

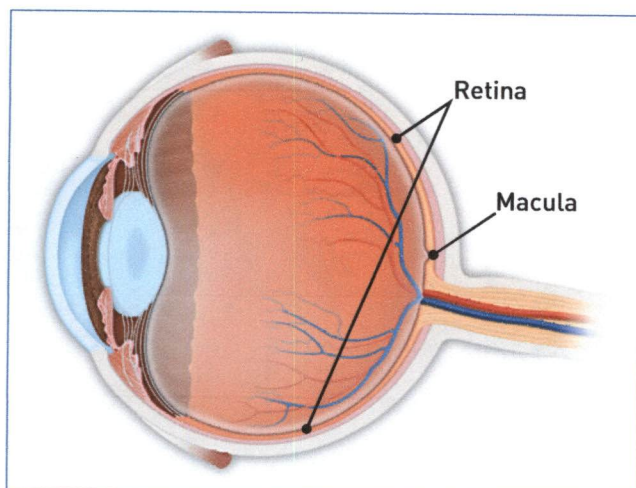
AMD and nutritional supplements

a closer look

WHAT IS AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION?

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a disease of the macula, the small part of the eye's retina that is responsible for our central vision. This condition affects both distance and close vision and can make some activities — like threading a needle or reading — very difficult or impossible. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of severe vision loss in people over the age of 50.

Many people with AMD have deposits under the retina called **drusen**. Drusen alone usually do not cause vision loss, but when they grow in size or number, there is an increased risk of developing advanced AMD. People at risk of developing a late stage of AMD may have a large amount of drusen or they may have abnormal blood vessels growing beneath the macula in one eye.



HOW CAN VITAMINS AND MINERALS AFFECT AMD?

The latest large scientific study on AMD and nutritional supplements has shown that some antioxidant vitamins and zinc may reduce the impact of AMD in some people.

The study found that people at higher risk for late-stage macular degeneration who followed a dietary supplement of vitamin C, E, lutein, zeaxanthin, along with zinc, lowered the risk of the disease progressing to advanced stages by at least 25 percent. The same treatment did not appear to achieve the same results among people without AMD, or within the first stages of the disease.

The nutritional supplements used by the study that proved to be beneficial contain:

- Vitamin C (500 mg);
- Vitamin E (400 IU);
- Lutein (10 mg);
- Zeaxanthin (2 mg);
- Zinc oxide (80 mg);
- Copper oxide (2 mg, to prevent the loss of copper associated with zinc supplements).

The levels of antioxidants and zinc that were shown to be effective in slowing AMD's progression cannot be consumed through your diet alone. These vitamins and minerals are recommended in specific daily amounts as supplements to a healthy, balanced diet.

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Some people may prefer not to take high dosages of antioxidants or zinc for medical reasons. The study did not reveal any evidence that the treatment may be toxic.

Another large study in women showed a benefit from taking folic acid and vitamins B6 and B12.

Other studies have shown that eating dark leafy greens, yellow, orange and other colorful fruits and vegetables, rich in lutein and zeaxanthin, may reduce your risk for developing AMD.

SHOULD I TAKE ANTIOXIDANT VITAMINS FOR AMD?

It is very important to remember that vitamin supplements are not a cure for AMD, nor will they restore vision you may have already lost from the disease. However, specific amounts of certain supplements do play a key role in helping some people at high risk for advanced AMD to maintain their vision. Talk to your ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) to determine if you are at risk for developing advanced AMD and to learn if supplements are recommended for you.

ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

To learn more about AMD and nutrition, scan this code with your smartphone or visit http://sn.im/_amdnutrition.



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