



*Healthy Choices For A Better Life*

## SPECIAL REPORT



# Foods Your Eyes Love

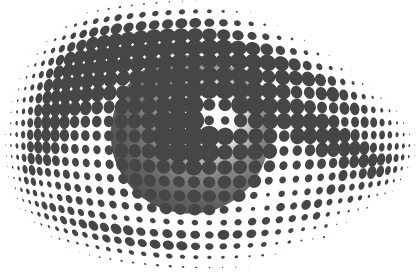
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# Foods Your Eyes Love

## Vision loss leads to the loss of your independence - but you can prevent it!

Your eyesight is undoubtedly the most precious of the five senses you possess. Without it, you would live in a world of perpetual darkness. Thanks to your eyesight, you get to enjoy all that life has to offer, which is why you should not take it for granted. Taking care of your eyes should be a top health priority. Most people tend to ignore this fact, yet your eyesight is not guaranteed to work perfectly for the entire duration of your life. Much like your heart, muscles, skin, and weight, you must maintain your eyes as well. So how do you go about doing this?

For starters, you should have an annual eye checkup with an ophthalmologist—this is a given. He/she will ensure your eyes are in good health and will help you keep your glasses or contacts prescription up to date. But what about the other things that you can do on your own to keep your eyes safe and healthy? Keeping your eyes protected from the sun and dry conditions is also obvious, but what about *what you eat*? Have you ever considered that your diet can provide your eyes with



protection, prevention, and overall health benefits and conditioning? It's true! We all know that good nutrition is important, but few of us know how important it is for our eyes. Proper nutrition is critical to strengthening and protecting your eyesight. In this special report, we will look at a cornucopia of healthy food selections that will help protect your eyes and that will keep your eyes working at their best for years to come. So, let's get started by first looking at the various threats to your vision that you need to be aware of.

### ***Various threats to your vision***

There are various threats to your eyes that you may want to consider protecting yourself against before you tackle the foods listed in this report. These are both major and minor issues that you can talk to your doctor about or solve on your own.

- **Dryness:** This common problem occurs when you are in an environment that does not provide your eyes with enough humidity. Some people are naturally predisposed to dryness. If you do find that it is a persistent problem, speak to your doctor about what eye drops you can use and if it is a symptom of a more serious disease. You can also purchase a humidifier and keep it in your bedroom at night or in your workspace to ensure your eyes are not exposed to excessive dryness.
- **Renewing Your Prescriptions:** This goes for your eyeglasses, contacts, and other medications that you may be taking for your eyes. You must make it your top priority to go and see your eye doctor once a year for your check-up. He/she will ensure your prescription is up to date and that your eyeglasses and contacts are set properly to meet your eye's changing needs. Your eye doctor can also catch any



eye illnesses early on, which is why a visit is so vital. As you age, your eyes unfortunately will decline in strength. It's up to you to be proactive and ensure you are safeguarding your vision by staying on top of all your prescriptions.

- **Dealing with Allergies:** This one's also important: if you have allergies, you may experience, dry, itchy, watery, or sore eyes. This is due to an excess of histamines in your system, which can cause your eyes to bear the brunt of the problem. Have your doctor assess your allergies and find out what antihistamines are best for dealing with the symptoms that affect your eyes. Over time, if you allow your allergies to affect your eyes, you can face accelerated wear and tear on your eyes, as well as permanent damage to the capillaries and the ducts that help refresh your eyes with tears.
- **Assessing Genetic and Hereditary Factors:** Do you have a family history of eye diseases such as cataracts, glaucoma, or macular degeneration? If you do, then you need to speak to your doctor and have him/her assess the current state of your eyes to see if you are at risk of developing these diseases. Early diagnosis can lead to prevention. Know that many

eye conditions are hereditary, so if you have family members who have dealt with these illnesses, then you need to learn about what you can do to prevent them from happening to you.

- **Diabetes:** This is a big one. If you have diabetes, you could be facing vision loss if you do not treat the condition properly. While some symptoms can be corrected with a prescription for correctional lenses, if the tissue in your eyes has degenerated due to diabetes, then you may experience scarring, vision loss, and damage that deteriorates your level of vision. One eye condition that is closely tied to diabetes is diabetic retinopathy.<sup>1</sup> This is where fluid or blood leaks into the retina, deteriorating vision as a result. It can cause hazy vision and can lead to blindness if left untreated.<sup>1</sup> Another condition that diabetic retinopathy poses is vitreous hemorrhage, which is where a clear-like substance leaks into the interior of your eye, causing reduced vision. Due to diabetes, you can also develop cataracts, secondary glaucoma, and macular damage, so you must treat your diabetes to prevent vision loss.<sup>1</sup>
- **Blinking:** Yes, you read that correctly—not blinking enough can be detrimental to your vision.

