



# HEALTHY EATING HABITS PLAY A ROLE IN EYE HEALTH

In honor of **Save Your Vision Month**, celebrated each **October** we want to take this opportunity to remind patients about the importance of healthy eating habits for optimum eye health.

More than 22 million Americans suffer from cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the two leading causes of visual loss and blindness. Because cataracts require costly surgery and treatment options for AMD are currently limited, preventive measures play a particularly important role in maintaining good eye health.

Based on research by the National Eye Institute, in addition to countless clinical trials, studies and surveys, there is a positive correlation between good nutrition and the prevention of AMD and cataracts. Studies have suggested that by eating foods rich in six nutrients -- antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin, beta carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E and zinc -- you can protect your eyes from disease. In other words, healthy eating habits can mean healthy eyes.

## So, what type of foods are EYE HEALTHY?

If you are familiar with the link between carrots and good eye health, then you have done some homework. Let's explore other foods that can benefit your eyes. These are foods that contain the six key nutrients for eye health.

Most fruits and vegetables are great sources of vitamin C, including oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, papaya, green peppers and tomatoes.

Vitamin E is more difficult to obtain from food sources, since it is found in very small quantities. However, good food sources include vegetable oils (safflower and corn oil), almonds, pecans, wheat germ and sunflower seeds.

Beta-carotene is present in dark green leafy vegetables (spinach!), deep orange or yellow fruits (carrots, mangos, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, apricots, and peaches), vegetables and fortified cereals.

Lutein and zeaxanthin are found together in many food sources. Dark green leafy vegetables are the primary sources of lutein and zeaxanthin (kale, collard greens and spinach), but they are also present in lesser amount in other colorful fruits and vegetables, such as broccoli, orange peppers, corn, peas, persimmons and tangerines.

Good food sources of zinc include meat, liver, shellfish, milk, whole grains and wheat germ.

Eating healthy for your eyes could be the most promising means of protecting your eyes from AMD and cataracts. In addition, planning menus rich in the nutrients described above can mean better overall health for you and your family. Consider eating eye healthy foods and gain benefits for your whole body.