye drops.

Treatment seeks to remedy the underlying cause of the edema. Eye drops, injections or steroid around the eye or into the eye, or laser treatment can be used to treat macular edema. Recovery depends on the severity of the condition causing the macular edema.