



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Photos Attached

EYES ON EATING HEALTHY

Foods That Can Help Protect Your Eyes

(Honolulu, Hawaii), July 26, 2012 – The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 20.5 million Americans 40 years and older suffer from cataracts in one or both eyes. An estimated 1.8 million Americans 40 years and older suffer from age-related macular degeneration (AMD) with another 7.3 million at serious risk.

The risk or damage from many degenerative diseases like cataracts and AMD can be reduced with a healthy diet consisting of foods low in fat and high in antioxidants and nutrients. People are becoming increasingly more aware of the foods they consume and how it affects their overall health. Still, many people overlook eating healthy for their eyes.

“What we eat really plays a major role in our bodies overall well-being and can really make a difference when it comes to degenerative diseases,” shares Dr. Christopher Tortora, M.D., Hawaiian Eye Center. “The eyes are just like any other organ in the body and require nutrients to function properly.”

The National Eye Institute, a branch of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, did an extensive study into the intake of high levels of specific antioxidants (vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta-carotene) and zinc and how they affect AMD. The results showed that high doses of these antioxidants and zinc can help reduce the risk of developing AMD and slow the progression for those already suffering from the disease. Various other studies have shown similarly positive effects in decreasing the risk and progression of AMD and cataracts with high doses of lutein and omega-3 fatty acid.

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Living on an island with consistently warm weather year-round offers Hawaii residents a great variety of fresh produce and seafood rich in antioxidants and nutrients that can help protect their eyes:

- Citrus fruits are well-known sources of *vitamin C*: oranges, lemons, limes and tangerines. Other great sources: pineapples, broccoli and bell peppers.
- *Vitamin E* can be found in many different foods: avocados, almonds, sunflower oil and wheat germ.
- *Beta-carotene* is found in foods typically bright orange or dark green in color: carrots, mangoes, sweet potatoes, papaya, spinach and collard greens.
- Great sources of *zinc* include low-fat proteins: oysters, chicken and turkey. Other great sources: peanuts, soybeans and black eyed peas.
- Leafy green vegetables are great sources of *lutein* and *zeaxanthin* (both found in healthy eyes): watercress, taro greens, kale, spinach and bok choy.
- *Omega-3 fatty acid* is found in many fish: tuna, salmon, halibut and sardines. Other great sources: walnuts and flaxseed.

“We are really lucky in Hawaii to have an environment that gives us access to such fresh and nutritious foods all year long,” explains Dr. Christopher Tortora. “I think we all need to take more advantage of that and realize how a healthy diet can really benefit our eyesight.”

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 preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8488 or visit www.HawaiianEye.com, where “*life has never looked better.*”

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