Blinking helps evenly distribute your tears, keeping your eyes nice and hydrated. Plus, blinking relaxes the muscles and nerves in your eyes, reducing strain. Keeping your eyes closed for 10 to 30 seconds every hour or so also helps ease any excessive stress your eyes may be dealing with. Many of us forget to blink when we are reading a book or sitting at a computer screen for a long period of time. Make sure you take the time to blink and make it a conscious habit when you are doing an activity that involves prolonged staring.

Out of all of these threats, there is one we have left out intentionally, because it deserves a section all its own: oxidative stress. Mentioning this deadly threat to your eyes—and indeed your entire body—is the main reason we'll explain to you how foods are such a great way to fight it off. What is oxidative stress and where do the foods listed in this report fit in? Read on to find out...

### ***Dealing with oxidative stress***

For starters, oxidation is a process where free radicals attack your system, causing damage, which can result in chronic illness and disease. We all have free radicals in our systems—it's unavoidable to eradicate them. However, it is when

your body undergoes undue stress or outside factors such as pollution, bacteria, fungus, radiation, cigarette smoke, car exhaust, or even alcohol, for example, that your body experiences an increase in these damaging molecules.<sup>2</sup> When it comes to oxidative stress and your eyes, it can cause your lenses to thicken and stiffen, preventing your eyes from being able to focus on items close up. It can also cause your lenses to become less pliable. So, no matter how hard your ciliary muscle works to change the shape of your lens, details remain blurred at close range.

What you need to do is get rid of the excess free radicals in your body in order to safeguard your vision. How can you do this? The first step is to eliminate any environmental factors that may be affecting your eyes. This means quitting smoking, cutting down or eliminating your alcohol consumption, and preventing any exposure to pollutants such as asbestos, molds and bacteria, and car exhaust, for example. The next and most important step involves increasing your intake of antioxidants. What are antioxidants? They are the nutrients that are found naturally in the food selections listed in this special report, which help fight off and prevent oxidative stress from occurring. By fortifying your diet with antioxidant-rich foods, you can ensure your eye health.

## **Major eye conditions**

While each of these conditions can arise due to various factors, such as age, hereditary causes, lifestyle, and environmental effects, know that diet can have an effect on each one as well. Especially worth noting, eating the foods that are listed below can help you prevent and stave off the development and progression of these eye problems.

### ***Cataracts***

Cataracts cause your vision to have a hazy clouded-over effect often seen in elderly patients. In fact, cataracts are the main cause of visual impairment in the U.S. About 1.2 million Americans develop cataracts every year and the incidence will only escalate as the population ages. Clouded lens means light can't transmit to the retina, leaving objects out of focus.

The majority of cataracts are triggered by an altered chemical composition in the lens—often a build-up of protein can reduce the light reaching the retina. Some of those chemical changes can be a result of an enzyme deficiency, an eye injury, diabetes, or medication. Also, ultraviolet light and radiation is thought to play a major role in creating that chemical change by forming the toxic free radicals that can disrupt the lens. A few

experimental studies have confirmed the link between UV and cataracts.

However, it's not known why age can trigger cataracts to occur. What is understood is that they can form so gradually that you don't even notice them until the cloudiness finally affects your sight. The symptoms beyond cloudiness include faded colors, glare, poor night vision, double vision, frequent prescription changes, and sensitivity to harsh indoor lighting and sunlight. If a cataract is on the outer part of the lens, your vision won't change.

### ***Macular degeneration***

Macular degeneration is the second most common cause of vision loss in people over the age of 65. In this condition, the most critical part of the retina—the macula—is injured. Related to aging, this condition affects close to two million people in the U.S.—a number that's expected to rise as the population grows older. This chronic eye disease is characterized by a macula that has deteriorated to the point where your central vision becomes blurred or you appear to have a very noticeable blind spot, which is always present when you look straight ahead. It never impairs your peripheral vision. Because of this, it greatly affects your quality of life. The condition has the ability to progress quickly and often the related damage is not reversible.

That's why it's important to have this condition diagnosed as soon as possible.

Look for a few of the following signs: a need for brighter light when reading, where the words seem blurred; dull colors; a slow increase of haziness in your vision; a blind spot in the center of your vision; and straight lines that seem crooked and other unusual visual effects.

