

VITAMINS AND YOUR VISION



Dr. Andy Baldus

The role of nutrition on overall health has been extensively researched with conclusions noting a balance of nutrients has a profound effect on disease prevention and in many cases is a factor in the healing process. Vitamins for the eyes are no exception to that consensus. Evidence suggests that nutrition is a key factor in the general health of the eyes as well. Good nutrition may improve vision and reduce deterioration that occurs as a natural consequence of aging. Several vitamins for eye health have been identified for their potential of having a therapeutic value for the eyes.

Evidence shows that Vitamins A, C and E along with zinc may reduce vision loss for individuals with macular degeneration. The dosage used during the study may not be appropriate for people who smoke or are taking certain medications. Therefore it is always appropriate to consult with your doctor prior to starting new vitamin supplements.

Lutein is the name of a carotenoid found in spinach. Evidence of the benefits of Lutein for the macula has been established. Since Lutein and Vitamin A compete for similar receptor sites, it is not practical to take the two supplements together.

It's still important to get the nutrients you need from food, rather than taking a single nutrient, and it's better to take a multivitamin. Dietary supplements are not a cure, and you should NEVER stop taking your medication or other treatment in favor of taking supplements, without first consulting your doctor.

A great source of eye-protecting nutrients can be found in the following:

- Vitamin A: cod liver oil, liver, carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash
- Lutein: dark leafy vegetables like spinach, kale, collard greens, it can also be found in corn, egg yolks, broccoli, green beans, green peas, brussels sprouts, cabbage, lettuce, kiwi and honeydew.
- Vitamin E: sunflower seeds, almonds, hazelnuts
- Zinc: oysters, hamburgers, wheat nuts
- Fatty acids: cold-water fish (salmon, mackerel, trout)
- Vitamin C: sweet peppers, kale, strawberries, broccoli, oranges, cantaloupe

What is the right supplementation for your vision? That is something you should discuss with your eye doctor, especially if you are at risk for developing or currently have Age Related Macular Degeneration or Cataracts.

Dr. Andy Baldus is an optometrist at HealthView Eye Care Center-Colby. For more information on vitamins and your vision, you can contact him at (715)223-4003.