

Caring for your vision

There is plenty people can do to care for their vision, improve their sight, and prevent vision loss. Note that at the first signs of vision trouble a visit to the doctor is very important, as there are treatments to correct, stop, and slow the loss of vision. Below are some tips for daily eye care.

Diet

It is a common understanding that eating carrots will improve your eyesight because they contain vitamin A. This is true! But there are other foods that you can eat with carotenoids as well, and can even prevent age-related macular degeneration and cataracts and help to filter harmful UV light. Note that these foods high in the yellow-colored lutein and zeaxanthin are most helpful if eaten raw or only lightly steamed, and it is suspected by researchers that cigarette smoke destroys carotenoids.

- Eggs
- Liver
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Zucchini

Other important nutrients for caring for vision include:

- Vitamin C (ascorbic acid – found in oranges, broccoli, strawberries, bell peppers, papaya),
- Omega-3 fatty acids (found in sardines, flax seeds, walnuts, salmon and soy beans), and
- Zinc (found in venison, calf liver, beef, and mushrooms).

Certain artificial sweeteners (particularly those that include cyclamate, which is not currently found in the U.S., but present in other countries as a sugar substitute in diet drinks for example) can make your eyes more sensitive to light. Other products can have this effect as well, such as certain antibiotics, hypertension medications, and anti-diabetic medications.

Protection

Protect against harmful eye injuries by using proper eye protection when working at a job or in a lab or around the house or yard, as well as when playing sports. Physical injuries can cause permanent damage. Sunglasses with gray lenses that are free of imperfections and that cover the eye area fully protect against harmful ultra-violet rays if they block out 99-100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B radiation. UV exposure has been linked to eye disorders such as macular degeneration, solar retinitis, and corneal dystrophies, and looking directly at the sun can cause permanent eye damage.

Behaviors to note

Contrary to popular belief, the following behaviors do not actually damage your vision, but could cause you to get a headache:

- Sitting closer than necessary to the TV
- Reading the in dark
- Using corrective lenses that are not the correct prescription

Sources:

- American Optometric Association <http://www.aoa.org/x4724.xml>
- The World's Healthiest Foods <http://www.whfoods.org>

- The Cleveland Clinic Cole Eye Institute and Charlotte E. Grayson, MD
<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=43069>