

---

## Eye Disorders: Cataract, Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration

---

Even though alternative medicine practitioners have prescribed various vitamin and food supplements for eye disorders for years, only recently have these supplements become common in mainstream medicine. Vitamin supplements incorporating the phytonutrient lutein are commonly recommended for macular degeneration. Eye floaters, glaucoma, cataract and other eye disorders commonly receive vitamin supplement recommendations. If you are taking supplements now and want to know what supplements you are missing, a website called RxAlternativeMedicine.com recommends that you take their Online Comprehensive Health Assessment for your custom report.

In January 1999 researchers at Harvard Medical School stated that:

oxidation plays a major role in development of **age-related eye disorders**. In 1983 the American Academy of Sciences reported that free radical damage to eye tissues is instrumental in development of cataracts. It is an accepted fact in medicine that this oxidative damage to the eye is responsible for degenerative eye disorders. With that established, three questions arise which, if answered, will help us in combating **cataract, glaucoma** and **macular degeneration**. They are:

1. What exactly is a "free radical" or "oxidative" damage?
2. What can be done to prevent oxidative damage?
3. What can be done to reverse oxidative damage and associated disorders?

Oxidation or production of free radicals is a normal part of the daily life of the cells of our body. A "free radical" is a chemist's term for a certain type of oxygen molecule which has been chemically altered during the normal course of daily life to become an undesirable molecule which is damaging to the tissues. This altered molecule, having gone through the process of "oxidation" is then considered to be "oxidized". The body normally uses "antioxidants" to neutralize these undesirable "free radical" oxygen molecules. Antioxidants are very important and life could not go on without them. The body synthesizes some antioxidants on its own such as glutathione and others it receives from nature such as vitamins and minerals.

The obvious question to follow is "*what can I do to minimize the oxidation process in my body?*". We can best answer that question by looking at what causes oxidation and then minimizing the causes as much as possible. Oxidation can be reduced by healthy living. The main causes of oxidation are bad diet, lack of exercise, smoking and all the other bad things we do to our bodies in this modern day culture. Write it down, anything that is bad for you is producing an excess of free radicals. So, the answer is, **live as healthy a life style as possible**, eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, eliminate as much stress as possible, quit smoking, minimize alcohol consumption, avoid junk foods, caffeine and excessive sugar and fat consumption. A particularly strong free radical producer to be avoided is the partially hydrogenated or trans-fats that you find in deep fried and snack foods. Wear sun glasses. U.V. radiation from the sun causes oxidation in the eyes. Then, you should take a good source of antioxidant supplements.

What to do to reverse or slow progression of degenerative eye disorders including **cataract, glaucoma** and **macular degeneration**? First, you should identify all the causes of excessive oxidation in your life that you can. Again this is where RxAlternativeMedicine.com says an Online Comprehensive Health Assessment will be of great value to you. Completion of the assessment will assist you in identifying areas of your life style and health which can use improvement. The health assessment is a very inexpensive way to gain a lot of information about your health. It's like an extensive consultation with your doctor without leaving the convenience of your computer.

The number one cause of oxidation outside the obvious bad habits like smoking and alcohol is *poor diet*. We Americans wrote the book on bad diet. The American Dietetic Assn., the American Cancer Society, Mayo Clinic, every authority everywhere all emphasize that we should be eating 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, preferably raw. Of course, very few people do that so we have to try the best we can and to make up the deficiency.

To fill the void in your diet, turn to *the one outstanding fruits and vegetables supplement* which we recommend to everyone who will listen. That supplement is **Juice Plus**. Detailed information is found at the link listed below. The reason whole food supplements are so important is that antioxidants work synergistically as a team. Whole food contains all the antioxidants in the right proportions accompanied by thousands of other nutrients called "phytochemicals". Phytochemicals are essential to good cellular health and play an important role as well. Conversely, if we use factory manufactured supplements containing only a few antioxidants, we miss out on those thousands of ingredients that our bodies require. This is why whole food supplements like **Juice Plus** work so well and are so important.

Lutein is one phytochemical that has gained much attention in regard to eye disorders. It is the red coloring in tomatoes and other foods. It has been found to have good antioxidant properties beneficial to the eyes. Other phytochemicals worthy of note are zeaxanthin and genistein. All three of these phytochemicals have been extracted from food and incorporated into food supplements. Why not take the whole food like **Juice Plus** instead?

