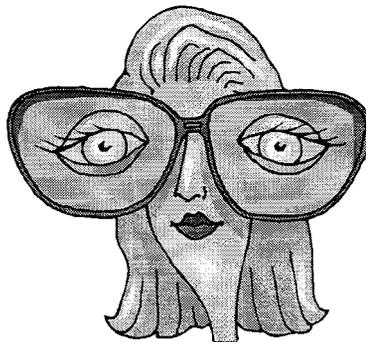


# Oh Say, Can You See?

## Natural Approaches to Healthy Eyes



What would it be like if you couldn't see? It's not a fun prospect to contemplate, but neglecting to take care of your eyes can result in a loss of vision as you age. Here are some of the statistics on the eye health of Americans.

For starters, 100 million Americans are visually disabled without corrective lenses. Seventy-percent of those are near-sighted (myopic) and the percentage of the population suffering from nearsightedness is steadily increasing. According to the *2008 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) Provisional Report* almost 25 million adult Americans say that they "have trouble" seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses.

Even worse, 80 million Americans are suffering from eye diseases that have the potential to cause blindness. There are over six million new cases of eye disease reported each year and over one million people are legally blind.

Obviously, we can't take "seeing" for granted. If we want to be able to see clearly, we need to take proper care of our eyes.

### Basic Eye Health

Eye health is not isolated from general health. In fact, most eye diseases are signs of deeper health problems, such as stress, free radical damage, diabetes and circulatory disorders. Poor nutrition plays a major role in creating the health problems that lead to a deterioration of eye health.

For instance, antioxidant nutrients that counteract free radical damage are essential to healthy eyes. Many eye disorders such as macular degeneration, cataracts and glaucoma are probably caused by free radical damage to the eyes. One cause of this damage can be the ultraviolet radiation present in natural light, but chemical toxins, cardiovascular inflammation and blood sugar problems are also contributing factors.

The eyes, like the brain, need good fats to be healthy, too. Omega-3 essential fatty acids, especially DHA, are critical to eye health. So are the fat-soluble vitamins like A and E that protect these fats from oxidation.

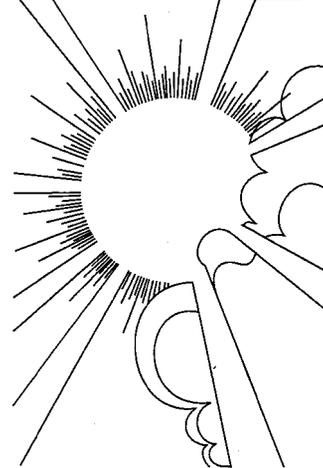
Poor nutrition isn't the only reason why eyesight deteriorates. Eyes need exposure to natural sunlight and artificial lighting plays a part in our diminishing eye health. Stress, and more particularly, eye strain, also plays a big role in vision problems.

In fact, the major reason myopia (nearsightedness) is becoming increasingly common is the amount of time people are spending doing close-up work like reading and working on computers. Constantly staring at these nearby objects strains the eyes, which need to regularly shift their focus from looking at nearby objects to objects in the distance, to stay relaxed. The eye strain caused by working at computer terminals and other close-up work, creates muscle tension that inhibits the eyes from relaxing and seeing in the distance.

A final, but extremely important aspect of general eye health is protecting the eyes from injury. It is very important when working with chain saws, weed-eaters and many other power tools to wear protective eye gear. There are about 2,000 cases of eye injuries occurring daily and most of these could be prevented by protective eye gear.

**To learn more about keeping your eyes healthy, turn the page**

# SUNSHINE SHARING



### Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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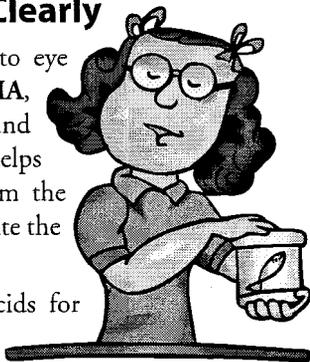
# Food for Your Eyes

Anytime we see something beautiful, we can think of it as a feast for the eyes, but the eyes also need proper nourishment from our diet. Here are some basic tips for nourishing your eyes.

