

5 Tips to Help Save Your Vision

Eight out of 10 people living with vision loss worldwide could have saved their sight through prevention or treatment.¹ Pretty amazing, isn't it? Of course, seeing your doctor for eye exams and treatment is key.

Here are a few other things you can do help ensure your eyes have a bright future:

1. Wear sunglasses. Sunglasses that block 100 percent of ultraviolet-A and ultraviolet-B rays give you a big bang for your buck. They can:

- Delay development of cataracts.
- Prevent retinal damage.
- Protect delicate eyelid skin from skin cancer, non-cancerous growths, and wrinkles.²

2. Eat right. You are what you eat. It's an old adage, but there's something to it. And when it comes to your eyes, it may still hold true. Recently, the Coimbra Eye Study found a lower rate of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) in people eating a Mediterranean diet. This includes lots of:

- Vegetables
- Legumes such as beans
- Fish
- Cereals
- Fruits (In the study, those who ate just over 5 ounces of fruit a day were nearly 15 percent less likely to have AMD.)³

The researchers found that fiber, beta-carotene, and vitamins C and E seemed to be most protective. (Surprisingly, people who consumed more caffeine also had less AMD.)³

Other research has also shown that zinc, lutein, zeaxanthin, and omega-3 fatty acids may protect not only from AMD, but also cataracts and dry eye. You can find these nutrients in citrus fruits, vegetable oils, nuts, whole grains, dark green leafy vegetables, and cold-water fish like salmon.⁴ Some people should not take large doses of

antioxidants for medical reasons. So be sure to talk your doctor or me if you have any questions about this.

If you are at risk for diabetes or AMD, you may also benefit from a low-glycemic index diet. What is this? Avoid foods that quickly raise your blood sugar, such as sweets and white bread.⁴

3. Quit smoking. Smoking is linked to AMD and cataracts.² Yes, I know it's not easy, but if you smoke, quit, and if you don't smoke, don't start! If you need ideas for quit-smoking resources, I'd be glad to help.

4. Send kids outdoors. Here's one for your kids: Recent research is pointing to a possible benefit of more time outdoors early in life, especially between the ages of 14 and 29. Although researchers don't understand why, this appears to decrease the risk of nearsightedness (myopia). So, send your kids outdoors, but don't forget the sunglasses and sunscreen.⁵

5. Use eye protection. Two-and-a-half million eye injuries occur in the U.S. each year. Using standard protective eyewear could prevent most of these injuries. If you or your child plays sports, make sure the eye protection meets the specific requirements of that sport. Not sure? Check with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).²

Nothing herein constitutes medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or is a substitute for professional advice. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other medical professional if you have questions or concerns about a medical condition.

Sources:

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2. AAO: Top 10 Tips to Save Your Vision. Available at: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/top-10-tips-to-save-your-vision-2> Accessed 2-3-17.
3. AAO: Mediterranean Diet May Keep AMD at Bay. Available at: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/news/eating-mediterranean-diet-may-keep-amd-at-bay> Accessed 2-3-17.
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5. MedlinePlus: Can Extra Time Outdoors When Young Reduce Nearsightedness? Available at: https://medlineplus.gov/news/fullstory_162315.html Accessed 2-

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