

Nutrients to Support Vision Health

Vision is something I think most of us take for granted. How often are we taking a step back and expressing gratitude for being able to look around and see vivid colors, clear faces, and fluffy four-legged friends? Today, I would like to take a few minutes to bring attention to eye health and the unfortunate rise of macular degeneration in our younger population.

Macular degeneration, or age-related macular degeneration, is a medical problem that may result in blurred or no vision in the center of the visual field. Symptoms generally go unnoticed until you wake one day and notice everything is blurry. When you think about macular degeneration, you typically think of those in their golden years. Unfortunately, people are reporting this blurred vision younger and younger. Some reports have even shown children starting to develop macular degeneration. Why and how? Well, I am so glad you asked....

The eyes are heavily dependent on an abundance of proper nutrients to keep them functioning optimally. Proper hydration, fatty acids, fat-soluble vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, and vitamins are required to keep vision sharp. As the quality of the foods we consume declines, our vision does too. Starving the eyes of what they need to stay healthy will catch up with us sooner rather than later. Remember, your body is not dumb; vision is not needed to survive. Our bodies use nutrients on "essentials to survive" before the "nice to haves"!

Another piece of this early-onset macular degeneration puzzle is electronics. Artificial light is everywhere! Lightbulbs in our homes are extremely new and foreign to our eyes. Humans have been around for over a million years, artificial light 150-ish years. Human eyes have not evolved to handle the load of this constant artificial blue light. Computer, TV, cell phone, tablets, billboards, house lights; it is all a lot for our eyes to take in. Blue light can penetrate deeper into our eyes, further complicating the issues. Blue-light blocking glasses, or "blue-blockers", can be used to help with blue light. There is also a new coating that can be added to glasses that helps with filtering the blue light from our eyes.

Vision is a sense I would like to keep sharp way into my golden years. While I do wear my blue-blockers and try to limit my screen time, I also make sure to keep my diet full of nutrient-dense and properly prepared foods. Sometimes this is not enough.

It is unrealistic to completely remove screen time from our daily lives. However, upping the nutrients that support eye health and taking precautions to protect vision is a must. Even in this crazy time of babies learning to use devices with screens shining in their little faces proves it is never too early to start supporting eye health!

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