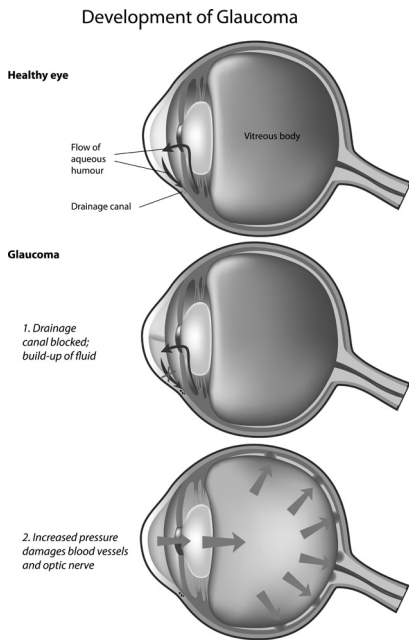
### ***Night blindness (Nyctalopia)***

Essentially, night blindness, which is also known as nyctalopia or impaired dark adaptation, is a condition that causes you to experience poor vision either in dim lighting or at nighttime. If you suffer from night blindness, you see poorly in the dark, yet you can see fine when there is an adequate amount of light present. If you have night blindness, you aren't actually blind—instead, you are experiencing a form of vision impairment that lessens your eyes' ability to process images. You'll need to speak to your doctor if you have this condition, as it can be set off by other, more serious eye conditions such as cataracts, retinitis pigmentosa, nearsightedness, or a deficiency, such as not getting enough vitamin A and other nutrients in your diet.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Glaucoma***

Affecting about three million Americans, glaucoma is thought





to be the second most common cause of vision loss. In Canada, one in nine people will develop this heartbreaking—and irreversible—vision loss by the age of 65. Glaucoma basically involves damage that has occurred to the optic nerve along with very high pressure occurring inside the eyeball. That pressure damages the small blood vessels that feed the optic nerve and, as it deteriorates, you suffer gradual vision loss, beginning with your peripheral vision. That nerve is quite important, as it relays the images we see to our brain to process them. There are several risk factors that are associated with glaucoma, such as: your age, family history, being

nearsighted, having poor overall health, suffering from an adverse health event such as a stroke, or having fluid blockage in the eye (also known as raised intraocular pressure).

There are different types of glaucoma, and they all depend on what is causing the inner eye pressure to occur. Primary open-angle glaucoma and open-angle glaucoma are the two most common types of this disease, occurring due to the eye's inability to drain properly because it is clogged. What results is a fluid buildup in the eye, where the pressure increases as well. It's sad to say, but you can get glaucoma without presenting any warning signs or symptoms. Even if you have normal eye pressure, you can gradually develop this condition.

Although there is no cure for glaucoma, it can be managed after being diagnosed. You can help prevent any further vision loss with the help of the right treatments. Overall, the best way to ward off glaucoma is to get regular eye exams, as this is a disease that needs to be diagnosed before it can be treated.<sup>4</sup>

## **Specific nutrients that can help your eyesight**

Before we get into the myriad foods that can help you preserve your eyesight, let's review a selection

of the most beneficial nutrients for your eyes, especially when it comes to preventing the conditions we just described. These selections are your top helpers when it comes to protecting your eyes and you can also get these nutrients from many supplements, such as Dr. Marchione's Super Sight Formula.

- **Lutein and Zeaxanthin:** These two carotenes are at the very top of the nutrient list when it comes to eye care and prevention. While lutein and zeaxanthin aren't as popular as beta-carotene, they have been shown to have the most potential when it comes to fighting the onset of macular damage. Both carotenes are found in high amounts in dark-green, leafy vegetables, especially spinach, collard greens, and kale. They can help protect the macula from sun exposure, almost functioning much like a pair of natural sunglasses by dyeing the macula yellow. At Harvard, researchers noted that those who ate the most lutein and zeaxanthin experienced nearly a 60% reduced risk of developing macular damage compared to those eating the least amount of the carotenes.<sup>5</sup>

According to the American Optometric Association, the ability for lutein and zeaxanthin to help

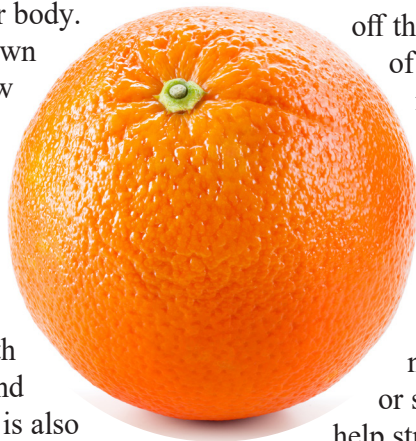
prevent age-related vision damage suggests that you should eat as much of these two super nutrients as possible on a daily basis. Both the National Cancer Institute and the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommend that you eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day, since they will provide you with these two great nutrients. Choose the right foods—specifically those green leafy ones used in salad. Since people generally don't eat enough fruits and vegetables, this may in part explain the rising incidence of macular damage.<sup>6</sup> So make a special note of the foods listed in this report—many of them contain both lutein and zeaxanthin.

- **Carotenoids:** Ah, carrots, the number one source that's known for this famous eye-boosting nutrient. It's true: carotenoids are good for your eyes. A few studies have hinted that carotenoids may be effective at preventing vision loss. In a lengthy study of 500 women aged 53 to 73, it was found generally that those with higher levels of carotenoids and vitamin C were less likely to develop vision damage.<sup>7</sup>

In particular, note the two carotenoids, lutein and zeaxanthin, that we just discussed above.



