

TIPS TO BEAT INSOMNIA ■ HEALTHY HAUTE CUISINE

# Alternative Medicine™

The Voice of Alternative Medicine®

**Saving Sight**  
**Beating the Macular**  
**Degeneration Epidemic**

**WHAT IS**  
**Naturopathy?**  
**And What is Not**

**The Threat**  
**of Meat**  
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**BioPulse:**  
An Extraordinary Clinic for  
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Anti-Cancer Foods  
What's New in Medicine  
Don't Poison Your Pet





ou've stayed up past your bedtime to see a special on Nightline. Rubbing your sleep-deprived right eye, you notice Ted Koppel's face is missing on the screen. Thinking part of dinner may have migrated to the outside of your glasses, you clean the lenses with your shirt-tail. But when you put them back on, Ted's face is still a blurry blank. It doesn't happen when you have both eyes open looking at his face, but when you close that one eye, the only thing left is the hair and the collar of his shirt.

Fear and frustration are your unwelcome bedfellows that night. The next morning you schedule an emergency appointment at the ophthalmologist. Surely he can fix your problem, you think and hope. But the visit to the eye specialist typically ends with shock, disbelief, and a feeling of helplessness. While observing the back of your eye, the doctor's comments trigger an emotional roller coaster ride that doesn't stop. "You have macular degeneration in this eye, and there's nothing we can do to restore the sight that is lost." The next sentence doesn't do much to reassure you when the doctor says, "You won't go completely blind. You'll always have your side vision." However, the ability to read, drive, recognize the faces of friends and loved ones, spot the food stains on your clothes, play cards or golf, pay bills, or distinguish the difference between a twenty and a one dollar bill will be gone. Not blind?

B Y G R A C E

When this single mother was diagnosed with “incurable” retinitis pigmentosa, she resigned herself to going blind. But when told her infant son would share the same fate, she fought back with alternative medicine—and won. Now she helps hundreds of others.

A large black and white photograph of a man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a dark turtleneck. He is holding a magnifying glass over his right eye, which is focused on a chart with various letters. The word 'SAVING SIGHT' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters with a black outline across the center of the image.

# SAVING SIGHT

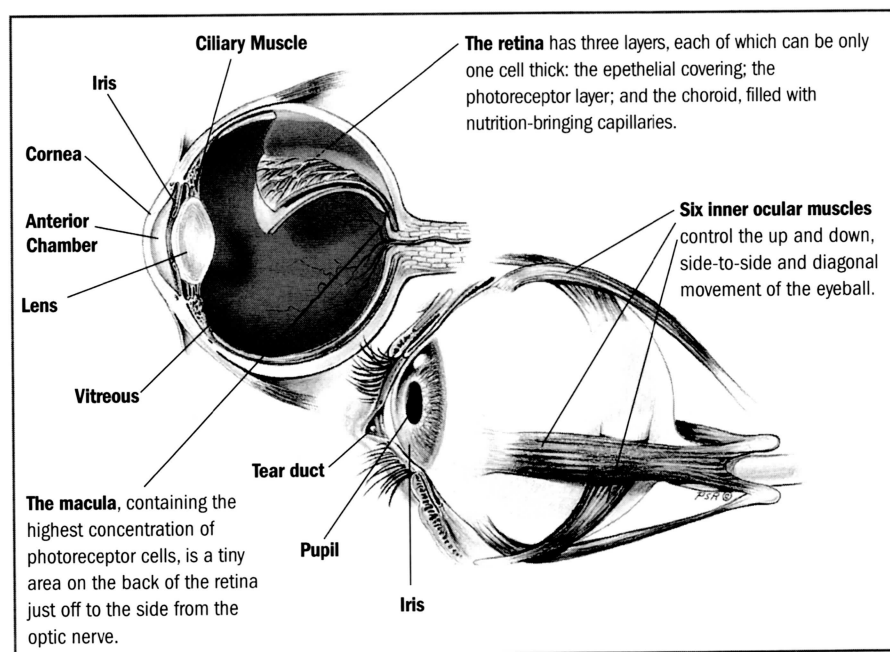
H A L L O R A N , P h . D .



