



COMMENTARY



Significant Uses and Side Effects of Lutein

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Description

Lutein is a type of organic pigment called carotenoids. It is related to beta-carotene and vitamin A. Many people consider lutein to be the “eye vitamin.” Lutein is one of the two main carotenoids found in the human eye (the macula and the retina). It is believed to act as a light filter, protecting the eye tissue from damage by the sun’s rays. Foods rich in lutein include egg yolks, spinach, kale, corn, orange peppers, kiwi, grapes, zucchini, and squash.

Lutein is commonly taken by mouth to prevent eye diseases, including cataracts and a disease that causes vision loss in the elderly (Age-related Macular Degeneration, or AMD). Lutein is used for many other conditions, but there is no clear scientific evidence to support these other uses.

Lutein may be effective for an eye disease that causes vision loss in the elderly (age-related macular degeneration or AMD). Taking lutein supplements by mouth for up to 36 months can improve some symptoms of AMD. More benefits may be seen when taken for at least 3 months at doses higher than 5 mg, and when combined with other carotenoid vitamins. But lutein does not seem to prevent AMD from getting worse over time.

Lutein is found naturally in a number of fruits and vegetables, especially deep green, orange and yellow ones. Lutein is a type of xanthophyll that is often used to treat or prevent eye diseases. Lutein supplements contain a natural substance classified as carotenoids (a group of plant pigments with antioxidant effects). Lutein supplements provide a more concentrated supply of this antioxidant. Below are some conditions with which lutein and zeaxanthin may help:

- Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) - Consumption of lutein and zeaxanthin may protect against the progression of AMD to blindness.
- Cataracts- Cataracts are cloudy spots in the front of the eye. Eating foods rich in lutein and zeaxanthin can slow down their formation.

- Diabetic retinopathy- In animal studies of diabetes, taking lutein and zeaxanthin has been shown to reduce markers of oxidative stress that damage the eyes.
- Retinal detachment- Rats with retinal detachments injected with lutein had 54% less cell death than those injected with corn oil.
- Uveitis- This is an inflammatory disease of the middle layer of the eye. Lutein and zeaxanthin can help reduce inflammation.

Possible side effects

Lutein and lutein supplements is likely safe when taken by mouth in appropriate amounts. Some patients, including those with skin cancer or cystic fibrosis, should be cautious when considering lutein supplementation. It is important to consult with your healthcare provider before taking any type of dietary supplement on a regular basis.

It is important to keep in mind that dietary supplements have not been tested for safety, and dietary supplements are largely unregulated. In some cases, the product may deliver doses that differ from the stated amount for each herb. In other cases, the product may be contaminated with other substances, such as metals. Additionally, the safety of supplements for pregnant women, nursing mothers, children, and those with medical conditions or medications has not been established.

To increase your lutein intake without using lutein supplements, include lutein-rich foods in your daily diet, such as kale, spinach, kale, green beans, mangoes, and papaya. While lutein supplements may offer some benefit in treating or preventing certain health problems, self-medicating with these supplements (and avoiding or delaying standard treatment) is not recommended. If you are considering lutein supplementation, consult with your healthcare provider about choosing a supplement and daily dosage that is right for your health needs.

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