



Welcome to Davis Vision's Summer Newsletter! With temperatures rising and people flocking to the beaches, pools, and enjoying other outdoor activities in the sunshine, the importance of skin protection and eye protection comes to mind - a natural adversary to the eye's lens is UV light which can be particularly damaging. We often think of our eyes in this context, of being affected by external elements and think of protecting our eyes only from the outside. But the fact is that as in the rest of our body, eye health is diminished or improved by what we eat and drink, and, of course, impacted harmfully by smoking. So for this edition, we would like to focus on the importance of 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 or helping to preserve vision. Some of the nutrients and vitamins that may prove helpful are:

Lutein and Zeaxanthin: Filters out radiation; also supports 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

Gingko 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

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

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 could actually speed up the process of oxidation. Smokers have three times the risk as non-smokers of developing macular degeneration. 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 can lead to serious eye diseases and loss of vision.

As with any other part of the body, the eyes are affected by everything that goes into the body. Sensible eating and drinking habits protect the eyes. With a proper balance of vitamins and nutrients, the necessary wellness measures for continued eye health are assured.