



eating for 20/20 vision

A high intake of dietary antioxidants—present in normal daily foods—may delay the onset of early age-related macular degeneration (AMD), according to a new study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. AMD is a leading cause of blindness.

The Rotterdam Study, which tracked more than 5800 healthy people over a period of 10 years, found that high dietary intakes of vitamin E and zinc, in particular, protected against AMD. People with above-average intakes of a combination of vitamin C, vitamin E, betacarotene and zinc also had a 35 per cent lower risk of AMD.

Previous studies have highlighted a protective role for other carotenoids such as lutein and zeaxanthin, omega 3s and monounsaturated fats.

Smoking is linked with a four times higher risk of AMD!

food or pills?

Foods high in these nutrients seem to be more important than taking nutritional supplements. Although one major study has shown that high-dose supplements may also be effective, there is concern as to their long-term safety.

feast for the eyes

Choose a range of colourful plant foods to obtain high levels of a mix of antioxidants, which get concentrated in

the tissues of the eye protecting it from oxidative stress that causes damage.

- ▶ Include intense yellow, orange and dark green fruits and vegetables such as corn, banana, pumpkin, papaya, spinach and Asian greens for at least two meals and one snack each day.
 - ▶ Eat a small handful of nuts or seeds daily, for example walnuts, linseeds, LSA.
 - ▶ Include oily fish twice weekly, such as sardines or red salmon, or eggs enriched with omega 3s for vegetarians.
 - ▶ Select wholegrains instead of refined white breads and low-fibre cereals.
 - ▶ Consume protective fats by using extra virgin olive oil, nut butters, canola oil, and avocado instead of dairy butter, margarine and vegetable oils such as sunflower, safflower or soybean oils.
- As dietary antioxidants appear to exert their strongest effects if taken early, teach your children to enjoy these foods for life!

See **page 41** for a delicious recipe the whole family can enjoy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on healthy eating, please contact *Sanitarium Nutrition Service*

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