

MacuNutrients

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Visual impairment is a big concern for older Australians. Being unable to see well affects not only our physical experience of the things around us, but impacts daily tasks, our emotional and social wellbeing and can significantly reduce quality of life.

Many things can contribute to a decline in vision. Family history of visual problems, the normal ageing process and smoking are some of the risk factors for visual impairment. Any situation that contributes to oxidative stress can cause damage to the delicate blood vessels in the eye.¹

With degenerative vision such an important health concern for Australians, it's no surprise that research is investigating natural remedies to help slow progression. A large, randomised controlled trial (AREDS2) published in 2013 was designed to investigate eye-health nutrients and their effectiveness.² The results found that several nutrients showed beneficial effects in reducing the progression of visual decline: vitamins A, C and E, beta-carotene, zinc, lutein and zeaxanthin.^{3,4}

Hours in front of the computer screen, reading long documents, poor diet, smoking or just simply using our eyes all day, every day, exposes them to a lot of oxidative stress where free radicals outnumber the antioxidants which counteract them. Oxidative stress leads to poor eye health, often damaging the macular area on the retina (back of the eye). The AREDS1/AREDS2 research has shown that several antioxidant nutrients can help support the health of the macula and improve vision in the long-term.

The main antioxidant nutrients are vitamins A, C, E and zinc. It's no accident that you see this combination in many formulas for ageing, healthy skin, liver health and more.

Vitamin A is also a particularly important nutrient for eye health.⁵ Vitamin A (retinol) is an essential component of rhodopsin in the

retina, which is responsible for detection of light.⁶ Vitamin E has a protective function on the polyunsaturated fatty acids in the retina and vitamin C is a well-researched, powerful antioxidant.⁷

Minerals also play an important role in the health of our macula. Zinc is required for the enzyme which converts vitamin A to a form that is able to produce visual pigments, and both zinc and copper are essential for the production of the powerful antioxidants superoxide dismutase and catalase.⁵

Two very talked-about nutrients at the moment are lutein and zeaxanthin. These naturally occurring carotenoids (bright orange in colour) are responsible for the filtering of blue light, which is the form of ultraviolet (UV) light which is most damaging to our eyes over time.⁸ Increasing your intake of zeaxanthin and lutein increases the density of the protective macular pigment of the retina and may improve visual function.^{6,9}

It's not just these nutrients which can improve your eye health, but herbal medicines too! Two herbs in particular have been shown to support eye function and overall health: marigold and saffron. After talking about antioxidant-carotenoids now, you can guess why these brightly-coloured orange and yellow plants have been shown to be important for eye health. Containing high amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin, these herbs have become important for the protection of photoreceptors in the eye.¹⁰⁻¹²

It is never too early to start taking care of our eyes. After all, we only have one set. Eating well, exercising and reducing stress and 'screen-time' will certainly help slow the progression of vision diseases, but a little antioxidant power wouldn't hurt either.

References available on request

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AUST L 245353

Vision Support Complex with Saffron, Lutein and Zeaxanthin

Key features and benefits

- Formula based on AREDS1/AREDS2 research and clinical trials.
- Provides nutrients to support healthy vision, eye function, night vision, macula, retina and lens.
- With standardised marigold (Lutemax® 2020) and saffron (Affron®Eye), containing lutein, zeaxanthin and crocin.
- Provides lutein and zeaxanthin that form the protective macular pigment of the retina.
- Supplementation with lutein and zeaxanthin increases macular pigment optical density of the retina and may improve visual function.
- May reduce ultraviolet (UV) damage to the macula.
- Reduces glare discomfort, photo-stress recovery time and enhances chromatic contrast.
- Provides antioxidant nutrients that may help to protect against free radical damage in the retina and macula.



Some of the risk factors for visual impairment include family history, smoking and the normal ageing process.

