

CYSTOID MACULAR EDEMA (CME)

The retina is located at the back of the eye. It converts light rays into signals, which are sent through the optic nerve to your brain. The macula is a small area in the center of the retina. It allows you to see fine details clearly and perform activities such as reading and driving. When the macula does not function correctly, your central vision can be affected by blurriness, dark areas, or distortion. CME is the presence of multiple fluid-filled, cyst-like (cystoid) structures in the macula. The result is swelling (edema) of the macula.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CME?

The most common symptom of CME is blurred or distorted central vision. CME does not affect peripheral (side) vision. Other symptoms can include pink-tinted or dim vision or sensitivity to light. Sometimes CME may be present when no visual loss has occurred. Your ophthalmologist may discover you have CME after a thorough medical eye examination, often after taking special photographs of the eye using fluorescein angiography or optical coherence tomography.

WHAT CAUSES CME?

Although the exact causes of CME are unknown, it can be associated with:

- Retinal vein occlusion (blockage of a blood vessel in your retina);
- Uveitis (inflammation of the uvea, the outermost layer of your eye);
- Diabetes;
- Eye surgery;
- Eye trauma;
- Side effects from medication.

Up to 3 percent of all cataract surgery patients may experience slightly decreased vision due to CME, within a month or two after surgery. In these cases, the CME generally resolves on its own without any treatment.

HOW CAN CME BE TREATED?

Depending on the cause of CME, treatment may include some of the following methods:

- Anti-inflammatory medications, including drops, pills, or injections;
- Laser surgery to repair leaky blood vessels;
- A surgical procedure called vitrectomy to remove a substance in the eye called the vitreous (a gel-like substance that fills the body of your eye).

Fortunately, most patients with CME are successfully treated, though the healing process may be slow and take up to several months.