



# NEWSLETTER

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(626) 335-EYES (3937) Vol. I, Issue I

## New Treatments for Wet AMD

By Richard Spaide, MD  
(adapted from *Sharing Solutions*,  
Spring 2007, Lighthouse International)

### What is Wet AMD?

Wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a term that describes a process where blood vessels and other cells invade the area under the macula, the part of the retina used for detail vision. The invading tissue can leak, bleed and cause scar tissue to form, damaging the macula and causing vision loss.

### Evolving Treatments

While a cure for wet AMD is not yet a reality, there are now treatment choices, and the field is changing rapidly. Recommendations made only a few years ago no longer hold today. For example, doctors previously used a laser to treat wet AMD.



### Coast to Coast Readers Share Tips to Make Home Life Easier

- Designate pantry & fridge shelves for specific items.
- Differentiate canned goods by using magnetic reusable labels or rubber bands.
- Store items on rotating tiered shelving.
- Separate socks, jewelry or paperwork in plastic sealable bags or containers.

[Even] if a doctor could successfully [burn] these blood vessels [away], new ones often quickly regrew to take their place. Unfortunately, each laser treatment destroys retinal cells.

The next development used a drug call Visudyne® that specifically binds to blood vessels

[and] is activated with a special cold laser in a process called photodynamic therapy...

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... **Wet AMD** (continued from pg 1)

To avoid some of the problems with photodynamic therapy, doctors began to use triamcinolone – a corticosteroid injected directly into the eye. Patients treated with a combination of triamcinolone and photodynamic therapy appeared to have better visual outcomes with fewer treatments per year.

Unfortunately, triamcinolone has many side effects, including glaucoma and cataract formation.


### **Anti-VEGF Treatments**

The need emerged to develop a way to suppress blood vessel growth without causing so many side-effects. The answer came from cancer therapy. To grow past a certain size, [tumors] need blood vessels to feed them. The most important chemical that causes blood vessel growth is a protein made by the body called Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF). Various drugs have been developed to block the effects of VEGF so that blood vessel growth can be stopped or, at least, restrained.

Lucentis® is FDA-approved for wet AMD. Avastin® is FDA-approved for colorectal cancer and is being used “off-label” to treat wet AMD. Both drugs are significant advances, producing much better results than no treatment or

previous treatment. Both drugs continue to be evaluated in ongoing clinical trials.

What we would like is for a greater proportion of patients to have a greater amount of vision gained. Another goal is to reduce the number of required treatments. Some new research is investigating various strategies to reduce the treatment frequency, but the visual outcomes of these approaches are not known at present.

It's important to work with your doctor to stay informed and assess your treatment options. Early treatment is critical. Although the results of treatment are better than ever, we continue to look for even more promising results in the future. 

Take Part in Lighthouse, International's next **Coast to Coast**

- 1). What types of lighting help you the most? How do you deal with glare?
- 2). What problems at home are you still trying to solve?
- 3). How have friends/family helped – or not – to make your life at home easier or make their homes “friendlier” for you?

Please submit responses by October 1, 2007 to Carol Sussman-Skalka at (212) 821-9481 or e-mail [sharingsolutions@lighthouse.org](mailto:sharingsolutions@lighthouse.org) or send letters or tapes to Carol at Lighthouse International, 111 East 59<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10022-


# From Your Perspective: Many Diabetics and Legally Blind Adults Need a System of Labeling

By Mildred Frank

(adapted from *The Braille Forum*,  
July-August 2007, pg 25-26)

Since I created the systems, and published three books with instructions for audible and tactile methods of labeling, I felt obligated to find an alternative method of making raised letters. Maxi-Aids cooperated with me and found sources of items that made it possible to have a small plastic box of materials for tactile labeling. It will cost under \$20, and the visually impaired can use it unassisted. The small plastic box contains peel-off raised letters with Braille under each letter; 50 blank labels to place the raised letters on (blank labels

item that needs to be identified; 50 rubber bands, 50 safety pins for attaching to clothing, identification dots for marking appliances and computers, and a 20/20 pen for printing large print for those who can read it.

I am very grateful to Maxi-Aids for cooperating with me and producing many needed items. This tactile labeling kit along with the Voxcom completes the audible and tactile method of labeling that I have developed through the years. My newest book – [Access to Information for the Blind](#) – available from Maxi-Aids, updates all the information. The labeling information is included along with chapters on identifying money, sighted guide techniques, Braille, nutrition, helpful hints and much more. 

(Editor's Note: You can reach Maxi-Aids at 1(800) 522-6294.)

## NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Lighthouse, International, through an unrestricted educational grant from Genentech, Inc. has launched a national initiative: "Living Better at Home: A Guide for People with Vision Loss."

A **free kit** is available containing information about eye care and diseases, living strategies, vision-friendly home solutions and much more. Also included are a signature guide, a bold-tip pen and tactile dots to mark appliances. **Go online to order** and learn more:

[www.lighthouse.org/livingbetter](http://www.lighthouse.org/livingbetter) or call (212) 821-9567.

## Glendora Club

La Fetra Center, 333 E. Foothill Blvd.  
Debbie Dozal (626) 914-8235

September 10, 2007

Joanne Ramos – Low Vision  
Therapist, Pomona Valley Hospital

October 8, 2007

Phil Obregon – Adaptive Equipment  
displays-demos (includes Sandy  
Krause – Glendora Library “Playaway”  
John Wolfe – EyetechLowvision

November 5, 2007

(Nov. 12 – Veterans’ Day)  
Michael Samplano – Reading for the  
Blind and Dyslexic

December 10, 2007

Christmas Dinner / Citrus Singers

January 14, 2008

TBA

February 11, 2008

TBA

March 10, 2008

Foundation Dinner / Potluck – St.  
Patrick’s Day

April 14, 2008

TBA

May 12, 2008

Shirley Evans – Foothill Center for the  
Partially Sighted  
Barbara Johnson – A.P.U., Medicare  
& MediCAL benefits TBA

June 9, 2008

Potluck Dinner / BINGO!!

## West Covina Club

2501 E. Cortez St.  
Marion Landesman (626) 331-5366

September 10, 2007

(Sept.3 – Labor Day)  
John Wolfe -- EyetechLowvision

October 1, 2007

TBA

November 5, 2007

CTAC Services

December 3, 2007

Christmas Lunch / Entertainment

January 7, 2008

Carmen Apelgren / Mindy Levanthal –  
Braille Institute

February 4, 2008

Valentine’s Party

March 3, 2008

Michael Sampiano – Recording for the  
Blind and Dyslexic, demo & training

April 7, 2008

TBA

May 5, 2008

TBA

June 2, 2008

Luncheon

### Fall Day Trips

Contact Rayanne Myers to sign-  
up: (626) 335-3937 or e-mail

[fuzzycyclops@charter.net](mailto:fuzzycyclops@charter.net)

Tues. Oct. 2 – San Antonio

Winery (\$18 for tour & lunch)

TBA – Morongo Casino

TBA – Braille Institute in L.A.

Board officers

Board of directors

Staff

Any one has tips to contribute, stories, items for sale or items needed

## **Coast to Coast**

### **Readers Share Tips to Make Home Life Easier**

- Contrast place settings with tablecloths and use colored glasses rather than clear.
- Outline plug areas of switch plates with a bold marker.
- Highlight doors by painting frames to contrast with walls.
- Use different key covers or colored nail polish on keys.
- Put furniture against a contrasting carpet or wall or use contrasting pillows.