- **Zinc:** Studies have varied a bit on this one, but it is well established that a couple of important enzymes in your retina rely on the mineral zinc in order to function effectively. Hence, it does play a role in your vision. However, can zinc help prevent macular damage? According to one study, taking 45 mg of zinc every day for one or two years significantly slowed down vision loss for people already diagnosed with macular damage.<sup>8</sup> Zinc is present in many of the foods mentioned below, so it doesn't hurt to add it to your diet.
- **Vitamin A and Beta-Carotene:** Vitamin A performs several functions inside your body. Mostly, it's best known for its ability to allow you to see in the dark. Beta-carotene is essentially the molecule that provides certain foods that are yellow or orange with their pigmentation and color. Beta-carotene is also a carotenoid, which is also found in many of the fruit and vegetables mentioned in this report, as well as in various healthy and lean animal products such as fortified eggs. Beta-carotene is crucial to



your eyes, as it holds antioxidant properties, thus keeping your eyes safe from free-radical damage.<sup>9</sup>

- **Pycnogenol (Maritime Pine):** This nutrient is a lesser-known player, but it's still worth mentioning. Pycnogenol is an antioxidant that helps fight free radicals and works to boost your immune system. These two beneficial actions help to not only boost your body's functioning, but also help keep your eyes safe from free-radical damage and excessive oxidation.<sup>10</sup> Look for it in your local health food or pharmacy isle.
- **Vitamin C:** Vitamin C—what can't it do? Besides acting as a powerful antioxidant that staves off the damaging effects of oxidation, this nutrient also has a strong connection to cataract prevention. Long-term consumption of vitamin C (either through natural food sources or supplementation) can help strengthen your eyes and prevent free radicals from inflicting damage to the eyes. In a Tufts University study, women under 60 who had more than 362 mg of the vitamin a day had a 57% reduced risk of developing

vision damage than those taking 140 mg a day. Those taking C supplements for more than a decade had 60% lower chances of vision loss than those who took no supplements.<sup>11</sup> Not too shabby for just one antioxidant!

If you make it a habit to get vitamin C in your diet on a regular basis, it can help to reduce the risk of you ever developing vision damage in the first place. An eight-year nurses study found that those taking C supplements for at least 10 years—not just getting it through diet—had nearly half the rate of cataracts as those not taking supplements. Yet another study, this time of 247 women, found the supplements again reduced the risk, this time by about 77%.<sup>12</sup>

- **Vitamin E:** This nutrient also fights free radicals. However, vitamin E does it in a different way than vitamin C—it's a powerful antioxidant that battles free radicals in the body's fats and oils. It's this similar antioxidant effect that may be behind vitamin E's association with a reduced risk of cataract formation. Several studies have found that people with low levels of vitamin E in their bloodstream (as well as vitamin A) were almost twice

as likely to develop cataracts.<sup>13</sup> Other reports have confirmed this, as those individuals who had the most amount of vitamin E in their system were the least likely to develop cataracts. While there isn't an overwhelming link between this vitamin and cataract prevention, it's still a suggestive one nonetheless, and thus worth mentioning here.

- **Magnesium:** If you want to reduce your risk of developing cardiac complications, you may want to ensure that you get enough magnesium in your diet. This mineral helps to dilate your blood vessels, making sure your blood flow remains strong. Getting enough magnesium is a good idea for just about everybody, as it performs many important functions in the body. However, you may want to note that it's also possible that magnesium can improve vision in people who have developed glaucoma.<sup>14</sup>

So, now that we've looked at some of the best nutrients for your eyes, let's look at the all-natural, healthy food sources that contain these great substances. The list is pretty extensive, as you'll see, so let's get started...

## **Foods that will help boost your eyesight and prevent vision problems**

There is an abundance of fruits, vegetables, meat, grain, and dairy products that you can add to your diet, which will benefit your eyesight. An added bonus? These foods are delicious, abundantly healthy for your body in myriad ways, and they will also help you live an overall better lifestyle. Not only will your eyes benefit, but so will your whole body and all your vital organs when you cut out fatty, unhealthy junk foods and replace them with the selections below. What are you waiting for? Clear out all those pre-packaged, preservative-laden fatty foods from your fridge and pantry, and instead go the ultra-healthy, whole-foods route.

### ***Enriched eggs***

Let's start with eggs, shall we? According to one study, eggs have been found to contain significant amounts of lutein, an antioxidant nutrient that is documented to prevent vision loss and macular

damage. Previously, it was believed that leafy green vegetables, such as spinach, which we'll discuss in a moment, were the best natural place to get lutein. However, recent research suggests the best place could be eggs—the yolk increases the availability of lutein because of the cholesterol and choline it contains. Now, to get an added vision boost, when you are purchasing eggs at your local grocery store, why not choose the omega-3-enriched version? They are very common and the added benefit of getting extra omega-3s in your diet will provide your eyes with even more protection.

