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Newsletter from the Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 531313 Henderson, NV 89053
<http://www.eyesight.org>

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Could Fish and Vitamin D Prevent Macular Degeneration?
Ivanhoe Newswire By Betsy Lievense, Ivanhoe Health
Correspondent

ORLANDO, Fla. (Ivanhoe Newswire) -- "Want to preserve your eyesight? Go fish! A recent study reveals eating fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids may reduce a person's risk for macular degeneration, the most common cause of blindness in people older than age 50."

"There is no proven way to prevent MD, but researchers believe proper nutrition could help. When members of the Age-Related Eye Disease Study Research Group looked at the eating habits of 4,519 individuals between 60 and 80 years old, they found those who ate foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (like fish) were less likely to develop advanced AMD than those who did not. In fact, participants who were at the lowest risk for AMD ate more than two 4-ounce servings of fish per week. Researchers report the DHA found in omega-3 fatty acids may stave off diseases like AMD by turning certain genes in the retina on or off. Omega-3 fatty acids might also form compounds that encourage cell survival and enhance blood vessel function, thereby reducing inflammation while maintaining a proper energy balance.

Although nutritious, experts say some fish contain high levels of mercury that could be hazardous to a patient's health. 'There's always a risk of high mercury levels in fish oil products, and if you don't know the product vendor, it may be a wiser decision to eat fatty fish three times a week that has lower levels of mercury,' Jane Sadler, M.D., a family practitioner at Baylor Family Medicine in

Garland, TX, told Ivanhoe. 'It's always better to get your intake of vitamins and supplements from eating, from your diet, than it is from a supplement.'

If patients must take supplements to get the recommended amounts of DHA and omega-3 fatty acids, Dr. Sadler recommends looking for mercury-free products. 'There are some fish oils available, such as Ultra Pure Fish Oil, which are purified to remove mercury. It's a premium DHA-rich supplement, and that is a good one.' Omega-3 fatty acids filled with DHA aren't the only nutrients that help prevent AMD. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison report taking Vitamin D may help stave off early (but not late) forms of AMD. Study authors looked at 7,752 individuals who were part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and concluded that Vitamin D may reduce the risk for AMD by cutting down on inflammation or preventing blood vessel growth in the retina.

No matter what form of AMD prevention people choose, Dr. Sadler said the bottom line is people need to take on healthier lifestyles."

Antioxidant supplements are very important in the protection of photoreceptor cells.

The most available and valuable antioxidant is WATER!

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ROLES OF LUTEIN AND ZEAXANTHIN IN THE EYES

From An Eye On Health www.thestar.com

A Look at the Roles of Lutein and Zeaxanthin in the Eyes.

"Of the more than 600 plant pigments called carotenoids found in nature, only two carotenoids, zeaxanthin and lutein, selectively accumulate in the retina, macular and lens.

Zeaxanthin is the dominant component in the centre of the macula, while lutein dominates at the outer edges. The eye is selective and preferentially places dietary zeaxanthin in the very centre of the

macula, the most critical area for central vision with the greatest need for protection.

Observational studies have noted that higher dietary intakes of zeaxanthin and lutein is related to reduced risk of cataracts and MD, two eye conditions for which there is minimal options when it comes to effective prevention.

Researchers speculate that these carotenoids may promote eye health through their ability to protect the eyes from light-induced oxidative damage and aging through both their antioxidant actions as well as their ability to filter out UV light.

Plants synthesize zeaxanthin and lutein to harvest light energy and protect against excessive light. It now appears that humans also utilize these pigments to protect the eyes from excessive interaction with the damaging effects of light. This function of zeaxanthin and lutein is similar to a set of natural sunglasses for the tissues of the eye. Acting as a filter to shield against harmful blue light and as antioxidants, both zeaxanthin and lutein help to reduce the risk of MD and cataract, the leading causes of blindness in the world.

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WORRIED ABOUT FREE ZINC?

Zinc (Zn^{++}) can be an unstable ion, and as such, has the potential for damage to cells in the eye. When zinc is combined with methionine it forms a very powerful antioxidant which stabilizes the zinc and protects the tissues of the eye. Most supplements for the eye includes 80 mgs of zinc.

Methionine is an essential sulfur amino acid. It is a part of the formation of numerous important compounds in your body. That formation is called "methylation." Methylation deficiency has been implicated in depression. This amino acid aids in your body's detoxification processes. Sunflower seeds are a great source of Methionine. Soy, on the other hand is deficient in Methionine. Diets

deficient in this amino acid may result in a destructive breakdown and metabolism of protein. Methionine is critical in regulating the availability of folic acid, which is important especially during pregnancy.

Optotabs formula incorporates zinc(methionine) to add more antioxidant strength. The Optotabs formula also includes zeaxanthin and lutein. To get more information on this eye supplement, call 800-924-4393.

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CONTACTING MDF

To speak to a support representative directly, you may call 1-888-633-3937. If you reach our voice mail, please speak slowly and distinctly.

ORDERING BOOKS & TAPES

When purchasing items from Amazon.com, please remember to use the MDF search box located at <http://www.eyesight.org/Books/books.html> . By simply originating your search from our website, Amazon rewards the Foundation with a small commission from each product you order. Thank you.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS:

Please make checks payable to Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 531313, Henderson, Nevada 89053, or you may use your credit card on our web site <http://www.eyesight.org/Donations/donations.html> . Your contributions make our services available as a support system for macular degeneration patients in the following ways:

1. We provide toll-free lines for personal contact assistance.
2. We mail brochures and other printed materials upon request.
3. We support an award-winning web site that provides the latest up-to-date information.

4. We fund research proposal grants to provide therapies for both the wet and dry form of AMD. Contributions marked "research" are used 100% for research.

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MDF was founded in 1992 by Edmund J. Aleksandrovich Ph.D (a victim of macular degeneration). It provides MD patients and their families with the information necessary to understand the disease, the latest news concerning ways to cope with the disease, and supports the efforts of researchers to find a cure.

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<http://www.eyesight.org/Newsletter/newsletter.html> .

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