

# Key community Eye health messages

## 1. Understanding Macular Health

- The macula is the central part of the retina responsible for sharp vision, reading, and recognising faces. Any damage to the macula can lead to significant vision problems.
- Macular diseases like diabetic macular oedema (DMO), age-related macular degeneration (AMD), and myopic maculopathy are increasing worldwide due to ageing, diabetes, and high myopia.
- Early detection is crucial. Encourage regular eye check-ups, especially for people with diabetes and those over 60 years of age.

## 2. Preventing and Managing Macular Diseases

- Diabetes can damage the macula: People with diabetes must control their blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol to prevent diabetic macular oedema.
- Lifestyle choices matter: Smoking, poor diet, and obesity increase the risk of macular diseases.
- Myopia can lead to macular damage: People with high myopia should have regular eye exams to monitor for myopic maculopathy and related complications.

## 3. Supporting Patients with Macular Conditions

- Recognising symptoms: Blurred or distorted central vision, difficulty reading, trouble recognising faces, and dark or blank spots in vision are signs of macular diseases.
- Anti-VEGF treatment can stop vision loss: For AMD and DMO, anti-VEGF injections are effective. Refer patients early for specialist care.
- Low vision support is essential: Patients with macular diseases may not go completely blind but need low vision aids, rehabilitation, and support to maintain independence.
- Community awareness is key: Organize screenings, health talks, and awareness campaigns to educate people about macular health and early diagnosis.