

# Lutein for Healthy Vision

by Margy Squires

**Blue light. Bright light. UV Sunlight.** Tablets, TVs, computer screens. Fluorescent bulbs, LEDs. **Your eyes face a challenge daily** in the process of seeing and your retinas take a direct hit.



Light rays travel through the front of your eyes and the power of vision begins. Lining the back of your eye is the retina, a light-sensitive tissue that captures the image. Specialized photo-receptor cells fine-tune color and clarity and send impulses via the optic nerve to the brain, which in turn “translates” into what you see before you.

Clear vision depends on a healthy retina. Unlike a “cloudy” lens in cataracts, the retina is irreplaceable. High energy light can cause free radicals and inflammation. The retina consumes large amounts of oxygen, creating oxidative stress itself. Lutein is your protective weapon. Much like sunglasses, lutein filters the harmful rays. Plus it quenches free radicals and has anti-inflammatory activity, too.

**10%**  
Most Americans only get  
**10% of the lutein and zeaxanthin** needed each day from dietary sources.

One specific eye condition involving the retina is age related macular degeneration (AMD), the leading cause of blindness over the age of 60. AMD is progressive, incurable and strikes the central (macula) part of the retina. It can advance slowly, causing blurring, loss of

detail and acute sensitivity to light changes. Ultimately, a dark “spot” remains in the center of your vision and images. The American Academy of Ophthalmology estimates by 2020, 18 million people will have AMD. Given the high use of multi-electronics at a younger age, will that number increase?

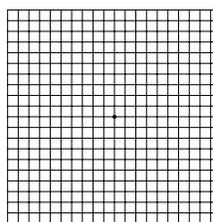
The Academy notes there is no drug or effective treatment and suggests nutrients as an option. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is behind two landmark studies that specifically look at which nutrients help slow down AMD progression and reduce the risks. In the second NIH study, more than 4,000 subjects were involved and those on lutein decreased their risk of AMD by 25%.



Lutein belongs to a group of nutrients known as carotenoids and is the most abundant one in the retina. Zeaxanthin and astaxanthin are two more. Your body does not make it so researchers suggest you'd better supplement to get the minimum 10 mg found effective in studies.

Lutein helps improve retinal health in two ways; 1) by its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity against oxidative stress to reduce tissue damage and preserve function and 2) by increasing macular pigment density (thicker sunglasses) to filter harmful rays. Thinning of the retina with age may also be a risk for retinal detachments, another potential vision robber. Specifically in the Lutein Antioxidant Supplement Trial (LAST), subjects improved retinal density by 50% on 10 mg daily (FloraGlo® Lutein), a benefit that continued through the 12 month study. Improvements in visual function and light adaptation were also noted.

Lutein shines even more when “helped” as the 7 year NIH study of 3,640 AMD participants proved. Zinc reduced the risk by 21%, antioxidants (A, C, beta carotene) by 17% and zinc plus antioxidants by 25%. In the Age-Related Eye Disease Study (CAREDS) of 913 women, adequate vitamin D levels lowered AMD risk 59%. The Lunar Nutrition 6 month study of 108 adults given lutein 12 mg (Xangold®) plus antioxidants showed a “significant” increase in macular density and thus “may delay, prevent or modify the course of AMD”. The AMD Twin Study found omega-3 intake reduces risk 22%. Krill oil with astaxanthin is a dual eye benefit.



So keep an “eye” on your vision. Test yourself with the Amsler Grid. Hold the chart 12 inches away, close one eye and focus on the dot. Lines should be solidly black and not wavy. Any distortion? See your eye doctor. Get annual eye exams as early detection is a must.

The American Macular Disease Foundation states that “nutrition is important for everyone, not just those already diagnosed with AMD.” Take a multi-vitamin mineral complex fortified with antioxidants, a vitamin D3 and an omega-3 as a solid foundation offering cumulative benefits. Add 10-20 mg of lutein to maintain your protective “shades”.

©TyH Publications (M. Squires) Read more in the TyH Online Library: **The Eyes Have It, Looking at Lutein**

*For informational purposes only and not intended diagnose, cure, treat or prevent any medical condition.*

Originally published in *Health Points*. For a free newsletter, email [customerservice@e-tyh.com](mailto:customerservice@e-tyh.com). For more information on TyH products, visit TyH Online at [www.e-tyh.com](http://www.e-tyh.com) or call 800-801-1406.