## A Hidden Epidemic

As I quickly learned when I began to learn about the disease, a similar scenario like this is experienced by over a thousand Americans every day. There is a hidden epidemic sweeping America. It is Macular Degeneration, broadly defined as the deterioration of the central area of the retina (see sidebar). According to a 1998 report from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), over 17 million Americans are now visually impaired in the United States. Glaucoma, complications from diabetes, retinal detachment and other eye diseases and dysfunctions account for about 55% of the problems; the remaining 45% are forms of macular degeneration. Within the next several years over 75 million Americans will pass the mid-century mark. The NIH estimates that nearly half of them may be at risk to lose their sight from these same causes at this same ratio.

Currently, over 500,000 Americans per year are diagnosed with MD. With the "dry type" of macular degeneration, a gradual worsening of the vision might prompt a routine appointment with the ophthalmologist: "I need a stronger eyeglass prescription." With the "wet type," described above, a person can suddenly find a hole in their vision when the non-dominant eye is closed.



Conventional medicine does not offer much in the way of treatment for this condition. In all my experience, and the experience of hundreds of others with whom I've talked, the only procedure offered was laser surgery performed within 72 hours of the onset of the wet type of MD. This cauterized the leakage but did nothing to reverse the condition. The vast majority of doctors are tremendously under-educated in the fields of nutri-

tion and alternative therapies. Tragically, due to their limited exposure and knowledge in these fields, they tell their patients that "nothing" can be done. This medical hexing may be as much a part of the decline of sight as any of the other contributing factors recently identified. The feeling of helplessness often creates a vicious stress cycle that can actually contribute to the predicted degeneration. But there is help and hope for the millions of individuals suffering from or at risk for macular degeneration. The experience of hundreds of individuals—myself included—has proven that when alternative methods are employed, eye health and visual function are often improved. Individuals facing sight loss from serious eye disorders need to aggressively explore lifestyle changes to improve overall health, and to reject the "victim" mentality that so often accompanies the conventional medical diagnosis of conditions that cause sight to fail.

## Taking Sight Loss Personally

I came to this awareness when I was diagnosed in 1971 with the wet type of macular degeneration due to a genetic eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa. I was told that I would soon be completely blind. I was twenty-four and a single parent. I consulted seven eye specialists, from the University of California at San Francisco Medical Center to Harvard University's Ear and Eye Hospital in Boston. Every one confirmed the diagnosis and prognosis. I was depressed, but resolved to face the inevitable and go blind as gracefully as possible. But then I was told that my nine-month-old son would probably be totally blind before he was a teen. That prediction turned my depression into anger and action and a journey that has now spanned twenty-six years. While my baby was still in diapers, I began my search for knowledge and help.

Running only into the same dead end with conventional medicine, I turned to the alternative medical community for answers. The attitude and offers of help in the alternative world was a healing balm to my wounded body and spirit. Instead of the negative attitude of doctors who seemed to concern themselves with cures, while the quality of my life was drowning in self-pity and failing sight, I found a lifeline that allowed me to turn a curse of sight loss into a gift of self-discovery and empowerment. Investigating a host of alternative disciplines provided knowledge and techniques to improve my overall health. I became an aggressive activist in my fight to save my sight, and to prevent my son from going blind.

Attending workshops, plowing through books, and seeking input from experts via private consultations, I focused on how all



these alternative health disciplines could affect the eyes. By the end of the 1970's I had come to realize that to achieve eye health one had to address body, mind, and spirit. In 1979 I earned a Ph.D. in Holistic Health Science from Columbia Pacific University, specializing in eye health. By that time I had improved my own eyesight from having a 3° and 5° field of vision in my left and right eyes respectively, to 80° in both (full faculty would be 90°). My central acuity was 20/40.

