





## The Eyes Are the Windows to Your Health

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is an eye disease that gradually destroys your sharp, central vision that lets you see fine detail needed for tasks such as reading and driving. AMD is the leading cause of vision loss in people 60 and older.

In addition to vision loss, AMD may be a sign of other health problems. In the Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) published in the *Archives of Ophthalmology*, participants with advanced age-related macular degeneration (AMD) had a higher rate of mortality. AMD was linked with heart disease deaths, and mortality rates increased with the severity of macular disease.

### Fight Vision Loss With Antioxidants

The good news is your diet can make an impact on AMD and your general health. AREDS study participants who received zinc had lower mortality. Results also showed those who received antioxidants and zinc reduced their risk of AMD progressing from intermediate to advanced — saving their vision. (In a second phase of AREDS, researchers are studying the protective effects of omega-3 and lutein against AMD.)

The study resulted in the creation of an AREDS formulation that included daily high-doses of vitamin C, vitamin E, beta carotene, zinc and copper. These are at levels higher than what people can achieve from diet alone.

Another study showed the importance of ensuring people include key antioxidants, such as vitamin C and zinc, in their diets to protect eyes against the damaging effects of blue light from the sun. A combination of blue light exposure and low intake of antioxidants was associated with the early stages of AMD in the study. Vitamin E and the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin were also shown to be important in the eyes' defense system against the sun's blue light.

In addition, the Eye Disease Case Control Study showed carotenoid levels were much lower in patients with AMD, emphasizing the importance of carotenoids in the diet.

Reliv's Herbal Harmony®, along with Reliv Now®, Reliv Classic® and Nutriversal®, are antioxidant-rich, with carotenoids, vitamin C and E, zinc and a host of other beneficial nutrients to support eye — and overall — health.

## Pycnogenol May Help Prevent Diabetes' Eye Damage

Diabetes brings a host of potential health complications, including kidney and/or heart disease and nerve damage. Another complication can be diabetic eye disease that can cause severe vision loss or even blindness. Diabetic eye disease may include a trio of vision problems such as:

- Diabetic retinopathy, which is damage to the blood vessels in the retina.
- Cataract, clouding of the eye's lens that may develop at an earlier age in people with diabetes.
- Glaucoma, an increase in fluid pressure in the eyes that can damage the optic nerve and cause vision loss. People with diabetes are twice as likely to get glaucoma.

But Pycnogenol®, an antioxidant extract from the bark of the French maritime pine tree, has been shown to protect the eye in the early stages of retinopathy by improving microcirculation, swelling in the retina, and vision.

Previous research has shown Pycnogenol reduces the progression of diabetic retinopathy so patients maintain their remaining eyesight. But this new research shows its benefit for preventing vision loss and improving vision in the early stages of retinopathy.

Pycnogenol is a key ingredient in Reliv's GlucAffect®.

## Cataracts and Nutrition

Cataracts, the clouding of the eye lens, also respond to good nutrition. Results from the Blue Mountains Eye Study, published in the *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, showed long-term use of multivitamins, B group and vitamin A supplements reduced the prevalence of cataracts. In addition, folate and vitamin B-12 were strongly protective against cortical cataracts, which are often found in people with diabetes.

This study also found high dietary intakes of omega-3 reduced the incidence of nuclear cataract, a clouding of the center of the lens due to natural aging changes.

### Sources:

For a complete list of references for this issue, please view the special addendum posted on the *Science & Health Today* web page, [www.reliv.com](http://www.reliv.com) >> The Products >> articles & research >> Science & Health Today.