

Oh, Say Can You See?

Part 1 of a two-part series on key nutrients for healthy eyes

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Oh, say can you see.... through the marketing advertisements that want you to believe their product will help you see better and avoid age related eye diseases. One product, recently promoted on cable TV (<http://www.berkeleypremiumnutraceuticals.com>), promises to send you a free 30-day trial so that you can see better in just one month, even though you receive a \$75.00 bill shortly thereafter for the recurring order you will receive (<http://www.ripoffreport.com/reports/ripoff76470.htm>). Or have you heard about the common vitamin mineral complex (<http://www.centrum.com>) that promotes the inclusion of lutein, but fails to tell you an important gastrointestinal fact. Fact: Lutein and Vitamin A (retinol) compete for absorption in the small intestine thereby rendering lutein useless to the macular. Or what about a multi-level product in which the distributors (unfortunately some are doctors) tell you that you can get all the fruits and vegetables you need in a pill and this supplement will help you avoid macular degeneration among many other diseases (<http://www.juiceplus.com>)? My response, as well as others (<http://www.mlmwatch.org/04C/NSA/juiceplus.html>), to these claims is that I may have been born at night but I wasn't born last night. You don't need a degree in nutrition to figure out the marketing ploys in some of these, do you? Now, I can understand why you may not know about the competition of absorption between Vitamin A (retinol) and Lutein, but that is why I am here as your community licensed nutritionist for the asking (diana@healthtransformations.com).

Although there are margins of truth laced into these less-than-reputable supplements' marketing ploys, there is absolutely no doubt that nutrition plays a crucial role to every cell in your body, and that includes the eyes, says Dr. Jeffrey Silbernagel, an optometric physician in Redmond and former assistant professor at LSU Medical Eye Center for 9 years. However, if you are not formally trained in nutrition, which most companies are banking on, then it is quite easy for TV ads and multi-level marketers to pull-the-wool-over-your-eyes (no pun intended) and influence you to think a simple remedy (i.e., taking one pill) is the answer to a complex cellular disease. There is a plethora of ocular studies (see table) that health care practitioners can turn to in order to **really** educate their patients on the up-to-the-moment biochemical picture about nutrition and eye health (see part-two in the next Sagebrush news). Based on these studies certain vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, herbs, plant pigments and dietary fat are taking center stage to make better sense of the complexities of eye disease. And according to these studies the sooner your nutrition improves the less risk you have as you age for some of the common age-related ocular diseases such as cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. "The studies are tantalizing", says Dr. Silbernagel, and educates his high-risk patients on including certain foods and specific doses of nutraceuticals (such as Vitamin C, various forms of Vitamin E, zinc, selenium, bioflavonoids, R-Lipoic acid, xanthophylls (i.e., lutein, zeaxanthin and astaxanthan), N-acetyl cysteine, L-carnosine, taurine, ginkgo biloba extract, bilberry extract, omega-3 fatty acid DHA as well as the decreased intake of saturated fat and trans-fatty acids) based on the specific eye disease, disorder or risk factor(s) he identifies during his exam. Furthermore, there are many reputable nutraceutical companies with vision formulas that have done their research. However eye disease is complex and needs to be addressed by your eye doctor, not by TV or multi-level marketers trying to help you to spend a buck.

Ocular Nutrition Studies:

• Age-Related Eye Disease Study
• Nurses/Women’s Health Study
• Eye Disease Case-Control Study
• Women’s Antioxidant Cardiovascular Study
• Physician’s Health Study
• Longitudinal Study of Cataracts
• Institute of Ophthalmology Study
• Nutrition and Vision Project
• Beaver Dam Group
• Melbourne and Framingham Eye Study
• Blue Mountains Eye Study
• International ARM Epidemiological Study

Table 1

To ask preventative health and nutrition questions visit www.healthtransformations.com and click on “contact Diana” or contact me at 541-610-9586.