## The IVH Program

I took everything I had experienced and learned from all the fields of alternative medicine I had studied and put together a program which I called Integrated Visual Healing (IVH). IVH is a multi-faceted approach, incorporating several ancient and modern therapies, increasing overall health with special focus on the eyes. Briefly described, some of the modalities we teach are:

**DIET AND NUTRITION:** We begin with the basics: eating organic, whole, fresh, minimally-processed foods. I also consider it essential that individuals at risk or who have serious eye disorders incorporate a supplement program, including therapeutic combination products, such as Pure Focus, a sublingual spray from BioMax. Nutrition education is a critical component in the IVH program.

**ACUPRESSURE:** This is a form of acupuncture, employing the same points, but stimulating energy flow with finger pressure instead of needles. I worked on myself, and also gave my infant son acupressure treatments while he slept in his crib, massaging points on his head, ears, hands, and feet to stimulate the energy flow to his eyes.

**MICRO-CURRENT THERAPY:** I first encountered this studying sports medicine. This is like a high-tech, non-invasive acupuncture technique. I used it with miraculous effect speeding my son's recovery when he severely broke his arm when he was eight. We recommend a device invented by Dr. Joel Rossen, called the MicroStim, which is suitable for both clinical and home use.

**COLOR THERAPY:** Ancient Egyptian texts allude to this form of healing. Again, there is inexpensive equipment suitable for self-application in the home, and it is valuable. We have found, for instance, that magenta stimulates the macular region; blue-green seems to increase lymph flow in the eyes; and a combination of the green-yellow range improves field of vision and night sight.

**MASSAGE:** We teach a version of Touch for Health, a system developed by Dr. John Thie which combines applied kinesiology (muscle testing and movement) with lymphatic massage therapy. We call our protocol Total Body Balancing and it is very useful for ongoing home therapy. Our research has demonstrated that chronic and degenerative disorders need to be addressed long term.

**STRESS MANAGEMENT:** Chronic stress reduces the blood supply to the eyes over a long period, which can result in severe degeneration. Under stress, even normal-sighted people

## What Is Macular Degeneration?

The macula is the region located in the back of the eye on the retina (see illustration, opposite). The back of the eye is the front of the brain, and the retina was formed from brain cells. Seeing is a learned response of the brain, interpreting images from incoming light vibrations. Hardly larger than the head of a ball-point pen, the macula contains the most concentrated area of photoreceptor cells. It is responsible for clear central sight. If the macular region is damaged or dysfunctional, the data transmitted to the brain can be incomplete or missing altogether. Reading, facial recognition, and color perception are all processed in the macula region.

There are two main types of macular degeneration: "dry" and "wet." In the wet type, fluid leaks from vascular cells into sensitive retinal tissue in the macula. Swelling prevents clear images to be processed. Sight loss can be dramatic and immediate. In the dry type the vascular system atrophies, preventing the supply of blood to this vital and sensitive area. This form develops more slowly, with sight gradually degrading over a period of years.

There are multiple contributing factors to macular degeneration. The National Eye Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, in their study, "Vision Research: A National Plan, 1994-1998," cited the following: genetic disposition, ultra-violet radiation, smoking, toxins from environmental pollution, drug use, and nutritional deficiencies. To these Integrated Visual Healing (IVH) has added stress, digestive problems, and an impaired circulatory system.

As of this date, conventional medicine considers macular degeneration incurable. To our knowledge, no one alternative therapy has emerged that can be considered a panacea. However, scientific studies have demonstrated that retinal tissue does have regenerative capabilities. Using a multi-faceted approach, educating individuals and training them to be their own therapist as an ongoing commitment, we at IVH consistently see the cessation of degeneration, dramatic improvement, and even cases of complete reversal (see case studies sidebar, next page).

improve circulation. Participants from ages 10 to 92 have been able to embrace these exercises with significant and sometimes dramatic effects.

## Looking to the Future

As yet we have not yet witnessed a cure for macular degeneration. We have documented visual function improvement in both subjective and objective evaluations (see Case Studies sidebar). We should also not overlook our success with the quality of life issues that have been dramatically enhanced by these alternative modalities.

When anyone, no matter what their condition, takes an active role in their health care, they can be empowered with knowledge and tools to improve the quality of their life, and as clearly demonstrated in medical documentation, improve their ability to see. Sight is a precious gift and should be treasured. There is always hope.