### ***Milk products***

Milk products contain many of the beneficial nutrients that your eyes need in order to stay healthy. Among some of these nutrients is vitamin B2, also known as riboflavin, which is required for the formation of red blood cells, the production of antibodies, and the growth and respiration of cells. Inside a cell's mitochondria, vitamin B2 helps shuttle the electrons we get in food along a pathway. It's needed to activate vitamin B6 and folate, which as we've already discussed, are important to maintaining good eye health. Riboflavin, magnesium, and folate, all good eye helpers, are found in many dairy products such as skim milk, yogurt, and cheese.



### ***Tofu***

This one may seem a bit far-fetched, but it turns out that tofu may reduce your risk of age-related macular degeneration and cataracts. Dietary components that appear particularly protective for your eyes in this food source include a variety of nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, iron, protein, selenium, and magnesium.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Walnuts***



Walnuts have received a lot of recognition lately due to their great health properties. Walnuts are full of vitamin E, which, in one study, was shown to help prevent the development of cataracts when consumed on a long-term basis. Walnuts also include manganese, as well as omega-3 fatty acids—making them a great source for this other beneficial eye-boosting nutrient, especially for those of you who don't enjoy fish.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Cheddar cheese***

Cheddar cheese contains a very essential mineral that helps with good eye maintenance—magnesium.

Your body stores a good amount of magnesium, but you still need to get it through your diet. It has the ability to block calcium from entering certain parts of your body, where it can do harm, which is why magnesium can help improve vision in individuals who have glaucoma. So go ahead, add some cheddar cheese to your diet.

### ***Squash***

This delicious autumn-harvest vegetable is a great source of both vitamin E and vitamin C—two nutrients that may help prevent cataracts, according to one five-year study. Researchers conducted eye examinations on a group of women who had participated in the Health Study. What they found was that the women who got enough vitamin E in their diets were less likely to see cataract progression, as opposed to women who did not get enough of this crucial vitamin.<sup>17</sup> If you want to aim for the best variety, winter squash in particular is an excellent source of vitamin A and also a very good source of vitamin C, potassium, dietary fiber, and manganese. In addition, winter squash is also a good source of certain eye-boosting nutrients, such as folate, omega-3 fatty acids, thiamin, vitamin B5, vitamin B6, and niacin.<sup>18</sup> You can look for squash in the fall months at your local grocery store or

farmer's market—baked in the oven with a little olive oil, it makes for a delicious, eye-protective side dish.

### ***Dark green leafy veggies***

Hands down, green leafy vegetables are the best sources of a plethora of eye-healthy—and all-over body-healthy—nutrients. The label 'dark green leafy vegetables' is a category that includes such choices as broccoli, spinach, Swiss chard, kale, bok choy, mustard greens, collard greens, and



others. These veggies include all the big players in eye health, as

they contain abundant amounts of vitamin A, beta-carotene,

C, E, magnesium,

niacin, manganese,

magnesium, various carotenoids (including lutein and zeaxanthin), zinc, folate, and many other beneficial nutrients that are good for your overall health. Dark green leafy vegetables work as powerful antioxidants, helping keep your eyes safe from oxidation.<sup>19</sup> The nutrients found in these veggies also help boost your immune system with nutrients such as beta-carotene and vitamins, A, C, and E can slow the progression of vision loss and macular damage. So go ahead, add these delicious and

nutritious dark green leafy goodies to your plate—your eyes will thank you for it, as will your entire body!

### ***Fish (trout, mackerel, sardine, salmon)***

Fish contain a plethora of nutrients that can be beneficial to your eye health, such as omega-3 fatty acids and co-enzyme Q10 (CoQ10), which is a powerful antioxidant that protects your cells against free radical damage, including the cells in your eyes.<sup>20</sup> CoQ10 is found naturally in every cell of your body. And it helps boost your immune system. Omega-3 fatty acids, in particular, are essential for proper nerve conduction in the retina, which helps keep your eyes functioning properly. Omega-3s also help prevent glaucoma and macular degeneration.<sup>21</sup>

Great fish sources that you can check out, which have these beneficial nutrients, include oily fish such as trout, sardines, salmon, tuna, mackerel, and halibut. These contain essential fatty acids (omega-3s and omega-6s), which help prevent dry, gritty eyes.<sup>22</sup> Don't like fish? That's okay, you can also get your omega-3s and CoQ10 from alternate sources such as flax seed oil, black current oil, olive oil, avocado, walnut and walnut oils, dark leafy vegetables, eggs and even some spices such



as mustard, fennel, cumin, and fenugreek.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Spinach***

