

Nourish Your Eyes

Age-related eye diseases such as macular degeneration and cataracts commonly cause impaired vision and blindness in older adults. Diabetes also increases your risk for age-related eye diseases and may cause diabetic retinopathy. However, lifestyle changes including good nutrition, could help delay or prevent eye problems. Janie Chua, dietitian, National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, recommends the foods to nourish your eyes.



Cardiovascular disease, diabetes and eye conditions including cataracts and age-related macular degeneration have been shown to occur less frequently in people who eat a diet rich in vitamins, minerals, omega 3 fatty acids and lutein.

Chockfull of vitamins & antioxidants

Vitamin A keeps the eyes healthy by preventing night blindness, and is probably the most important ingredient for healthy eyes. Foods rich in vitamin A are cod liver oil, sweet potatoes and squash.

Vitamin C is an antioxidant, which helps to fend off damaged free radicals and protects cells, thus helping to prevent some eye diseases. Papayas, orange, grapefruit, strawberries, green peppers, tomatoes and cauliflowers are foods laden with this vitamin.

Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant for the protection of eye health against eye illnesses like cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. Almonds, sunflower and corn oils, mango, hazelnut, pistachio nuts and peanuts are all rich in vitamin E.

Carotenoids refer to the natural plant pigments that provide the vibrant colours found in the vegetables and fruits we eat. Lutein is one of the many varieties, and is thought to protect the eyes from deterioration. Lutein can be found in dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach and kale, sweet corn, peas, and broccoli.

In general, eat plenty of colourful fruit and vegetables for optimum eye health. In fact, it is recommended that you consume two servings of fruits and two servings of vegetables daily by choosing dark green or brightly coloured fruit and vegetables to obtain the most antioxidants that protect your eyes by reducing damage related to free radicals that can cause age-related eye diseases.

Healthy Fats

The omega-3 essential fatty acids found in fish, flax, walnuts and canola oil help to prevent dry eyes and, possibly, cataracts. Do eat oily fish such as cod, threadfin, tuna and salmon twice a week. Use canola oil for cooking, and snack on walnuts, but take note of the high calories in walnuts.

Good Sources of Protein

Choose lean meat, fish, nuts, legumes and eggs for protein. Eggs are a good source of lutein as well.

Cut the Salt

High sodium intake may add to your risk of cataract formation. Use less salt and look for sodium content on the labels of canned and packaged foods. Choose fresh and frozen foods whenever possible. Try to stay below 2000 mg of sodium each day. Use herbs and spices to enhance the flavour of the dish instead.

