

“Eat Your Carrots”

As children, many of us were told by our mothers, “Eat your carrots, they’re good for your eyes!” Mom was right because carrots provide beta-carotene, a precursor of the vitamin A essential for normal vision in the retina. But, did you know that eye researchers have discovered that many other vegetables and fruits also play important roles in the eye? Most notably, it has been shown that people who consume large amounts of dark green leafy vegetables (such as spinach, collard greens, and broccoli), and orange-yellow fruits and vegetables (such as corn, peaches, and persimmons) have much lower rates of age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in the United States. These vegetables contain lutein and zeaxanthin, close relatives of beta-carotene that are highly concentrated in the macula, the part of the retina responsible for reading and driving vision. While vitamin supplements for these nutrients are available, most ophthalmologists agree that it is probably best to get most of our nutrients from the natural sources. This cookbook gives delicious ideas on how to get more fruits and vegetables into your diet every day. While we can’t guarantee better vision, the recipes provided here are one more step you can take to a healthier lifestyle.

- Paul S. Bernstein, MD, PhD