

## **Eye Surgery.**

The man had been busy getting his firewood ready for winter. A friend of his cut down trees, cut the trunks into the lengths the customer wanted, in the man's case, sixteen inches, and then he delivered those rounds, dropping them off at the man's property for a very reasonable price. A typical load of rounds was a cord to a cord and a half, and a cord was four feet wide by eight feet long by four feet high, weighing approximately twenty-five hundred pounds. When he was younger, he split the rounds with an axe, but several years earlier, he had purchased a gas-powered log splitter that made the process somewhat easier.

The man lifted each round onto the splitter, pulled the lever, and a hydraulic-powered wedge split it. He then continued to split each segment until they were small enough to fit through the side door of his wood stove, yet as large as possible so they would burn the longest. Years of burning wood as his primary source of heat had taught him well; he was strong and enjoyed the process.

Some of the rounds were simply too heavy for him to lift, while others maxed out his strength. He often laughed and was even teased by his friend who had delivered the rounds to him. His friend had loaded the rounds onto his truck, so the man agreed that his friend was much stronger than he was. Sometimes it took him two or more tries to get the heavy round from the ground to the splitter, and for the heaviest rounds, he put the splitter to its vertical position and split those into two or more pieces. Finally, after splitting six cords, he stacked it and let it all cure until needed.

Finishing the splitting and stacking, he noticed that his right eye felt as if there was something in it. He tried eye rinses, but the problem persisted, and finally he went to an ophthalmologist.

After a visit that included dilation, etc., he was diagnosed as having a cystic macular edema, which required further medical attention.

Finally, he underwent a series of injections, and while they seemed to stop the situation from getting worse, there was little improvement.

Spring rolled around again, the rounds were delivered again, and this time the man split and stacked five cords due to a milder winter.

During a recent visit, his eye doctor told him he needed cataract surgery, so he worked harder than usual to finish his wood supply before the surgeries. He managed to get everything done just in time. The first surgery went well, and he was waiting for his appointment for the other eye.

The first surgery was to the affected eye, for which he was still receiving injections a year later.

During his recovery, and because he was told to limit his screen time, he was unable to write.

But he had time to investigate his eye treatment. The first eye doctor had diagnosed him with cystic macular edema, or CME, but the clinic he went to diagnosed his condition as age-related macular degeneration, or AMD. He asked about the discrepancy and was informed they were the same. He accepted what the doctor told him.

But now that he had time, he looked both up online and found that each diagnosis required different treatments and, most importantly, he shouldn't have been lifting heavy rounds anymore.

The increased blood pressure was bad for CME, and indeed, he had noticed his eye was very painful after each splitting and stacking session. Of course, it was entirely possible that the first diagnosis of CME was incorrect and that the second diagnosis of AMD was correct.

It was true that the man was quite stubborn when it came to doing what he wanted, and he had worked through pain more often than he could remember. Being a loner required being alone,

and being alone required doing things on his own. He liked to split and stack his own firewood; he didn't mind the hard work at all. And when he was done, he liked standing back to admire his workmanship.

However, he didn't want to go blind even if it was confined to one eye. His next injection was due to happen tomorrow, so he decided to try to speak to his doctor about his findings.

Written by Peter Skeels © 4-8-2026