## Good Fats Help You See Clearly

Essential fatty acids are essential to eye health. In particular, the eyes need **DHA**, an omega-3 essential fatty acid also found in large quantities in the brain. DHA helps with communicating information from the eyes to the brain. Good fats also lubricate the eyes and keep them from drying out.

Good sources of essential fatty acids for the eyes include deep ocean fish, flax seed oil, walnuts and dark green, leafy vegetables (also sources of carotenoids for the eyes). You can also take **Super Omega-3 EPA, Krill Oil** or **DHA** as supplements to promote eye health.



## Protect Your Eyesight with Antioxidants

The beautiful colors of many fruits and vegetables are both pleasing and nourishing to the eyes. That's because the purples, yellows, greens, blues, reds and other bright colors found in the plant kingdom are signs of the presence of important nutrients called antioxidants.

Antioxidants are vital to our health because oxygen is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, we need it to metabolize or "burn" the food we eat to create energy. On the other hand, it can oxidize or "burn" our own tissues, causing tissue damage. Antioxidants protect our tissues from this damage.

The eyes are particularly sensitive to oxidative damage, so if you want to keep them healthy it is very important to "eat the

rainbow" including lots of brightly colored fruits and vegetables in your diet. This will aid your overall health as well.

## Carotenoids Inhibit Cataracts and Degeneration

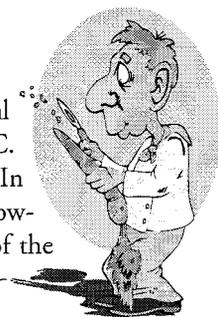
Certain antioxidants called carotenoids are particularly critical to eye health. One of these is beta-carotene, which is a precursor to the formation of vitamin A (see below).

Two other carotenoids are also essential for healthy eyes. These are lutein and zeaxanthin. Lutein is a yellow pigment found in green leafy vegetables like kale, chard and spinach. It is also found in egg yolks and animal fats. Lutein is found in the macula (the center of the retina) and has been shown to counteract free radical damage caused by blue and ultraviolet light. It protects against macular degeneration and inhibits the formation of cataracts (the number one cause of blindness in the elderly).

Zeaxanthin has similar properties. It is also a yellow pigment found naturally in green vegetables, eggs and yellow corn, that protects the macula from light-damage. It also inhibits cataract formation. Both of these carotenoids are found in **Perfect Eyes** (see sidebar) and the **Carotenoid Blend**.

## Vitamins Vital to Vision

Several antioxidant vitamins are also essential to eye health, including vitamins A, E and C. Vitamin A is extremely critical to eye health. In fact, another name for vitamin A is retinol (showing its relationship to protecting the retina of the eye). A deficiency of vitamin A is known to cause blindness.



**Vitamin A** keeps fats in the eye from oxidizing and prevents the eye from dehydrating by helping in tear formation. Carrots are high in beta-carotene, the precursor to vitamin A, which explains why they have a reputation as being good for the eyes.

**Vitamin E** is found in both the retina and the lens. Adequate intake of this fat-soluble vitamin reduces the risk of cataract formation. It also works with bioflavonoids to inhibit macular degeneration.

**Vitamin C** is also critical to eye health because it helps protect the capillaries nourishing the eye tissue. It reduces pressure in glaucoma (the second leading cause of blindness), reduces cataract formation and helps rebuild the cornea when it has been damaged.

## More Nutrients for Healthy Vision

The amino acid taurine is found in high quantities in the retina. It is depleted by diabetes and is low in vegan diets. It helps protect the retina against UV radiation, and is found in **Perfect Eyes**.

People with cataracts are deficient in glutathione, a major antioxidant in the liver and eyes. **N-Acetyl Cysteine** helps increase glutathione levels and may be helpful in protecting against eye disease. It is also an ingredient in **Perfect Eyes**.

