



Parish Nurse Corner

HEALTHY EYES

Do your eyes have all the nutrients they need to help prevent cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma and other sight woes? But don't count on popping a pill to get these nutrients — your best sources of vitamins and antioxidants are from whole foods.

Kale: See the Light This leafy green is a rich source of lutein and zeaxanthin, which are related to Vitamin A and beta carotene, and are believed to protect eye tissues from sunlight damage, and reduce the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration. Other good sources include dark leafy vegetables such as spinach and broccoli, as well as oranges, kiwi, red grapes, mangoes, and honeydew melon. Your body needs fat to absorb lutein and zeaxanthin, so be sure to eat them with a bit of healthy fat such as olive oil or a few avocado slices.

Sweet Potatoes: The Color of Health These orange tubers are a good source of beta carotene. Your body converts beta carotene to Vitamin A, a nutrient that helps prevent dry eyes and night blindness. They also help reduce the risk of eye infections. Sweet potatoes not your favorite? For beta carotene, try deep orange foods, such as carrots and butternut squash, plus dark green foods. Liver, milk, and eggs are also great Vitamin A sources. Also beta carotene and Vitamin A are absorbed best with a drizzle of olive oil.

Strawberries: Help You "C" Better Fresh, juicy strawberries contain plenty of Vitamin C, which is an antioxidant that helps lower your cataract risk. Also, load up your plate with other Vitamin C rich foods including bell peppers, broccoli, citrus and cantaloupe.

Salmon: Goodbye, Dry Eyes Dry eyes? Eating enough omega-3 fatty acids can help alleviate the problem. Get some healthy fats every day in salmon or other fish, walnuts, flax and chia seeds. Salmon is also a good Vitamin D source, which helps protect against macular degeneration. You can also get Vitamin D by enjoying sardines, mackerel, milk, and orange juice fortified with Vitamin D.

Green Tea: Antioxidant Powerhouse A cup of green tea's antioxidants may help lower the risk of developing cataracts and macular degeneration. Green tea contains healthful substances called catechins, which are responsible for it's anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Other foods that are high in catechins include red wine, chocolate, berries and apples.

May The Lord richly bless your Lenten journey, and all of your health choices.



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