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## Eating Foods That Help Diabetic Eyes Stay Healthy



Diabetics are at a greater risk for eye diseases and problems and controlling blood glucose, blood pressure and blood lipid levels are critical in protection against diabetic retinopathy, the leading cause of blindness in diabetics and other conditions that are prevalent in people with diabetes. Some foods aid in the prevention of diabetic eye problems, including low glycemic index (GI) carbohydrates, Omega-3 fatty acids and carotenoids.

Low GI carbohydrates include brown rice and whole grain breads. A study done by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that men and women who consumed higher glycemic diets than their peers had a higher instance of age-related macular degeneration (AMD). The study also found that approximately 20% of AMD cases could have been prevented with a lower glycemic diet.

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in fish and can help reduce the instance of dry eye symptoms. A recent study in Nature Magazine (July 2007) found a promising link between omega-3 intake and vessel regrowth and limiting inflammation in mice with eye injuries.

Carotenoids, such as lutein and zeaxanthin, are antioxidants that are yellowish pigments and are found in many fruits and vegetables. Both are also found in the retina of the eye and together they help filter out harmful UV light. These carotenoids also help protect against AMD and cataracts.

Avoiding trans fats in your daily diet may also protect against developing AMD. Trans fats can lead to the plaque buildup in blood vessels, including the eyes, which causes a loss of central vision.

Combining a healthy diet of low GI carbohydrates, omega-3 fatty acids and carotenoids with controlled blood glucose, blood pressure, and blood lipid levels are a sure way to keep diabetes-related eye problems at bay. And be sure to have your eyes examined yearly.

Source: Diabetes Self-Management  
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