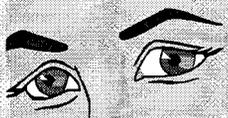
Other antioxidants that protect the eyes include anthocyanidins, found in blueberries and bilberries, silymarin from milk thistle and quercetin from onions. Grape is also a useful antioxidant for the eyes.

## Perfect Eyes

### Eye Protection in a Bottle

Perfect eyes is a formula designed to help maintain healthy eyes as a person ages. It contains numerous antioxidant nutrients that can help protect the eyes from macular degeneration, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma. It is an excellent supplement to take for soothing irritated eyes or protecting against blindness for people with diabetes.

Perfect Eyes contain lutein, zeaxanthin, other carotenoids and flavonoids. N-acetyl-cysteine in this formula promotes the production of glutathione, an intracellular antioxidant found in abundance in the liver and eyes. It also contains the anti-inflammatory herb turmeric and the herbs eyebright and bilberry, which have been traditionally used for promoting eye health. Taurine, zinc and selenium provide additional nutritional benefits for healthy eyes.



# Natural Eye Remedies

Here are some specific suggestions for preventing and possibly reversing many common eye problems.

## Cataracts

Any clouding of the lens in the eye is called a cataract. Cataracts cause hazy vision, glare, trouble focusing, rapid eye fatigue and double vision. They are the number one cause of blindness in the elderly, world-wide. Cigarette smoking greatly increases the risk of cataracts. Proper hydration, a healthy liver and a diet high in antioxidants (fruits and vegetables) reduce cataract risk.

If you are concerned about developing cataracts, you can reduce your risk by taking **Perfect Eyes** and/or **Carotenoid Blend**. Omega-3 essential fatty acids (**Krill Oil** or **Super Omega-3 EPA**) will also reduce your risk. Herbs that support liver health, such as **Chinese Liver Balance**, may also be helpful.

Large doses of vitamin C may help to reverse cataracts after they have started to form. Some people have reported using the herbal eye wash (see sidebar) as helpful in getting rid of cataracts, but this may not work for everyone.

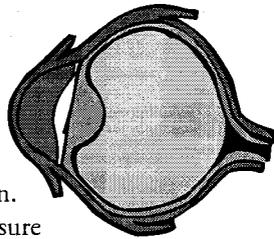
## Glaucoma

The second leading cause of blindness in the elderly is glaucoma. Glaucoma involves damage to the optic nerve that transmits signals from the eye to the brain. This damage is usually caused by pressure build-up in the eye, but it can also be caused by poor circulation.

The pressure builds up because cellular debris from free radical damage in the circulatory system enters the eye and blocks lymphatic drainage in the eye. It's much like having hair and soap scum clogging up the mesh covering the drain in your shower.

Glaucoma is highly stress related, so managing stress is important for prevention. Avoiding tobacco, alcohol, diet sodas and caffeine is also helpful in preventing glaucoma. Since free radical damage is involved, a diet high in antioxidants is also important.

If you have glaucoma, you should seek medical attention to prevent blindness. Natural therapies that can be helpful in conjunction with medical treatment include improving circulation and relaxing the meshwork that allows the eye to drain. Beans and legumes contain substances that help to open the "drain" in



## Additional Help and Information

For more information about how to keep your eyes healthy or solve eye health problems, contact the person who gave this newsletter to you. Their contact information should be found at the top of page four. They have additional handouts and resource materials to help you. You can also consult the following sources:

*Oh, Say Can You See* DVD by Tree of Light Publishing

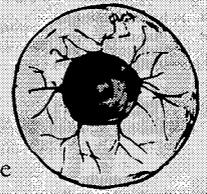
*Relearning to See* by Thomas R. Quackenbush

*The Eye Care Revolution* by Robert Abel, Jr., M.D.

