



PRESS RELEASE

TO: Editor in Charge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Healthy Eating Proven to Reduce Risk for Cataracts

Understanding How Food Affects Vision Health

(Honolulu, Hawaii), August 6, 2008 – Is eating carrots good for your vision? While carrots alone don't affect vision much, nutrients found in carrots and other foods can. A healthy diet containing fruits, vegetables, fish, and whole grains can reduce the risk for cataracts over time. Nationally, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the nation's largest group of Eye MD's recognizes August as Cataract Awareness Month. Here in Hawaii too, it pays to be conscious of the effect that food has on vision health.

A cataract is the clouding of the eye's lens, blurring vision much as looking through a foggy window might. The condition has little effect on vision at first. Early symptoms include making lights seem too bright or colors seem dull. These symptoms can be temporarily improved using visual aids such as new glasses. However, if left untreated, cataracts worsen, causing significant vision loss and eventually even blindness. Thanks to modern surgical techniques, cataracts have become a 100% treatable disease when the patient seeks proper medical attention.

“Our eyes become more susceptible to cataracts as we age,” said Dr. Christopher Tortora, Medical Director at the Hawaiian Eye Center. “The antioxidants present in fruits, colorful vegetables, and dark green leafy vegetables contain nutrients that may help reduce the risk or slow the progression of cataracts.”

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Lutein and zeaxanthin are two antioxidant pigments in fruits and vegetables which are thought to reduce age-related damage to the macula, the portion of the eye responsible for sharp, clear central vision. According to the Eye Disease Case Control Study, increased intake of lutein and zeaxanthin resulted in a decreased risk for developing age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Some foods containing these important antioxidants include yellow corn, persimmons, yellow squash, spinach, and tangerines.

“Although many nutrients are available in the form of supplements, these substances are often better acquired through a healthy diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables,” said Dr. Tortora.

A healthy diet consists of five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables and three servings of 100% whole grains each day. Two servings of fish twice a week help provide healthy fats in our diet.

Although it can be difficult to transition from unhealthy to healthy eating, the temptation for junk food will eventually fade. Consistency is the key and the benefits of healthy eating include not just healthy vision, but a healthy body as well.

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of The Hawaiian Eye Show, a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventive eye care. To learn more about other eye health issues, please call Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8448 where “*life has never looked better.*”

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