

[IMAGE]

## **Eat For Great Vision**

By Julie T. Chen, MD

When my patients ask me what to eat for healthy eyes, I usually resort back to telling them that when they eat a diet that is mostly plant-based with lean proteins which represent an anti-inflammatory diet, they will naturally be eating a diet that is rich in the nutrients we need for healthy eyes.

So, if you are one of those people who would prefer not to remember which specific foods help your eye health, then stick to the concept of eating foods that are not processed and is as close to Mother Nature as possible. That would be mostly fruits and vegetables and low saturated lean proteins in the form of animal products or plant-based proteins like nuts.

However, if you are one of those people who would like to know which foods specifically are good for eye health, let's get started with some top choices you can start incorporating into your daily diet.

Many older patients are concerned about macular degeneration and cataracts. There are certain nutrients that are especially helpful in the prevention and lessening of progression of macular degeneration. Foods that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, lutein, zeaxanthin, vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin E, zinc, and beta carotenes are particularly helpful in the battle against macular degeneration. These are great for cataract prevention as well since nutrients like zinc and B vitamins like niacin are important for this particular concern as well.

Great Vision - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark The easiest way to make sure that you are getting plenty of these nutrients is to eat a lot of leafy greens along with bright yellow, red, or orange vegetables. It would also be a great idea to add some nuts, lean low fat proteins like turkey or ostrich, and fish.

Avocados, fish, and nuts are rich in healthy fatty acids that help to keep the blood vessels for the eyes healthy. The bright colored vegetables like bell peppers, carrots and sweet potatoes are rich in beta carotenes which are essential for our retinal health. Also for our retina, let's keep in mind that leafy greens like spinach are rich in the lutein and zeaxanthin that are good for our eyes.

If you are interested in adding in some variety to what's already been mentioned, there are other foods to take into consideration such as blueberries, raspberries, eggs, garlic, and even dark chocolate for the

antioxidants, minerals and vitamins we all need for healthy eyes.

So as you can see, eating healthy for the goal of healthy eyes doesn't have to leave you with a bland and boring diet. A lot of these foods can be easily incorporated into a delicious lunch or dinner such as pasta primavera or lean turkey with a side of rainbow-colored vegetables. And for all of you out there with a sweet tooth, the dark chocolate would be a great way to finish off your eye healthy meal...so happy dining everyone!

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**Dr. Julie T. Chen** is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit [www.makinghealthyez.com](http://www.makinghealthyez.com).

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