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**PREVENT BLINDNESS FOUNDATION**

**Queensland Eye Institute &  
Prevent Blindness Foundation**

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# **Nutrition and your Eyes**





## **Nutrition and the eye**

The old saying “you are what you eat” is as true today as it ever was. Our modern diet can have a dramatic effect on our health and well-being, both positive and negative. Unfortunately a healthy modern diet is not necessarily in perfect balance for excellent overall health. Like other parts of the body, our eyes suffer when our diet is not delivering adequate vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants and essential oils. Specific nutritional supplements have been shown to be of benefit in numerous eye conditions, including Dry Eye and Blepharitis, Macular Degeneration, Thyroid Eye Disease and Glaucoma.

### **Omega-3 Fatty Acids, including Fish Oil.**

Taking a high dose of Omega-3 oils can significantly help blepharitis and other dry eye conditions. People who have a high intake of fish also have a lower incidence of Macular Degeneration and fish oils may also play a protective role in glaucoma. The essential fatty acids in Omega-3's are important for producing potent anti-inflammatory prostaglandins and also for reduce the amount of pro-inflammatory compounds in the blood. The dose of omega-3 required to help dry eye is very high so you should consult your doctor or optometrist for advice.

## **Anti-oxidants**

A large international research project (called the AREDS study) has shown that some patients with a particular type and severity of macular degeneration will have a slowing in the progression of their disease when they take a set combination of anti-oxidants. This is an ongoing study and the benefits of different anti-oxidants are being studied.

## **Selenium**

Selenium is essential for the normal functioning of cells. It is an important component of anti-inflammatory enzymes and it assists in converting one type of thyroid hormone to another. High doses of selenium have been shown to be beneficial in Thyroid Eye Disease but do not take this supplement unless advised by your doctor.

## **Always Consult Your Health Professional**

Some nutritional supplements may list unproven claims of particular health benefits. You should always discuss starting a new medication with your Doctor so that you can be sure there is a proven health benefit and that there are no interactions with your other medications, especially if you take warfarin. You should always list any nutritional supplement as a medication when asked what medications you are taking, as this may be important information for your health professional.