

Mosman Sydney Vision Therapy Eye Health Cataract Myopia Treatment and Prevention

Dietary Recommendations for Better Eye Health

Dietary Recommendations for Better Eye Health It's often said that people eat with their eyes, but no matter how tempting attractively presented meals are, they are not necessarily good for the eyes' health. Eye scientists, researchers and doctors are increasingly calling for them to eat for the eyes rather than with them, says Gary Rodney, fellow of the International Academy of Orthokeratology and Myopia Control (FIAOMC), behavioural optometrist, and founder of the Smart Vision Optometry (SVO) system in Australia.

He says: "Those who want their car to run well, will ensure the right fuel and oil is used so all its systems work smoothly. It makes sense that eyes, the organs which provide 80% of the information which shapes and guides people's lives and how they see the world, should be given the same treatment."

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Lessening the Worst of the Worst According to Rodney, research has shown that the wrong food can impact on vision in general, and also play a role in the development or worsening of chronic eye diseases. On the contrary, an eye-friendly diet keeps the eyes healthier, lessens the likelihood of eye problems, slows the progression of chronic eye conditions, and lowers the risk of vision loss.

He says an eye health diet is vital when it comes to the top four vision destroyers. These include the eye-clouding cataract; age-related macular degeneration that blurs central vision; diabetic retinopathy which impacts on the retina's blood vessels; and glaucoma, the world's largest cause of blindness in those over 60. This eye disease which affects around 76 million people globally, raises the pressure levels in the eyes and damages the optic nerve responsible for conducting visual data from the eyes to the brain.

Eating the Way to Healthier Vision Rodney says an eye-healthy diet should not include highly processed foods, frequent take-outs and fast-foods like burgers, milkshakes, pre-packed dinners, as well as carbohydrates, fried foods and margarine, which can clog the thin arteries supplying blood to the eyes.

Diabetics, or those who are insulin resistant, should keep clear of sugar to lower the chances of diabetic retinopathy, or slow its progression if already present. Carbonated drinks, and specially those sweetened with corn syrup, are also not recommended, as they can increase blood pressure, which can lead to vision problems.

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Using What's Good in the Food On the other hand, a diet which is low in fat, sugar and chemicals, but rich in fruits and vegetables can help protect the eyes' health, says Rodney, and certain vitamins and minerals have long been seen to support eye health.

Among these stalwarts is Vitamin A, which keeps the eye's light-sensing cells, used in the harvesting of visual information, in shape. It's found in orange vegetables and fruits such as carrots, sweet potatoes, apricots and cantaloupes.

Studies also suggest the Vitamin C in oranges, lemons, grapefruit, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, bell peppers and tomatoes; and the Vitamin E from avocados, almonds and sunflower seeds and nuts may, at the very least, slow age-related macular degeneration and cataract, and protect the eyes from environmental problems, smoking, and over-consumption of processed food and take-outs.

So will the two anti-oxidants, lutein and zeaxanthin, found in leafy green vegetables such as kale, spinach, romaine lettuce, turnip greens, peas and broccoli and in eggs; and the zinc in chickpeas, beans, oysters, lean beef and yogurt.

Omega-3s have been associated with a reduction in the risk of diabetic retinopathy in older adults, and it's also being investigated with regard to helping with dry eyes. Omega-3s are found in oily fish such as salmon, sardines and tuna, as well as in nuts.

NOTE: Rodney says any eye-health diets should be discussed with eye doctors, whether they're for coping with severe and sight-threatening diseases, or for improving general eye health and sight. This is important as some supplements or vitamins will only show positive effects if there is a deficiency in them.

For more information on eye health, its treatment and management, or to make an appointment, visit the Smart Vision website: Optometrists Sydney: Optometry Services For Children and Adults | Smart Vision; for specific information about Myopia treatment and prevention visit Myopia Prevention: Solutions, Control And Treatment In Sydney; and for detailed information about Myopia Treatment visit Orthokeratology In Sydney: The Non Surgical Alternative.

To book an appointment for a thorough eye check-up, click here or Call the Bondi clinic on (02) 9365 5047 or the Mosman clinic on (02) 9969 1600.

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