We want to delve a bit deeper into spinach for one particular reason: it's an excellent source of the carotenoid lutein. As mentioned, lutein can help prevent vision loss and prevent blurry vision. This great nutrient helps shield your eyes by filtering and absorbing harmful UVB rays as well as being able to keep your eyes safe from free radicals.<sup>21</sup> It can also help you if you have a history of macular degeneration and other vision-loss conditions. In one study out of Harvard University, researchers found that women who maintained a diet high in both lutein and zeaxanthin (which is also in spinach!) saw a 22% reduction of vision loss, where men saw a 19% reduction.<sup>22</sup> Not too bad for a dark green leafy vegetable that tastes great and makes for an awesome addition to any salad. Still can't stand spinach but want to get more lutein in your diet? Try carrots, kale, Swiss chard, collard, mustard greens, red peppers, dill, parsley, romaine lettuce, tomatoes, potatoes... phew, there are lots of choices you can go with here!

### ***Broccoli***

While we're at it, let's look at yet another great dark green vegetable: broccoli. This delicious veggie is

a great source of vitamin C, which fights free radicals in water, and vitamin E, which does so in the body's fats and oils. With minuscule amounts of saturated fats and cholesterol, broccoli is very high in vitamin A, folate, and dietary fiber, as well as protein, thiamin, riboflavin, calcium, iron, phosphorus, and potassium. A tripled-up health boost, cooking broccoli with oil and topping it with cheddar

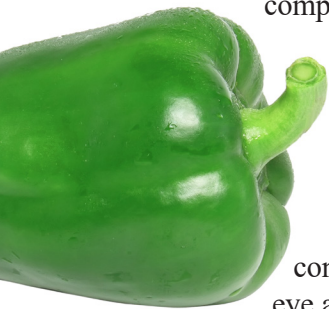
### ***Brussels Sprouts***



Let's look at yet another great green veggie—Brussels sprouts. Okay, you may not have enjoyed the taste as a child, but hopefully as an adult your palette is now more discerning! Brussels sprouts are particularly worth noting, as they contain high levels of vitamin C and folate—both great eye protectors. These little sprouts also contain plant phytonutrients, which play an important role in your body's natural defense system. Particularly,



glucosinolate phytonutrients, which are found in many green cruciferous veggies, boost your body's ability to detoxify itself, which helps keep harmful free radicals at bay. New research now shows that the phytonutrients in Brussels sprouts actually take it one step further by signaling your genes to create enzymes that are active in the detoxification process, which help clear out dangerous and unhealthy compounds.<sup>25</sup> What



else?

Brussels  
sprouts

pack a  
healthful  
punch,

containing  
eye and body

protective nutrients such as vitamin A, manganese, dietary fiber, potassium, vitamin B6, vitamin B1, omega-3 fatty acids, iron, phosphorous, protein, magnesium, vitamin B2, vitamin E, copper, and calcium.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Red, orange, and green peppers***

Next, let's look at carotenoids and their tie to red, orange, and green peppers—actually, let's look at their tie to all colorful vegetables. They are found in all fruits and vegetables that are colorful—they provide the pigment. They are the reason behind

carrots being linked to eyesight, for example, as well as other orange-colored veggies, such as orange peppers. The most famous carotenoid, as we've already mentioned, is beta-carotene, which is converted into vitamin A by your body. Vitamin A just happens to be inside your eyeballs—and you can get it via red, orange, and green peppers.

More specifically, the two carotenoids that we are interested in here, are lutein and zeaxanthin, which are abundant in red and orange peppers in particular. In a study of U.S. men, these two carotenoids were found to achieve a modestly lower risk of cataracts severe enough to require extraction.<sup>24</sup> They also show the most potential in fighting macular degeneration.<sup>24</sup> Both carotenes can help protect the macula from sun exposure, almost acting like a pair of natural sunglasses by dyeing the macula yellow. At Harvard, researchers noted that those who ate the most lutein and zeaxanthin experienced nearly a 60% reduced risk of getting the condition compared to those individuals who ate the least amount of these carotenes.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Bilberries, blueberries, and cranberries***

Let's start with the bilberry. It has flavonoids



that protect against eye damage. It's a common berry that's often mentioned when it comes to vision, thanks to its protective properties. Within this berry (which is a member of the blueberry, huckleberry, and cranberry family) flavonoids may protect the lens from damage. Bilberry is commonly used in vision supplements and its popularity persists although its evidence isn't so strong. One Italian study, however, did find that a combination of bilberry extract and vitamin E supplements halted the progression of vision loss in nearly all of the 50 patients. It's unclear, though, which of the treatment's ingredients was primarily responsible for these findings.