*The One Earth Herbal Sourcebook* by Alan Keith Tillotson, AHG

## The Herbal Eye Wash

Many people have reported that using an herbal eye wash has helped to improve their vision. The herbal eye wash is particularly helpful for conjunctivitis, pink eye and eye infections. To make an herbal eye wash, make a tea using 3-4 capsules of **EW** with one cup of boiling water. Allow the tea to steep for about five minutes and then strain all the herb particles out using a fine cloth.



Refrigerate the tea and warm some to body temperature before use. Make a fresh batch after four days. For added infection fighting properties, and to preserve the tea longer, add one teaspoon of **Silver Shield** to the tea.

You can then wash the eyes one to four times daily using the tea in an eye wash cup. Alternatively, you can drop the tea directly into the eyes as eye drops. A third option is to soak a cotton ball or soft cloth with the warm tea and lay it over the closed eyelids as a compress.

Plain **Chamomile** tea can also be used as an eye wash or compress to relax sore and strained eyes or ease pressure caused by glaucoma. Make and use the tea in the same manner described above.

the eye. **Chinese Stress Relief** may be helpful here as it contains several ingredients used in Chinese medicine to reduce ocular pressure. It also reduces stress.

**Ginkgo** and **Capsicum** can be helpful for improving circulation. **Blood Pressurex** may also be helpful as it reduces cardiovascular irritation and contains coleus, an herb known to reduce ocular pressure.

Other potentially helpful remedies include using **Chamomile** as an herbal eye wash or compress and taking **Perfect Eyes** and **Super Omega-3 EPA** or **DHA**. It may also be helpful to massage around the eyes, temples and neck to improve circulation and lymphatic drainage.

## Macular Degeneration

The macula is the center of the retina and when this part of the retina starts to deteriorate, a person experiences a loss of central vision in one or both eyes. This degeneration of the macula is also caused by inflammation and free radical damage. High blood pressure and hardening of the arteries increases the risk of developing macular degeneration.

As with other eye diseases, increasing dietary antioxidants is an important step to preventing macular degeneration. Avoid cigarette smoke (including second-hand smoke) and protect the eyes from UV radiation with hats or sunglasses.

Antioxidant supplements can definitely prevent and possibly even reverse macular degeneration. Consider using **Perfect Eyes** and **Thai-Go. Bilberry**, as a single herb, is especially helpful for preventing macular degeneration.

Continued on page 4



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## Protect Your Eyesight

**Antioxidants, Omega-3  
Fatty Acids and Other  
Nutrients Help to Prevent  
Many Eye Diseases**

**Learn More Inside...**

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### **Continued from Page Three**

Because circulatory problems are involved in macular degeneration, many people have found **Mega-Chel** helpful in halting and even reversing macular degeneration. It is not necessary to do a full oral chelation program, two to four tablets of Mega-Chel taken daily, in place of a multiple-vitamin and mineral supplement, seem to do the trick.

### **Conjunctivitis and Styes**

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the lining of the eye that causes redness in the whites. It may be due to allergic reactions or infections such as pink eye, a contagious viral condition. A closely related condition is a stye, which is an infection in the eyelid by staph bacteria that causes swelling in the eyelid.

These conditions may be treated naturally using the herbal eye-wash (EW) as described on page three. When infection is involved, **Silver Shield** may be used topically in the eyes as eye drops, as well as internally. You can also poke a pin-hole in a capsule of **Vitamin A & D** and rub the oil around (but not in) the eye.

### **Other Eye Diseases**

Diabetic retinopathy is caused by damage to the retina due to complications of diabetes. **Citrus Bioflavonoids with Vitamin C**, **Alpha Lipoic Acid** and **Grapine** are particularly helpful. Bilberry and ginkgo are also useful, along with Omega-3 EPA.

Sjögren's Syndrome is a combination of dry eyes, dry mouth and arthritis. Omega-3 fatty acids and **EverFlex** can be helpful. People with Sjögren's Syndrome should avoid wheat, dairy and nightshades (eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes).