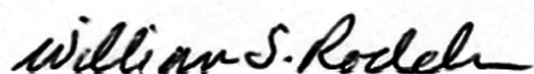


Vitamins for Macular Degeneration

Good news but not necessarily new news

There have been some recent publications discussing the importance of antioxidant vitamins plus the mineral zinc for patients with macular degeneration. This recommendation is the result of the conclusions of a national study, AREDS (Age- Related Eye Disease Study), that has been in progress for well over ten years, and the patients were followed for an average of six years. At the time this study was initiated, the state-of-the-art ideas regarding vitamin therapy included vitamins C and E, beta carotene, lutein, and zeaxanthin, as well as zinc. Since that time, other developments have occurred, including the finding that excellent nutrition does, indeed, slow down the progression of this disease. Fortunately, at this time, most antioxidant vitamin formulas, including the generic types, contain all of these dosages. Brand names that have been around for years, including ICAPS and OcuVite, have also contained these dosages.

I do remind people, however, that probably the most important nutritional proof in the literature to date has shown that general good nutrition and diets rich in green leafy vegetables, corn, and fruits have made the primary difference rather than vitamin supplementation. I certainly support the use of antioxidant vitamin supplementation but do emphasize that good nutrition probably makes the greater difference, and these vitamins are, indeed, *supplements* to a healthy diet.



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