

Eating More of These 5 Foods can Help Improve your Eye Health

By Julie Wilson, *Natural News*

Vision is one of mankind's most valued senses. Unfortunately, for many it's susceptible to extremely degenerative conditions. In the United States alone, nearly \$7 billion is spent to treat cataracts, affecting about 22 million Americans over the age of 40.

Approximately **75 percent of adults require some sort of corrective lenses**, according to the Vision Council of America, and about 64 percent wear eyeglasses, with the other 11 percent wearing contact lenses.

About a third of the population suffers from near-sightedness, while about 60 percent are far-sighted, struggling to see up close.

It's safe to say this country has a vision problem, and other than consuming a healthy diet, no preventive methods have been developed. We live during an age of heart transplants, yet there's no technology that preserves one of our most important traits, eyesight.

Fortunately, a healthy diet is pretty powerful. Consuming certain foods has proven to directly impact vision and overall eye health.

Below are **five top foods** for tackling degenerative vision.

1. Egg Yolks

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of vision loss for people over 65 years old; however, eating egg yolks can help slow this process. For various reasons, a degenerative process can affect the macula, a tiny area in the back of the eye, subsequently damaging your vision.

Egg yolks contain lutein, a yellow-pigmented antioxidant belonging to a class of compounds called carotenoids. Lutein and a similar compound called zeaxanthin selectively accumulate in the macula of the retina, scavenging free radicals and acting as a blue-light filter.

Some experts suggest that we need about 6 mg of these antioxidants a day. One egg yolk has about 0.25 mg of lutein, and even more if you don't cook it. Also, the body absorbs lutein found in egg yolks more easily than it does that found in fruits or vegetables. Consuming lutein with olive or coconut oil enhances absorption.

While other foods contribute to eye health, egg yolks were found to help the most

2. Spinach

This delicious, green leafy vegetable contains lots of lutein, therefore working miracles on the eyes. Consuming it raw is the best method, as heating spinach is known to damage some of its antioxidants.

In the macula, lutein and zeaxanthin are considered macular pigments. Macular pigments have been shown to decrease the risk of AMD, and might also play a role in age-related cataracts, according to the Egg Nutrition Center [PDF]. Among carotenoids, lutein and zeaxanthin are the only ones to be found in the eye's lens.

Kale, broccoli, romaine lettuce, peas, Brussels sprouts, zucchini and other collard greens also contain high amounts of lutein.

3. Blueberries

Blueberries, also referred to as "brainberries," are considered by some to be the healthiest food on the planet. Their bright blue casings contain anthocyanins, a group of powerful antioxidants that aid the body with multiple protections.

Eating blueberries helps protect the retina from unwanted sunlight and oxygen damage.

4. Carrots

While consuming carrots won't necessarily reverse bad eyesight, they can help improve overall eye health. Carrots contain lutein and beta-carotene, a substance converted to vitamin A by the body, a beneficial nutrient for eye health. Vitamin A is a crucial nutrient; in fact, a lack of it is the leading cause of blindness in the developing world, according to *HowStuffWorks.com*.

Orange-colored foods like mango, pumpkin, apricots, sweet potatoes and cantaloupe also contain beta-carotene.

5. Almonds

This vitamin E-rich nut has also been proven to slow macular degeneration, and just one handful a day provides you about half of your daily dose, according to *Health.com*. Almonds contain the anti-cancer nutrient amygdalin, also known as laetrile or vitamin B17.

Almonds promote overall well-being. They contribute to weight loss, help lower cholesterol, prevent heart disease and improve your complexion, among many other benefits.

Additional sources:

<http://glassesrafter.com>

<http://www.aao.org>

<http://www.counselheal.com>

<http://health.howstuffworks.com>

<http://www.eggnutritioncenter.org>