

# Wellness

## REVIEW

### A LITTLE BLURRY ON WHAT TO DO ABOUT YOUR EYESIGHT?

#### Sight – A Precious Gift Worth Protecting

Sight is considered one of the most precious of the senses and yet the health of our eyes is an all too often neglected area of wellbeing. Eyesight is worth protecting! Even partial vision loss can make reading, recognition of faces, driving, watching television and independent living increasingly difficult.

Glaucoma, cataracts, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD) are diseases of the eye recognised as the three leading causes of blindness for people over the age of 60 worldwide. However, eye related complaints are not just limited to your parents, grandparents or the older generations. In the modern world, eye related complaints such as eye strain, blurred vision, red eyes and visual fatigue are becoming increasingly common in younger generations due to hours of staring at a computer, television screen or computer games.

Although it can be difficult to cut down on computer time, fortunately there are natural ingredients that may alleviate the annoying symptoms of eye strain as well as reduce your chances of vision loss associated with age. Be proactive about eye health and ask your Practitioner how to maintain healthy vision. It's never too early to start looking after your eyesight!

#### Protecting the Eyes Inside and Out

The eyes are very delicate and vulnerable to damage from both external and internal factors which can ultimately affect eyesight.

In addition to dust and pollution from the outside environment, eyes are also prone to internal damage caused by the production of unstable molecules known as free radicals. Free radicals are produced as a result of many natural processes within the body; they may cause damage to various bodily tissues including the eyes, if they are not balanced by antioxidants. Antioxidants, which can be obtained from the diet, help to counteract these damaging molecules and preserve the delicate parts of the eye. Factors that may contribute to increased free radical production include sun exposure, smoking, diabetes and high blood pressure. Improving antioxidant status can promote eye health by protecting the internal structure of the eye.

#### Nature's Answers for Eye Health

Plant-based medicines are a rich source of antioxidants that are beneficial for maintaining the integrity of the delicate components of the eye. Specific natural ingredients for eye health include:

- **Lutein and zeaxanthin:** These plant-based nutrients are found within the retina of the eye, protecting the eyes from sun damage and supporting healthy macula pigmentation.
- **Blackcurrant:** The small dark fruit of blackcurrant is rich in important antioxidants to support eye health and reduce the symptoms of visual strain. Research has shown that a combination of blackcurrant, lutein and zeaxanthin may help to reduce the symptoms of visual fatigue with improvements seen in just two weeks.

- **Zinc, vitamin E and vitamin B12:** Are nutrients required to support eye health.
- **Omega-3 fish oil:** Provides anti-inflammatory support, which in turn may slow the progression of age related vision loss.
- **Lipoic acid:** Eye related conditions are a common complication of diabetes. Lipoic acid is a potent antioxidant that has been found to support healthy blood sugar levels and is a key nutrient to help minimise the risk of visual conditions associated with diabetes.

Depending on your individual needs, your Practitioner can recommend high strength, quality supplements that provide these natural ingredients to improve your vision health, so you can retain the gift of sight!

#### Diet and Lifestyle Tips for Healthy Eyes

As well as taking specific natural remedies, you can also take daily measures to support vision health.

- **Eat antioxidant rich foods every day**  
Antioxidants play a vital role in protecting the tiny structures of the eyes from free radical damage. Examples of antioxidant-rich foods are vibrantly coloured fruits and vegetables such as berries, beetroot and capsicum.
- **Maintain a healthy weight**  
Being overweight increases the chances of high blood pressure and diabetes, which are both risk factors for vision loss. Ask your Practitioner about a professional weight management program to help you get back into a healthy weight range.
- **Quit smoking**  
Cigarette smoking increases the amount of free radicals which are detrimental for eye health. Your Practitioner can provide support to help overcome this harmful habit.
- **Have your eyes checked regularly**  
Make the time to visit your Optometrist regularly to keep a check on your eye health and ensure your glasses or contact lenses are suitable for your current needs.
- **Wear sunglasses**  
The sun's ultra violet rays can damage the eyes and increase the risk of macular degeneration and vision loss. Shield your eyes from the sun's glare by wearing sunglasses when out in the sun.
- **Take a break!**  
Reduce visual fatigue and eye strain by taking regular breaks away from the computer or television screen.

#### You will see the benefits in the future!

Sight is a gift that should not be taken for granted. Be proactive about vision health and don't wait until it is too late. Maintain healthy vision by consulting with your Practitioner about natural ingredients and lifestyle tips that are tailored to your individual needs.

