

FOODS THAT KEEP YOUR EYES STRONG

Lutein and Zeaxanthin: Two Powerhouse Antioxidants for Your Eyes

Eating foods rich in lutein and zeaxanthin can lower your risk of macular degeneration, so if you value your eyesight, listen up.

To get the benefits of these antioxidants, some researchers believe you need to eat about 6 mg a day. But the amount of lutein and zeaxanthin needed to treat macular degeneration rises to about 11-12 mg per day.

Yet, most people are not getting nearly this much. Federal surveys have found that the average American consumes only about 2 mg of lutein daily.

What is Your Best Source of Lutein and Zeaxanthin?

Lutein is found in high amounts in:

- Kale and spinach
- Turnip and collard greens
- Romaine lettuce
- Broccoli
- Zucchini
- Brussels sprouts
- Peas

Lutein is easy to add to your diet if you eat plenty of spinach and other green, leafy vegetables. Every time you eat a spinach salad or a serving of kale or turnip greens, your body is getting high levels of lutein.

It is important to note that lutein is an oil-soluble nutrient, and if you merely consume the above vegetables without some oil or butter you can't absorb the lutein. So if you are consuming vegetable juice, it would be wise to use some **olive or cod liver oil** in the juice to maximize your lutein absorption, as well as the absorption of other important nutrients like **vitamin K**.

These are all great sources, however, your best source of these antioxidants is actually not on that list.

Egg Yolks are One of the Best Foods for Your Eyes

Most people don't know that lutein is also present in egg yolks. There is about 0.25 mg in each egg yolk-in a highly absorbable nearly ideal form, especially if you don't cook it. Egg yolks also have zeaxanthin in an equal amount. Zeaxanthin is another carotenoid that is likely to be equally as effective as lutein in preventing macular degeneration.

Quite simply, the lutein in egg yolks is superior because it is more easily absorbed by your body. A study in the Journal of Nutrition even proved this.

The researchers gave 10 volunteers different sources of lutein (spinach, eggs or one of two types of lutein supplements, each of which provided 6 mg of lutein per day), and the eggs were the best. Those who ate eggs as their lutein source had blood levels of lutein that were about three times higher than that of those who ate other lutein sources.

By the way, modifying your eating habits is one of several things you can do to lower your risk of eye disease naturally and safely. Other methods include:

Take Plenty of Animal-Based Omega-3 Fats

Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) may help protect and promote healthy retinal function. DHA is concentrated in the eye's retina and has been found to be particularly useful in preventing macular degeneration. Your best source for this is a high-quality fish or krill oil.

Eat Dark-Colored Berries

The European blueberry, bilberry, is known to prevent and even reverse macular degeneration, and bioflavonoids from other dark-colored berries including blueberries, cranberries and others will also be beneficial. They work by strengthening the capillaries that carry nutrients to eye muscles and nerves.

Avoid Trans Fat

A diet high in trans fat appears to contribute to macular degeneration. Trans fat may interfere with omega-3 fats in your body. Trans fat is found in many processed foods and baked goods, including margarine, shortening, fried foods like french fries, fried chicken and doughnuts, cookies, pastries and crackers.

What does the science say about lutein and zeaxanthin?

- A study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that [diets higher in lutein and zeaxanthin resulted in improvements](#) in both AMD patients and the control group.
- A study in the [Archives of Ophthalmology](#) found participants who ate the most foods containing lutein and zeaxanthin had a 35 percent lower risk of developing AMD than those who ate the least.

Reference website: <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/05/08/can-spinach-save-your-eyesight.aspx?source=nl>