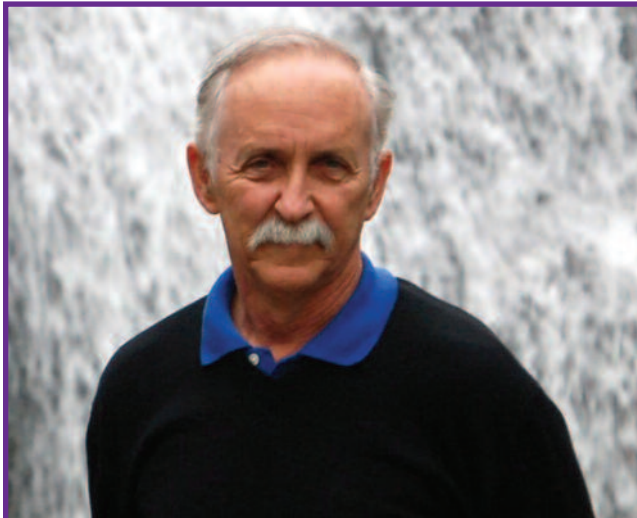


In the late 1980s, Richard Solomon's father told him about his deteriorating eyesight. "I suspect he'd been dealing with it for a while, but at around age 70, he began to talk about it," Solomon says. "In retrospect, I think that's when his AMD went from dry to wet."

"My dad had several laser surgeries to seal some of the blood vessels in his eye to keep them from leaking," he says. "The surgeries left scar tissue in his macula, and he said looking out through his eyes was like looking through a piece of Swiss cheese — there were these holes in his vision where the scar tissue was. I remember that very well.

"At one level, my dad was pretty resilient: He listened to books on tape; he played tennis until he couldn't see the ball at all; he used a talking watch that he liked to show off; he drove until he took himself off the road following a minor accident. On the other hand, he struggled to maintain his independence and occasionally grew frustrated and discouraged. It was poignant, as a son, watching a parent go through this."

Watching his father cope with vision loss spurred Solomon to find



Solomon's Eye-Healthy Habits

To help stave off the effects of AMD, Richard Solomon made lifestyle changes he learned about from MDP and DEF. Here are his top five:

- Wear sunglasses with protection against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Take an eye-healthy vitamin regimen.
- Keep glasses clean. ("I don't need dust distorting my vision more than it already is.")
- Eat well. ("Lots of fruits and vegetables, and I stay away from fatty foods.")
- Exercise every day. ("If I'm not playing golf, I'm walking. It's a great way to start the day.")

out all he could about age-related macular degeneration (AMD); he learned the disease was probably in his future, as well. Solomon subscribed to the Macular Degeneration Partnership (MDP) Update and the DEF newsletter. He got his first Amsler grid from MDP, checked it regularly and even developed his own: "As a psychologist, I did in-depth interviews with patients every day. I took notes on lined paper, so I had my own version

of an Amsler grid, where I could track my vision."

It wasn't until 2010, just before Solomon and his wife moved from Santa Barbara to Oakland, Calif., to be closer to their granddaughter, that he started noticing real distortion on the grid, with an increase in the waviness of the lines. "Instead of the one or two areas of minor distortion I saw 10 years ago, now it's five or six," he reports. Luckily, Solomon has seen no real effect on his ability to read or drive — or golf, which has been his passion since age 12.

"I don't let myself sit and ruminate about what is going to happen to my sight," Solomon says. "I learned from my mom that worrying doesn't help you. Do what you can at the moment and go on, then face it when it happens. That's how she lived her life.

"When I do start to worry about the future in regard to having AMD, I recall that research and medicines to treat wet AMD have progressed a great deal in the 17 years since I was diagnosed, and that there are research projects going on for treating dry AMD, too. These are things I have learned in reading AMD.org updates, and they give me hope."