We eat way too much fat, sugar, junk food, and processed food. We drink too much caffeine, soda and alcohol. If you are prematurely aging and find yourself with a degenerative eye disease, *poor diet* is probably as contributory a factor as any other in your progressive decline to poor eye health.

Exposure to environmental toxins plays a much greater role in aging and oxidation than is appreciated by the medical community. If you have been exposed to chemicals such as insecticides or heavy metals such as lead or cadmium (found in welding rod and old galvanized home water pipes) you need to pay close attention to the Toxic Metals.

If you have used prescription drugs long term, you should consult with your pharmacist and ask if they produce excessive oxidation. For example, Tylenol is reported to be a potent oxidizer.

## Resources

[Online Comprehensive Health Assessment.](#)

[BrooksHarris.JuicePlus.com](http://BrooksHarris.JuicePlus.com) for information on a great fruits and vegetables product.

[www.lef.org](http://www.lef.org) the Life Extension Foundation has a good line of products and is a great source of information.

This article may be found at the following site:

[http://www.rxalternativemedicine.com/articles/cataract\\_glaucoma\\_macular\\_degeneration.html](http://www.rxalternativemedicine.com/articles/cataract_glaucoma_macular_degeneration.html)

## **Antioxidant Supplements**

**Glutathione** is known to be one of the most powerful antioxidants. Unfortunately, it isn't well absorbed into the body when taken orally. Therefore, we must find other supplements which will support the production of glutathione within the cells. One product is N-Acetyl-cysteine which is a compound the body uses to produce glutathione. NAC works especially well when used in conjunction with Garlic. You can probably find NAC at your health food store.. Another source of glutathione is found in milk whey. If you don't have a milk sensitivity or allergy you will benefit from whey protein extract which is a strong precursor to glutathione. There are several companies which sell whey products. See below.

**Vitamin C** is well known for its antioxidant properties. The lens of the eye is particularly deficient of vitamin C during the development of cataracts. 1000 to 2000 mg in divided doses during the day is usually adequate. Used in conjunction with vitamin C and also strong antioxidants are the bioflavanoids, quercetin, myrcetin and ginko. Vitamin C and the bioflavanoids were found to reduce intraocular pressure in glaucoma studies.

**Vitamin A** and **beta-carotene** have been found in studies to be preventive against cataract onset. Interestingly, spinach was more consistently related to prevention than carrots. One study found cod liver oil to be beneficial for glaucoma in rats. Cod liver oil is high in vitamin A.

**Retinol** , one of the ingredients in vitamin A has been use in eye drop form for eye inflammation and ointment form in dry eyes. Talk to your physician about this if you want to try it.

**B vitamins** are also essential to good eye health, particularly vitamins B2 and B6. B2 is destroyed by U.V. radiation and thus your need for wrap around sun glasses. Both B2 and B6 need to be replenished daily.

**Melatonin** is another antioxidant which has been shown beneficial in eye health. It is actually a hormone which is involved in your daytime-nighttime, or circadian, rhythms. You should take it under supervision of a nutritionist and only at the specified time of day.

**Vitamin E** and **Selenium** are both beneficial antioxidants and when used together with the other antioxidants are more effective.

**Zinc** is a commonly used supplement for eye disorders. It has been helpful in macular degeneration and night vision. If you use zinc supplements, you should also use copper as the two tend to deplete one another. Use about one-tenth the dosage of copper as you do zinc. Also, it is good to know that some cereals containing oats tend to decrease your absorption of zinc. Therefore, take your zinc at a different time of day than at breakfast.

**Magnesium** is a mineral very important to eye health. Supplementation utilizing the liquid ionic form of the mineral will offer better absorption. In tablet form, the typical dose is 400 mg. per day even though in one study intraocular pressure was improved in glaucoma patients at 120 mg. per day.

## **Herbs**

**Bilberry (Blueberry)** is the herb of choice for eye problems. The story is told that during WWII the British pilots found their night vision to be better when they ate Bilberry jam. Bilberry is used in most all eye supplements.

**Ginko biloba** is a great antioxidant herb. It is useful in many conditions including eye disorders. One caution is necessary here. Many people have food allergies and may not even know it. Occasionally, people with food allergies are sensitive to herbs because herbs in their natural state are foods. Ginko is one that has occasional allergy symptoms.

This article may be found at the following site:

[http://www.rxalternativemedicine.com/articles/cataract\\_glaucoma\\_macular\\_degeneration.html](http://www.rxalternativemedicine.com/articles/cataract_glaucoma_macular_degeneration.html)