

WHFoods: What foods are best for vision health?

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In general, here are some foods and nutrients that support vision health:

Fruit

Data reported in a study published in the June 2004 issue of the Archives of Ophthalmology indicates that eating 3 or more servings of fruit per day may lower your risk of age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), the primary cause of vision loss in older adults, by 36%, compared to persons who consume less than 1.5 servings of fruit daily.

In this large-scale study, which involved over 110,000 participants, researchers evaluated the effect of study participants' consumption of fruits, vegetables, antioxidant vitamins (A, C, and E), and carotenoids on the development of early ARMD or neovascular ARMD, a more severe form of the illness associated with vision loss. Food intake information was collected periodically for up to 18 years for women and 12 years for men.

Many fruits, including berries, also contain flavonoid phytonutrients, which may play an important role in protecting eye health. They not only serve as antioxidants and therefore protect the eye from free radical damage, but they help to support the strength and integrity of the capillaries that channel blood to the eyes.

Fish

Results of a prospective follow-up study of participants in the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study show that eating fish more than four times each week offers significant protection against ARMD) For more information, please see: <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=news&dbid=23#summary>.

Brassica family vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, kale, and mustard greens

Research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences has revealed that sulforaphane, a cancer-fighting compound in broccoli and other *Brassica* vegetables, also packs a powerful and long lasting antioxidant punch. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University discovered that human retinal cells (the retina is the light-

sensitive membrane lining the inner eyeball that focuses light rays) treated with sulforaphane continued to be protected from oxidizing free radicals for several days after the compound was removed. By increasing our cells' ability to defend themselves against oxidant free radicals, broccoli not only helps protect the eye, but also boosts the body's resistance to disease. For more on this topic, please see: <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=news&dbid=37#headline>

Lutein and zeaxanthin carotenoids

The eyes are repositories for carotenoids with lutein and zeaxanthin concentrated in the retina and lens. Observational studies have noted that higher dietary intake of lutein and zeaxanthin is related to reduced risk of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration, two eye conditions for which there are minimal options when it comes to effective prevention. Researchers speculate that these carotenoids may promote eye health through their ability to protect the eyes from light-induced oxidative damage and aging through both their antioxidant actions as well as their ability to filter out UV light. Rich sources of lutein and zeaxanthin include eggs, kale, spinach, turnip greens, collard greens, romaine lettuce, broccoli, zucchini, corn, garden peas, and Brussels sprouts.

For more information on this topic, please see

[Blueberries Lutein and zeaxanthin](#)

To read more, see our article on blueberries at <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=8>