Next, let's look at the blueberry, which is known as the healthiest fruit in the world. It has huge amounts of vitamin C, manganese, calcium, magnesium, potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin E, and riboflavin. Where the blueberry surpasses others is in proven medicinal benefits—it contains some of the most potent antioxidants. The fruit's phytonutrients may have the highest capability of destroying free radicals that damage the body's (and your eyes') tissue. Blueberries can help prevent cataracts and glaucoma, so go ahead and add this delicious, potent berry to your diet—it makes for a great dessert.

Finally, let's take a look at the last berry on the list, cranberry. Cranberries are a proven natural healer of the urinary tract system, and are a known digestive aid, yet they also contain nutrients that can benefit your eyes, too. For example, cranberries contain high levels of vitamin B2, alongside four other B vitamins. They also carry high levels of vitamin C, iron, and manganese.

### ***Raw cabbage***

Okay, you may have thought that cranberry was an unlikely source of vision-friendly nutrients, but this next choice might really surprise you.



Raw cabbage is a fantastic source of vitamin C, too. It also contains folate, vitamin B1, vitamin B6, potassium, omega-3 fatty acids, magnesium, vitamin A, and even phytochemicals, all of which work in tandem to keep your eyes safe from oxidation and deterioration due to free radicals while detoxifying your system overall.<sup>25</sup> Try chopping up some raw cabbage and adding it to a pasta salad for extra crunch.

### ***Nuts and seeds***

Let's not forget about zinc here—another vital vision helper. This amazing mineral plays an amazing role in your body. More than 300 unique enzymes need it to work. In fact, it's found in each cell of your body and nearly every single bodily process. Because a severe deficiency in zinc causes major loss of immune function, the link between the mineral and your protective, fighting white blood cells is clear. Zinc is important for your eyes, as it plays a role in specific enzymes in your retina that rely on the mineral in order to function effectively. So, what's a good food source for zinc? Nuts and seeds, of course! Try adding a handful of mixed nuts to your diet a few times a week, which consists of such picks as walnuts, almonds,



Brazil nuts, cashews, peanuts, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, and pumpkin seeds.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Almonds***

Let's look at one nut in particular—the almond. Almonds are a great

source of magnesium, a mineral that helps relax the smooth muscles in your eyes while preventing muscle spasms from occurring. In particular, almonds also contain vitamin B2, which helps aid your retina's ability to receive and process light. Plus, both vitamin B2 and magnesium help prevent such eye conditions, blurry vision and vision loss.<sup>27</sup> For these benefits alone, almonds really stand out in the pack!

### ***Sunflower seeds***

Since we singled out a nut, let's take a more in-depth look at a seed next, shall we? Sunflower seeds, besides being fun to get out of their shells, offer up a good amount of the nutrient selenium. What does selenium do? It helps make sure that the substance glutathione is doing its job, which, in one study, showed to be particularly helpful for patients with macular degeneration. A combination of selenium and vitamin E, which are both present in sunflower seeds, helps the patients experience improved vision.<sup>28</sup> Selenium also helps prevent a variety of causes of eye damage, so ensure you get enough of it in your diet by eating not only sunflower seeds but also other selenium-rich foods as garlic, onions, cabbage, brown rice, eggs, tuna, shrimp, chicken, Brazil nuts, and broccoli.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Papaya***

You may have already guessed that this delicious, exotic fruit also contains bountiful amounts of vitamin C. It protects your eyes against free-radical damage and is essential for



maintaining a strong immune system. Your body also needs it to build collagen, the most important protein there is because it is of a structural nature holding your connective tissues in place (and thus, the element that holds our bodies together). Vitamin C allows these connective fibers to weave across each other, thus creating a stronger structure.

Vitamin C has been found to have a direct link with cataracts and macular degeneration. But most of all, for our purposes here, papaya is the proof that you don't need to take vitamin C supplements in order to obtain this crucial nutrient. It's present in most of the foods mentioned here, including more exotic picks such as papaya, which goes to show that you can mix up your routine by picking out less common orange, red, and yellow fruits.

## Cantaloupe

Let's check out another orange fruit that is full of many vision-boosting nutrients. Peaking in the summer months, cantaloupe is available year round. It contains almost no saturated fats and offers an excellent supply of beta-carotene, potassium, and vitamin C. One cup of cantaloupe has less than 60 calories, but is already well above your recommended intake of vitamin A. It also has in its orange flesh vitamin B6, B1, B5, and B3; folate; and a nice chunk of dietary fiber. Plus, thanks to its characteristically rich orange color, yup, you guessed it, cantaloupe is ripe with carotenoids, specifically lutein and zeaxanthin. Chock full of great nutrients that can prevent oxidative damage to your eyes, cantaloupe is a fruit your diet needs to be utterly d

## Asparagus

Asparagus is the produce of the grocery store that's a great addition to its menu. Particularly for those who are not only low in sodium and sodium in vitamin C, asparagus is a superior source of B1, B2,



minerals such as copper, phosphorus, potassium, iron, zinc, manganese, and magnesium as well. This is a great green to add to your diet that can both boost your immune system but can also keep your eyes safe from free-radical damage as well.

