

Q2 2023

PLANET HEALTH NEWSLETTER

5A CLARKSON RD. ELLISVILLE, MO 63011
636.527.8888



THE EYES HAVE IT

Our eyes are a window to the world. We use our eyes for work and pleasure, to read a computer screen, to watch a sunset, to recognize the face of a beloved child. They keep us safe, watching out for cars as we cross the street or warning us of broken glass on the floor. They are amazingly complex—in fact, the only organ more complex than your eyes is your brain. And yet so many things can go wrong with our eyes, many of which are preventable.

There are a few facts about eye anatomy that are important to consider. The first is that the iris—the colored part around the pupil—is a muscle that lets in light. It expands and contracts to control the amount of light striking the retina.

The second is our retina, a very dense patch of nerve tissue in the back of the eye that turns the patterns of light we see into nerve signals sent to the brain for nearly instantaneous interpretation. Third is the macula—near the center of the retina that provides the keenest vision when looking at things in front of us. Last is the cornea, the clear outer layer that covers the pupil and iris.

Some of the most common eye problems affect these four structures, and usually involve oxidative stress and inflammation, although all causes of eye problems have not been fully explained.

For example, cataracts are a clouding of the clear lens under the cornea that is caused by age and oxidative stress that breaks proteins in the lens to render it unclear. Macular degeneration is caused by blue light exposure and circulatory changes to the macula and causes vision loss for central vision. Glaucoma is the opposite—central vision is kept, but peripheral vision is lost, which is why it is nicknamed “tunnel vision.” It occurs when high levels of pressure within the eye damage the optic nerve. Diabetic retinopathy is damage to the tiny blood vessels that feed the retina and is the leading cause of preventable vision loss in the United States.

Though it is not nearly so serious, night blindness is the common problem often associated with age in which the pupil cannot contract quickly in bright light nor open more fully in low light to modulate the amount of light striking the retina of the eye.

You may have noticed this yourself as you flipped on a light in a very dark room. At first, you are blinded and uncomfortable, but your eyes accommodate quickly. Imagine if it took your eyes much longer to make this adjustment. The reverse is also true—your eyes take longer to get used to the dark, so falling and other injuries are a big risk.

These descriptions are oversimplified, but they give you an idea of some of the problems that can cause vision loss. The best thing we can do is work on prevention. Keep blood sugars normal, lower blood pressure, lose a few pounds, eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables—all of this plays an important role in keeping your vision strong. However, even if your vision problems are already starting, it is not too late to intervene with specific nutrients that can make a difference.

NATURAL VISION ALTERNATIVES

Lutein and Zeaxanthin

These two amazing carotenoids are present in healthy foods, including green leafy vegetables, yellow and orange squashes, as well as egg yolks. They are excellent antioxidants, but beyond that, they protect the macula of the eye. They help prevent macular degeneration, and if a person is already struggling with this problem, they can help stabilize it and keep it from worsening. Lutein and zeaxanthin protect the eye from damaging blue light—the kind of light emitted by screens.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A deficiency is a primary cause of night blindness for individuals with digestive conditions or nutrient absorption issues due to intestinal surgery, women during pregnancy and overall low dietary intake. Low vitamin A reduces levels of the pigment that the rods in the retina need for night vision. This is one of the reasons why a consistent daily intake of vitamin A in the retinol is critical.

Grape Seed Extract

The heavy lifters in grape seed extract are called oligomeric proanthocyanidins, or OPC's. There are several reasons they are healthy for eyes, including the fact that OPCs are super antioxidants. However, their most powerful impact may be their ability to strengthen blood vessel walls and make them more flexible. Remember, the machinery of the eye is fed by tiny capillaries that can get clogged or even break. Making these capillaries stronger affects every aspect of vision!

Polyphenols

Polyphenols are beneficial nutrients in plants that have been called “life span essentials.” They are the most important small nutrients after vitamins and minerals. Increase your intake of foods that include vitamin A, lutein, zeaxanthin and other nutrients that reduce inflammation.

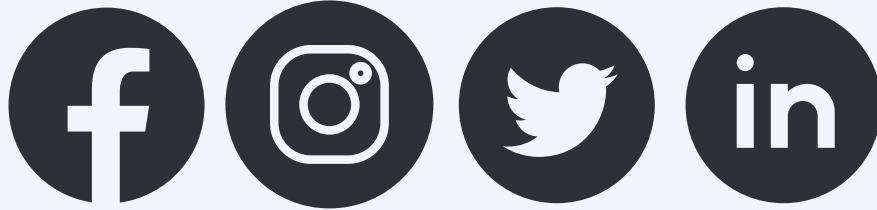
WHAT'S NEW?



GRAIN FREE, GLUTEN FREE, VEGAN

JOIN OUR NETWORK

@PLANETHEALTHSTL



5A CLARKSON RD.
ELLISVILLE, MO 63011

636.527.8888

WWW.PLANETHEALTHSTL.COM

HOURS:

MON-THURS 9AM-6:30PM

FRIDAY 9AM-5PM

SATURDAY 9AM-4PM

CLOSED SUNDAY



To remove your name from our mailing list, please click [here](#).

Questions or comments? E-mail us at planethealthstl@yahoo.com or call 636.527.8888.