

March is Save Your Vision Month

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Research shows that 30 million Americans age 40 or older (1 out of 4) suffer from some level of vision loss. As well, approximately 43 million Americans suffer from age-related macular degeneration (AMD) or cataracts – the two leading causes of vision loss and blindness.

The good news is that research shows a great way to help in the prevention of these age-related eye diseases: Nutrition.

“Basic and clinical research has shown that nutrients in eye-healthy foods can slow vision loss,” said Dr. Stuart Richer, optometrist and AOA (American Optometric Association) Vision and Nutrition Expert. “Indeed, in some cases, these foods can even improve vision, while providing additional health benefits to the patient.”

The AOA, along with nutritional ingredient manufacturers Kemin and DSM, recommend the following foods which contain the key nutrients for eye health:

- **Lutein and zeaxanthin:** Colorful fruits and vegetables such as broccoli, spinach, kale, corn, green beans, peas, oranges and tangerines.
- **Essential fatty acids:** Fatty fish like tuna, salmon, or herring, whole grain foods, chicken and eggs.
- **Vitamin C:** Fruits and vegetables, including oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, papaya, green peppers and tomatoes.
- **Vitamin E:** Vegetable oils, such as safflower or corn oil, almonds, pecans, sweet potatoes, and sunflower seeds.
- **Zinc:** Extra-lean red meat, poultry, liver, shellfish, milk, baked beans, and whole grains.

“Nutrition is a component of health for the entire body, including the eyes,” said Somer, a registered dietician and nutrition research expert. “I suggest incorporating nutritious ingredients into daily menus. There are some great, quick and simple recipes that promote healthy eye sight and vision.”

DID YOU KNOW?

1. Eating spinach can reduce your risk of getting certain eye diseases like AMD because it contains a large amount of lutein, an important eye nutrient. In order to maintain healthy eyes, add 10 mg of lutein to your diet each day or eat one cup of cooked spinach four times a week.
2. More than 50% of Americans do not take in the recommended dosage of Vitamin C per day. Vitamin C has been linked, in approved amounts, to minimize or reduce the risk of cataracts and AMD.