### ***Carrots***

How can we forget about carrots? This orange vegetable is famous for its protective abilities when it comes to your sight. That orange color is due to carotenoids, and its thanks to lutein and zeaxanthin again, in particular, that help boost your vision while preventing such conditions as macular damanger and vision loss. The nutrients in carrots, specifically carotenoid phytonutrients such as alpha- and beta-carotene, and lutein, help nourish and replenish your eyes, helping stave off strain



and various eye-related concerns as the ones we just mentioned.<sup>29</sup> This excellent antioxidant vegetable is one of the top runners when it comes to maintaining good eye health through

your diet.

### ***Cauliflower***

This vegetable merits a brief mention thanks to its vision-boosting nutrients. Cauliflower is a great source of vitamin C, folate, vitamin B5, vitamin B6, omega-3 fatty acids, and manganese. It's great boiled or chopped up in a salad for added roughage.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Oranges***

Vitamin C—we just can't stress this awesome antioxidant enough when it comes to your eye health. Vitamin C also acts as a sort of ultraviolet filter inside your eyes, keeping them safe from the harmful rays of the sun. Vitamin C can help prevent free radical damage which causes vision loss, and even dry eyes. In one study, in fact, long-term vitamin C was shown to help reduce the risk of cataracts. Along with all the other great foods mentioned in this report that are rich in this great nutrient, did you know that just one medium-sized orange can provide you with your daily recommended dose of vitamin C? It's true!

## **Going organic: Making the best food purchases**

All the foods listed in this special



report are excellent choices to add to your diet. Not only do they provide your eyes with a load of vitamins, minerals, and nutrients, but they also taste great and will keep the rest of your body slim and healthy. So how can you go the extra mile and ensure you make the best food picks when at the market? By going organic, of course! Organic foods are grown and raised in pesticide and hormone-free conditions. They often provide you with all-natural, boosted sources of nutrients, which means you are truly getting the best for your eyes. While organic choices may be slightly more expensive than their counterparts, they are on the rise. More and more markets, grocery stores, and companies now carry organic foods, thanks to consumer demand. Since the organics market is expanding exponentially, prices are becoming more reasonable, so don't let that stop you from going organic.

Here are some tips on purchasing organic foods:

- **Check out your local farmer's market:** This is a great place to start. The local farmer's market in your community can provide you with a wide variety of organic food choices. A great bonus is that the prices are often very low and the foods are hand-grown and hand-raised, plus many vendors offer gourmet organic selections

as well, such as preserves, salads, prepared meats, and other delicious selections.

- **Find out what producers offer organic product lines:** Do you prefer certain food brands over others? You may be surprised at how many companies now offer an organic foods line. The next time you are at the market, take notice, you may find that the brands you have relied on all these years are now offering you organic alternatives at affordable prices.
- **Join a food co-op:** Food co-ops are a great means of buying organic foods for less. The way it works is you pay a fee to join the co-op and/or you volunteer a few hours of your time a month at its location and you get the opportunity to buy organic foods for less. Check out your local Yellow Pages to see what food co-ops are offering memberships in your area. An extra bonus? Food co-ops often support local farmers, which helps bolster your community's economy as well.
- **See what the little guy can offer:** Are there small vendors in your community? Do you live near any farms that you can drop by during the weekend? If so, then check out these options. Smaller



businesses and local farmers can provide you with a great source of organic foods for a price that can't be beat.

- **Check out what is available at grocery stores:** The demand for these foods is on the rise and more and more people these days want to go organic. Many food chains are responding by providing organic produce sections, organic meats, and baked goods made with organic ingredients. It's a trend that is not going to go away, so the next time you are grocery shopping, take note of the organic alternatives that are available to you. By switching to the organic options of the items you usually buy, you will be getting better, all-natural whole-food choices that will benefit not only your vision but your entire body as well.
- **Grow your own fruits and veggies:** This is the least expensive means of obtaining organic fruits and vegetables—

grow them on your own! If you have the space in your back yard, why not start a small garden? You can grow all your favorite fruits and veggies inexpensively. As an added bonus, you will get plenty of fresh air and exercise in the process, plus you can make preserves you and your family can enjoy later on in the winter months. If you don't have a lot of space, you can always start a window box and grow your own herbs.

These are just a few of the foods that contain the essential nutrients that your eyes need to be healthy and function properly. There are a lot more foods out there that contain the vitamins and the carotenoids your eyes need. The important thing is for you to be aware of these foods make a conscious effort to introduce them into your daily diet. The more your body gets of these nutrients, the more your eyes will benefit.

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