

NUTRITION NEWS

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Healthy Vision

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Taking care of your vision as you age is an important consideration. We've portably all heard that carrots are good for eyesight. But incorporating other nutritious foods into your diet may play a role as well. There are even vitamins on the shelf of your local supermarket that tout claims that choosing them will help keep your eyes healthy.

Lutein is a nutrient that is often heard in conjunction with eye health. But few people are actually familiar with what lutein is. Lutein is a yellowish-orange pigment that is found mostly in plants. It is a type of carotenoid. You may have heard this in relation to beta carotene, which is another carotenoid. Lutein is found in the retina of the eye, so it is essential to eye health and maintaining good vision. Lutein also has the ability to work as an antioxidant.

Many vitamins are now supplemented with lutein in the hopes of preserving good eye function. But eating a diet rich in lots of colorful fruits and vegetables will also help ensure that you are getting ade-

quate amounts of lutein, as well as other carotenoids.

Lutein is found mainly in plant sources, including kale, spinach, corn, squash, oranges, bananas, and broccoli. The only animal source of lutein is found in egg yolks. While some people try to limit their intake of eggs related to possible cardiovascular issues, consuming 2-3 eggs per week is generally considered safe for the vast majority of the population.

We have discussed the importance of including antioxidants in your diet before. Antioxidants are useful in the prevention of many diseases, including heart disease as well as certain types of cancer. Also, most foods that are high in antioxidants are also high in fiber, low in saturated fats and cholesterol, and a good source of other vitamins and minerals. Now we're learning that antioxidants may play a role in maintaining your vision as well.

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Monthly

Exercise:

Single Leg Balance

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Lift left foot above the ground, hold position for 12 sec. Repeat with right foot.

Continue with 3 repetitions per side.

With summer around the corner, now is a great time to start increasing your intake of high antioxidant foods. Brightly colored fruits and vegetables are loaded with antioxidants. “Superfoods” such as blueberries, acai berries, and goji berries are widespread in the upcoming season. Pomegranates and cranberries are also rich in antioxidants. Here is a partial list of some of the most antioxidant rich foods:

- * Beans
- * Blueberries
- * Broccoli
- * Oats
- * Oranges
- * Pumpkin
- * Salmon
- * Spinach
- * Soy
- * Tea (green or black)
- * Tomatoes
- * Walnuts
- * Yogurt

Sometimes, the total antioxidant in a food is less important than how our bodies metabolize the antioxidants. The bioavailability of the nutrients plays a role in the health benefits as well. Some other rich sources of antioxidants include cranberries, artichokes, prunes, apples, pecans, and potatoes.

By adding some of these foods to your already established eating plan, you may be able to reap the health benefits without a total upheaval of your diet. For example, adding fresh or frozen berries to your cereal (hot or cold) in the morning is an easy way to in-

crease your intake of antioxidants. Having a cup of tea in the afternoon can also increase your intake of antioxidants. And switching out a meal that was centered around red meat could be changed to one that incorporates salmon. This is also a way to increase your intake of omega 3 fatty acids as well.

Keep in mind that whenever possible, it is best to obtain your nutrients from whole foods, as opposed to juices or supplements. Whether fresh or frozen, using whole fruits, for example, will provide greater benefits than drinking a glass of 100% juice or adding an additional vitamin or mineral supplement.



Diabetes continues to be on the rise, especially type II or adult onset diabetes. This is probably due to a combination of factors, including the increasing prevalence of obesity and a greater longevity of the population. One complication that arises from unmanaged diabetes is retinopathy. It is caused by damage to the blood vessels of the light sensitive tissue at the back of the eye (the retina.)

Diabetic retinopathy may initially cause few or mild symptoms. As it progresses, however, it can eventually lead to blindness. The longer you have diabetes and the less controlled your blood sugar is, the more likely you are to develop diabetic retinopathy.

What causes retinopathy? Over time, too much sugar in your system can lead to the blockage of the tiny blood vessels that supply the retina, cutting off the retina's blood supply. This results in the eye attempting to grow new blood vessels. But the new blood vessels usually don't develop properly and can leak.

There are two types of retinopathy: early diabetic retinopathy (NPDR-non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy) and advanced diabetic retinopathy.

NPDR is much more common and is so named because the new blood vessels are not growing. The walls of the blood vessels in your retina weaken and sometimes the smaller vessels can leak fluid and blood into the retina. NPDR can progress from mild to severe as more blood vessels become blocked.

In proliferative diabetic retinopathy, damaged blood vessels close off, causing the growth of new abnormal blood vessels in the retina. Eventually, scar tissue may cause the retina to detach from the back of the eye. It can also lead to a build up in the eye pressure (a type of glaucoma).

There are certain individuals who are at an increased risk of developing diabetic retinopathy. Risk factors include the following: duration of diabetes, (the longer you have diabetes, the greater your risk of developing retinopathy), poor control of your blood sugar level, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, pregnancy, tobacco use, and being black, Hispanic, or Native American.

Diabetic retinopathy usually affects both eyes and includes the following symptoms:

- Spots floating in your vision
 - Blurred vision
 - Fluctuating vision
 - Impaired color vision
- Dark or empty areas in your vision
 - Vision loss

Lastly, macular degeneration is a chronic eye disease that causes vision loss in the center of your field of vision. It is marked by the deterioration of the macula which is in the center of the retina. Macular degeneration is directly related to age.

Symptoms develop gradually and include:

- ♦ The need for brighter light when reading or doing close work
- ♦ Increasing difficulty adapting to low light levels, such as when entering a dimly lit room
- ♦ Increasing blurriness of printed words
- ♦ Decrease in the intensity of brightness of colors
 - ♦ Difficulty recognizing faces
 - ♦ Crooked central vision
- ♦ A blurred or blind spot in the center of your field of vision

**Herkimer County
Senior Citizen's Picnic
Herkimer County Fairgrounds
Wednesday, June 18, 2025
From 10-3**

Coffee & Donuts served at 10am. You may provide your own lunch or you can purchase a ticket for lunch, which is being provided by K-Dogs BBQ (boneless chicken, potatoes, coleslaw & roll) at a cost \$5 per meal

Call Linda at 315-867-1149 for tickets

The picnic will also feature BINGO at no additional cost. Many GREAT prizes!!!

HEAP

If you received HEAP this year you may qualify for a Air Conditioner -

There are limited supplies

Call the HEAP office

315-867-1195



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There are hundreds of delicious recipes that are loaded in antioxidants. Here is one to get you started !

Blueberry Cobbler

3 cups fresh blueberries

1/3 cup orange juice

3 tbs white sugar

2/3 cup all purpose flour

1/4 tsp baking powder

1 pinch salt

1/2 cup butter, shortened

1/2 cup white sugar

1 egg

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Gather all ingredients and preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Mix blueberries, orange juice, and 3 tbs sugar in an 8 inch square baking dish.

Mix flour, baking powder, and salt in a small bowl.

Cream butter and 1/2 cup sugar in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Gradually add flour mixture, stirring just until ingredients are combined.

Drop spoonful's of batter over the blueberry mixture, covering as much filling as possible.