

What is MacTel?

Macular Telangiectasia (MacTel) is a disorder of the blood vessels which supplies the macula, the central part of the retina that lines the back of the eye, that is responsible for fine vision. For reasons unknown, sometimes the blood vessels around the center of the macula, known as the fovea, become dilated and incompetent, much like a varicose vein, but on a much smaller scale. This condition is called MacTel. While MacTel does not usually cause total blindness, it commonly causes loss of central vision, which is required for reading and driving. Vision loss occurs gradually over a period of 10 to 20 years, or more.



The MACTEL PROJECT



*Eye Tissue
Donation*

Why the MacTel Project Is Important

Although typically regarded as a rare disease, MacTel may be much more common than previously thought. Due to the subtle nature of the condition in its early stages, the diagnosis may be missed by optometrists and general ophthalmologists. Unfortunately, no new information has emerged about this condition since the early 1980's. *The MacTel Project is the only international project devoted entirely to the study of this condition.* There is much work that can be done to better understand the disease, to help the medical community identify the condition and to search for new treatments.

You can also find more information at www.mactelresearch.org

Organization of the MacTel Project

The MacTel Project draws on the knowledge of the world's leading experts in eye research.

Basic scientists working in laboratories will work to understand the pathology of the disease by studying MacTel eye cells at a microscopic level. Then the scientists may be able to replicate MacTel in animal models to better understand how the conditions develops.

Research ophthalmologists will carefully evaluate the natural course of the disease for several years to understand how the disease progresses and to determine if there is a genetic component to the disease.

The basic scientists, along with the research ophthalmologists, will seek to identify potential new treatments for the condition.

Contributions from Participants

You are making a significant contribution by participating in the Natural History Study and, along with your family members, in the Genetic Study. We ask that you consider one additional contribution . . . a gift of eye tissue once you have passed away.

In order for the basic scientists to advance the understanding of MacTel, they must have tissue from eyes with MacTel.

Choosing to become an eye donor will not delay funeral arrangements and cosmetic reconstruction is carried out routinely.

If you would consider an eye tissue donation, please discuss this first with your family. It is very important that they are aware of your wishes and agree. Then ask your MacTel physician or the MacTel Study Coordinator for details.