



**Macular  
Disease  
Foundation**  
AUSTRALIA



# **NUTRITION FOR AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (AMD)**

**Nutrition is important to optimise macular health and reduce the risk age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet, which includes eye friendly foods, will benefit your overall wellbeing as well as your eye health.**

**An appropriate dietary supplement may help if consumption of eye health foods is inadequate.**

**However, it's important you speak to your doctor before changing your diet or taking any supplements.**

**Please note:**

While this fact sheet focuses on nutrition for AMD, in general the same dietary recommendations may apply to people with other macular diseases.

## **Eating for eye health**

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Studies show diet is important to reduce the risk of AMD and slow its progression. The following advice can help keep your eyes healthy:

- eat dark green leafy vegetables and fresh fruit daily
- eat fish two to three times a week
- choose low glycemic index (GI) carbohydrates whenever possible
- eat a handful of nuts a week
- limit your consumption of fats and oils.



# Nutrient content of foods

Nutrient	Daily Intake <sup>†</sup>	Examples of food sources	Contains <sup>‡</sup>	Examples of food sources	Contains <sup>‡</sup>
<b>Lutein &amp; zeaxanthin</b>	6mg <sup>‡</sup>	½ cup (65g) kale	11.9mg	½ cup (120g) pumpkin	1.2mg
		½ cup (90g) spinach (cooked)	10.2mg	½ cup (125g) Brussels sprouts	1.2mg
		1 cup (30g) spinach (raw)	3.7mg	½ cup (80g) broccoli	0.8mg
		½ cup (80g) peas	1.9mg	½ cup (80g) corn	0.6mg
		1 cup (55g) cos lettuce (raw)	1.3mg	2 eggs	0.5mg
<b>Omega-3</b>	0.9-1.6g	100g salmon	1.8g	100g tuna	0.2g
		100g sardines	0.9g	100g prawns	0.2g
<b>Vitamin C</b>	45mg	1 medium orange	69mg	¼ cup capsicum	47mg
<b>Vitamin E</b>	7-10mg	20 almonds (30g)	7.8mg	1 tbs wheat germ	2.2mg
<b>Zinc</b>	8-14mg	7 oysters (100g)	59mg	½ cup rice bran	3.5mg
<b>Selenium</b>	60-70µg <sup>#</sup>	2 Brazil nuts (8g)	80µg	24 cashew nuts (30g)	5.6µg

† Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) per National Health and Medical Research Council.

‡ There's no standard daily intake for lutein; 6mg is considered an acceptable daily intake from food.

‡ www.nal.usda.gov #The measure µg is a microgram. 1 milligram (mg) = 1000 micrograms (µg)

**Note:** The RDI refers to the amount of a specific nutrient (vitamins, minerals, energy or protein) considered adequate to meet the requirements of healthy people. The RDI does not address the extraordinary needs of people who smoke, suffer from ill health, or are on medication.



### **Do I need to be careful with leafy greens and medications?**

Most of the best natural sources of lutein, including kale, spinach, silverbeet, Brussels sprouts, and broccoli, also contain high levels of vitamin K. This may interfere with some medications, including the blood thinner, warfarin. If you can't obtain enough lutein from your diet, a supplement may be appropriate. You must speak to your doctor before changing your diet if you take warfarin.



### **Are carrots the best food for eyes?**

Carrots are a good source of vitamin A, which is important for general health. However, they're not the best eye food that the popular myth suggests. Choose dark green leafy vegetables as your main eye health vegetables and eat carrots in moderation.



### **Does food have to be fresh?**

No. Frozen or tinned food, such as fish or vegetables, are very good options if fresh isn't readily available.



### **What about alcohol?**

As part of a healthy diet, excessive consumption of alcohol should be avoided. You shouldn't consume more than two standard drinks per day.

# Eye health checklist

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- have regular eye examinations, including a check of the macula
- don't smoke
- live a healthy lifestyle, control weight, and exercise regularly
- eat fish two to three times a week, dark green leafy vegetables and fresh fruit daily, a handful of nuts a week, and limit your consumption of fats and oils
- choose low GI carbohydrates instead of high GI whenever possible
- ask your doctor about taking a dietary supplement
- ask your eye health professional if AREDS2 supplements are appropriate for you
- protect your eyes from exposure to the sun
- use an Amsler grid regularly to check for changes in your vision

## Need more information?

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You can find more publications on AMD, reducing your risk and living well with macular disease on our website:  
**[www.mdfoundation.com.au](http://www.mdfoundation.com.au)**

You can also access our free, personalised support services and order information kits and Amsler grids by calling our National Helpline on **1800 111 709**.

MDFa has a free newsletter and you can sign up to receive invitations to education sessions and events in your area.

Macular Disease Foundation Australia is committed to reducing the incidence and impact of macular disease, by providing up-to-date information, advice and support.

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