

🍎 Nutrition for Healthy Eyes 🍎

An evidence based guide

How to Protect Your Vision Through Food and Lifestyle

Dry Eye Prevention

Daily habits and anti-inflammatory foods can help ease discomfort:

- **Ground Flaxseed:** Add 2 tablespoons of ground flaxseed to smoothies or oatmeal. Rich in omega-3s and lignans, flaxseeds reduce inflammation and improve tear quality (*How Not to Die*, Ch. 13).
- **Warm Compress + Lid Massage:** Use a clean, warm washcloth for 1–2 minutes daily (in the shower works great), then gently massage lids to stimulate oil glands.
- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water to support tear production.
- **Professional Treatment:** Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) therapy may help restore oil gland function

Glaucoma Support

Support optic nerve health and circulation:

- **Dark Leafy Greens:** One serving daily of kale, spinach, or collard greens may lower intraocular pressure. Dr. Greger highlights nitrate-rich vegetables as powerful natural vasodilators (*How Not to Die*, Ch. 4).
- **Beets and Beet Juice:** Improve circulation and nitric oxide levels.
- **Black Currants:** A potent antioxidant source shown to support visual field stability.

Macular Degeneration Prevention

Antioxidant-rich foods protect your macula from oxidative damage:

- **Leafy Greens:** At least 3 servings a week—high in lutein and zeaxanthin, the macula's natural protectors.
- **Goji Berries & Berries:** Packed with carotenoids and anthocyanins.
- **Saffron:** Small daily doses have been linked to improved ARMD symptoms.
- **Dark Chocolate:** Choose 72% cocoa or higher for polyphenol benefits.

- **Lower Cholesterol Through Diet:** High LDL levels are linked to increased macular degeneration risk. Statins haven't been shown to help, but dietary changes have.
- **Lutein Supplements:** Can help—but eating the real thing (greens) is better absorbed and more effective (*How Not to Die*, Ch. 13).
- **Blue Light Protection:** Use glasses with blue light filters to help protect retinal cells.

Cataract Prevention

Whole-food antioxidants slow down lens clouding:

- **Spinach, Carrots, Citrus Fruits:** Rich in vitamin C, beta-carotene, and lutein.
- **Skip Supplements:** Most studies show food-based nutrients work better than pills.
- **Wear Polarized Sunglasses:** UV exposure is a leading cause of cataract formation. Protect your eyes every day, not just at the beach.

Preventing Diabetic Retinopathy

Stabilize blood sugar and reduce inflammation to protect retinal blood vessels:

- **Whole Plant-Based Foods:** A diet centered around beans, greens, and whole grains significantly reduces the risk of Type 2 diabetes and its complications (*How Not to Die*, Ch. 2).
- **Nuts & Seeds:** Almonds, walnuts, and chia seeds support insulin sensitivity.
- **Avoid Ultra-Processed Foods:** Sugar, white flour, and processed meat worsen insulin resistance.
- **Cruciferous Vegetables:** Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and kale fight inflammation and support retinal health.
- **Spices That Heal:** Turmeric and cinnamon have anti-inflammatory and blood-sugar-regulating properties.
- **Regular Physical Activity:** Movement boosts insulin sensitivity and circulation.

NEW FINDINGS: Retinal Protection Through Diet (2025 Study)

A June 2025 study published in *Healio* revealed that people who follow a **plant-based diet** have significantly better **retinal sublayer thickness**, a biomarker of eye health. Thicker, healthier retinal layers are associated with reduced risk of diseases like macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.