

EYE CARE

3 foods to improve your eyesight

Wednesday, Sep 3 2014 Emma James

Failing eyesight is often thought to be a natural part of ageing, but did you know it's actually more impacted by a modern lifestyle? It's true. Wind, dust, chlorine fumes, smoking, freezing temperatures and physical injury aren't good friends to the health of your eyes, and let's not get started on long hours spent in front of a computer screen or tablet.

What is good for your eyes is a well-balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables, particularly ones that give your body vitamin A. The great thing about this is what while we can't turn back the clock (although sometimes we all wish we could!), you can change what you eat. To improve your eye health today, pop these foods on your shopping list.

Kale

This leafy green is a superfood for good reason. Kale has been linked to a reduced risk of developing age-related macular degeneration and reducing the risk of many cancers, as its cancer-protective compounds help block the growth of cancer cells. Other foods rich in carotenoids, such as spinach and collared greens, are also well worth putting on your shopping list.

Some experts also suggest that green and yellow coloured foods are even more effective at reducing risk for macular degeneration and cataracts than orange ones, like carrots. Green, yellow, orange – why does colour matter?

In this instance, green and yellow foods are packed with lutein and zeaxanthin, which are two nutrients that are thought to protect the

retina against oxidative damage and reduce the risk of macular degeneration.

Apricots

Did you know that a pigment called beta-carotene gives fruits and vegetables, like apricots and carrots, their rich, bright hues? The other fun fact about this pigment is that in the body it changes into vitamin A, or retinol, which is important for good vision and eye health. While carrots have long been thought to be the best food for your eyes, apricots have actually been shown to have more beta-carotene contents.

Whether fresh or dried, either is good for your health. This little fruit is also packed with potassium, calcium, iron and dietary fibre. With powerful antioxidants, vitamin A and vitamin C, working together, your eyesight is in good hands.

Blueberries

Blueberries are one of the healthiest foods you can eat. A rich source of vitamins and minerals, these delicious dark berries may help improve the health of many of the body's tissues, including the eyes. Do you like to walk your dog in the evenings? Blueberries are also thought to improve night vision due to a compound in its make-up called anthocyanins.

While this isn't proven, they have plenty of other health benefits for your eyes. Blueberries are thought to help slow the progression of cataracts, one of the leading causes of vision loss around the world. The anthocyanins in blueberries are also thought to protect retinal cells from damage caused by ageing and light.