

# EYESIGHT *and Nutrition*

## HEALTHY EYES HEALTHY LIVES!

With temperatures rising and people flocking to the beaches and pools, or enjoying other outdoor activities in the sunshine, the importance of skin and eye protection comes to mind. A natural adversary to the eye's lens is ultraviolet (UV) light, which can be particularly damaging. Although we often consider the effect that external elements have on our skin, and sometimes remember our eyes as well, we generally think of protecting our eyes only from the outside. But the fact is, just like the rest of the body, eye health is improved or diminished by what we eat and drink, and, of course, impacted negatively by harmful practices such as smoking. So, although most people don't often stop to think about it, it is important to focus on the relationship between nutrition and eye health.

More than 22 million Americans suffer from cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD), which are two leading causes of visual loss and blindness. Researchers have found that certain vitamins can have a long-lasting effect on eye health and may help to preserve vision. Some of the nutrients and vitamins that may prove helpful are:

Beta-carotene is a member of a class of phytochemicals called carotenoids. As a group, carotenoids are among the most important nutrients in regard to overall eye health. Natural sources include not only carrots, but also many red, yellow and

*Lutein and Zeaxanthin:* Filter out radiation; also support crystalline lens and macular health

*L-Taurine:* Protects the retina from damage

*Curcumin:* A powerful free radical-fighting antioxidant

*Beta-carotene:* Helps improve vision, particularly in poor light (night vision)

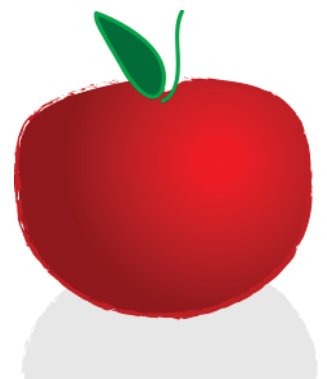
*Zinc:* Important ingredient for maintaining a healthy retina

*Ginkgo Biloba:* Increases blood circulation in the smallest blood vessels of your eye

*Vitamin E:* Fights cataracts by stabilizing lens cell membranes

*Bilberry:* Improves nighttime visual acuity and recovery from glare

*Vitamin C, riboflavin and folate* also contribute to better eye health



# THE INFLUENCE OF NUTRITION...

orange fruits, including mangoes and vegetables, or green leafy vegetables such as spinach, collard greens and broccoli. Deficiencies of this nutrient can cause poor night vision.

Antioxidants are compounds in foods that help maintain healthy cells and tissues in the eye and other organs. The most well-known antioxidants are vitamins A, C and E and the mineral selenium. Protective, antioxidant-rich nutrition may be the most practical means to delay cataracts. Antioxidants can be found in colorful fruits and vegetables including spinach, blueberries, garlic, Brussels sprouts, carrots, red bell peppers and tomatoes; dark chocolate and green tea contain antioxidants, as well.

Researchers are learning more each day about the ways in which nutrition helps protect the body's cells from damage done by a process called oxidation. Oxidation can cause degenerative damage to cells and, consequently, to the tissues in which the cells are located, including the eyes. Smoking can actually speed up the process of oxidation. Smokers have three times more risk than non-smokers of developing macular degeneration, and smoking also increases the risk of developing cataracts. In addition, smoking can actually prevent your body from absorbing certain vitamins, such as vitamin A, and it can worsen complications of diabetes and hypertension, both of which often lead to serious eye diseases and loss of vision.

As with any other part of the body, the eyes are affected by everything that we ingest. Sensible eating and drinking habits, including a proper balance of vitamins and nutrients, will benefit your eyes, and will help maintain overall good health.

The Davis Vision program is designed with member convenience, value and quality in mind. To learn more about our program, call:

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