Oh, and if you're wondering what happened to my son, who every specialist I saw unequivocally pronounced would be blind by the time he was a teenager? He is now 27 years old, stands six feet four inches, and is a Staff Sergeant in the Air Force. You can bet with certainty that the Air Force doesn't let blind individuals enlist. Thanks to

alternative therapies and his willingness to be my little guinea pig, his eyes are perfectly normal.

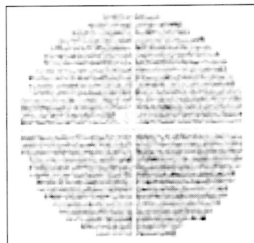
### Resources:

**For Complete Nutritional Protocol and Workshop Information:** *Integrated Visual Healing*  
 655 Lewelling Blvd., #214  
 San Leandro, CA 94579 Tel. 510-357-0477

**Book:** *Amazing Grace – Autobiography of a Survivor*, by Grace Halloran, Ph.D.  
 North Star Publications, 1993. ISBN: 1-8880823-0505. Available at  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), local bookstores, or call 800-742-6139

## Case Studies from the Integrated Visual Healing Program

Aside from contrary thinking, another factor blocking the acceptance of alternative eye-health modalities into mainstream medicine is the lack of interest and funding available for research in this arena. All of the documentation collected by the IVH program has been self-funded, with generous donations of time by doctors such as August L. Reader, M.D., F.A.C.S., and Dale Fast, O.D. All of the small sample studies establish that the IVH multiple approach does indeed improve visual function. For instance, between December 1995 and August 1997, Dr. Reader and I evaluated the effects of IVH on thirty

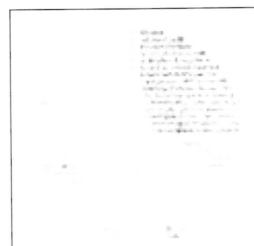


**Humphrey Field of Vision Analysis**

Patient Marilyn W.

**Figure A:** Pre-therapy: retinal damage so severe no light can be perceived at all.

**Figure B:** After 80 hours of IVH therapy over two weeks, vision is 60% to 70% restored.



participants, between the ages of 13 and 83. Results included the case of a 72-year-old male, who had been afflicted with retinitis pigmentosa since his 20's. Before the program his sight was limited to counting fingers at one foot (CF@1'). After three months his visual acuity had improved to 20/200 in one eye, 20/100 in the other. A 58-year-old woman with MD and high myopia had presenting visual acuity of 20/300 in the right eye and CF@5' in the other. After two weeks her visual acuities were 20/200 in the right and 20/100+1 in the left. A 66-year-old woman who was still active as an underwater photographer was diagnosed with early onset MD. Eighteen months after she took the IVH program her eye specialist gave her the good news. Not only had the macular degeneration not progressed as predicted, it appeared to be nonexistent: her central acuity was measured at 20/15 in both eyes! Her vision, instead of getting worse, had improved.

Here is a case study with a little more detail. Angie was diagnosed with macular degeneration in her late seventies. At the age of eighty-three, she participated in a two-week IVH therapy and training session. Pre- and post-therapy vision exams were supervised by a Neuro-ophthalmologist, August L. Reader, M.D., F.A.C.S. The post therapy exam revealed an increase in distance vision in the right eye from 20/400 (legally blind starts at 20/200) to 20/200, and to correctly identify 2 letters on the 20/100 line on standardized acuity charts. Objective field of vision evaluations provided by the Humphrey Field of Vision Analyzer, in the right eye, went from a mean deviation of -7.19 to -5.19, which is near the normal range of visual function (normal mean deviation is -4 to +4). Pre-testing on the left eye was unable to be performed due to the inability of Angie to visualize the target. Post examination established a field of vision. Although still dysfunctional, this was a great improvement. Angie's macular degeneration was quite advanced, and the results were dramatic in a short period of time, although visual performance was still poor and she still could not drive or read. However, eye health and visual function improvement allows Angie to see her grandchildren's and great-grandchildren's faces better, to enjoy watching television, and to play her favorite card game.