



Healthy Living at Hannaford

Nutrition for Eye Health

Curious as to how you can keep your eyes healthy as you age? Preliminary studies indicate that eating higher-than-average amounts of the following nutrients may prevent or slow the progression of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD)*:



Beta-Carotene

Essential to the proper functioning of the retina, beta-carotene is an antioxidant found in foods such as sweet potatoes, kale, carrots, butternut squash, red peppers, mangoes and cantaloupes.



Lutein and Zeaxanthin (a form of beta-carotene)

Lutein and zeaxanthin are believed to be important for eye health, providing possible protection against cataracts and AMD. They are found in foods such as dark leafy green vegetables (kale, spinach, romaine lettuce, collard greens, Swiss chard), eggs, broccoli, parsley, corn, sweet potatoes, squash, mangoes and papayas. It is important to note that our bodies do not produce lutein or zeaxanthin, so we must get them through our diet.



Vitamin C

An antioxidant that reduces the amount of free radicals in our bodies, vitamin C is found in foods such as red peppers, kale, broccoli, green peppers, strawberries, cantaloupe and grapefruit.



Vitamin E

Vitamin E is essential to complete eye health. Some studies have shown that it can reduce the risk of developing AMD by up to 25 percent when consumed in conjunction with vitamin C, zinc and beta-carotene. Vitamin E is found in foods such as almonds, sunflower seeds, peanuts, spinach and turnip greens. A supplement may be appropriate if you do not get enough of foods that are high in vitamin E. Talk to your doctor.



Zinc

Zinc is the most abundant mineral found in your eye, and it's very important for proper vision function. It can be found in foods such as Brazil nuts, beef, cod, turkey, oatmeal, eggs and walnuts.



Omega-3 Fatty Acids (DHA and EPA)

Studies have shown that people who consumed 2-4 fish servings per week decreased their risk for macular degeneration by 35 percent. Omega 3s can be found in coldwater fish, such as salmon, sardines, mackerel and herring; in walnuts and flaxseeds and flaxseed oil; and in certain foods that have added DHA and EPA, such as eggs, milk, margarines, and orange juices.



Interested in learning more?

Our registered dietitians hold classes, have on-the-sales-floor nutrition demonstrations and do healthy store tours. They can give you the information you need to make the healthy life style changes you want.

You can also email a private message to our staff registered dietitian, for free nutrition advice at [hannaford.com/asknutritionist](mailto:asknutritionist@hannaford.com).



Healthy Living at Hannaford

Eating Right for Healthy Eyes

- Eat at least nine servings per day of fruits and vegetables (especially leafy greens) to get the beta-carotene, vitamin C, lutein and some vitamin E.
- Eat at least two servings of fatty fish per week (or foods that have DHA and EPA added) to get your omega 3s (DHA and EPA).
- Add nuts and seeds, such as almonds, Brazil nuts, walnuts and sunflower seeds, to your diet to help you meet your daily requirements for vitamin E and zinc.
- Eat most of your grains as whole grains (as opposed to refined grains).
- Find a few enjoyable activities to keep you moving most days of the week. Aside from many other benefits, an active lifestyle is associated with a lower risk of AMD.



Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD):

Usually affects older adults and results in a loss of vision in the center of the visual field (the macula) because of damage to the retina. It occurs in “dry” and “wet” forms. Macular degeneration can make it difficult or impossible to read or recognize faces, although enough peripheral vision remains to allow other activities of daily life.

Cataracts:

An eye disease in which the lens becomes covered in an opaque film that affects sight, eventually causing total loss of sight.

Retinopathy:

A disease of the retina, especially one that is non-inflammatory and associated with damage to the blood vessels of the retina.

* According to the American Optometric Association Web site, consuming antioxidants cannot reverse the damage caused by AMD; however, they may prevent or slow the progression of AMD in certain patients. Additional studies and data are needed to further define the nutritional and antioxidant therapies and their relative dosages for the prevention of AMD.



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