

# Patient Focus

April-May 2012

## Vision and Heart Healthy Foods

A diet low in fat and rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can pay benefits not only to your heart but to your eyes. The connection isn't surprising: your eyes rely on tiny arteries for oxygen and nutrients, just as the heart relies on much larger arteries. You can keep those arteries healthy by including the following colorful foods in your diet.

Dark green, leafy vegetables, like **kale**, are high in lutein and zeaxanthin, two nutrients found in the healthy eye that are believed to lower your risk for age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and cataracts. One large study showed that women who had diets high in lutein were 23 percent less likely to develop cataracts than women whose diets were low in this nutrient. Eggs are also a good source, as are broccoli, peas, and corn.

Some studies suggest that diets rich in omega-3 fatty acid from cold-water fish like **salmon**, tuna, sardines, and halibut reduce the risk of developing eye disease later in life. A 2010 study from Johns Hopkins found that people who had a diet high in omega-3 fatty acid were much less likely to develop AMD.

All citrus fruit, like **oranges** and lemons, are high in vitamin C, an antioxidant that is critical to eye health. Scientists have found that your eyes need relatively high levels of this vitamin to function properly and antioxidants can prevent or at least delay cataracts and AMD. Other foods that offer the same benefits include peaches, red peppers, tomatoes, and strawberries.

Legumes of all kinds (**black-eyed peas**, lima beans, and peanuts) contain zinc, an essential trace mineral that is found in high concentration in the eyes. Zinc may help protect your eyes from the damaging effects of light. Other foods high in zinc include oysters, lean red meat, poultry, and fortified cereals.

**Carrots** are high in beta-carotene, a nutrient that helps with night vision, as are other orange-colored fruits and vegetables like sweet potatoes, apricots, and cantaloupe.



Source: [www.geteyesmart.org](http://www.geteyesmart.org)

# First Aid for Eye Emergencies

## Cuts and punctures of the eye or eyelid

- DO NOT wash out the eye with water or any other liquid.
- DO NOT try to remove an object that is stuck in the eye.
- Cover the eye with a rigid shield without applying pressure. The bottom half of a paper cup can be used.
- SEE A DOCTOR AT ONCE.



- If the speck does not wash out, keep the eye closed, bandage it lightly, and see a doctor.

## Blows to the eye

- Apply a cold compress without putting pressure on the eye. Crushed ice in a plastic bag can be taped to the forehead to rest gently on the injured eye.
- In cases of pain, reduced vision, or discoloration (black eye), seek emergency medical care. Any of these symptoms could mean internal eye damage.

The Penn State Hershey Eye Center has an Ophthalmologist on call 24 hours/day, seven days/week at (717) 531-5690.

## Specks in the eye

- DO NOT rub the eye.
- Try to let tears wash the speck out or use an eyewash.
- Try lifting the upper eyelid outward and down over the lower lid.

*Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology*



*For an appointment, please call 717-531-5690*