

# Cataracts, Glaucoma and Nutrition

The eyes are more sensitive to oxidative stress than any other part of the body. There is twenty times more Vitamin C in the eye than in the blood. Pigment in the retina is regenerated by Vitamin A and Vitamin E prevents oxidation of photoreceptors. Pioneer doctors including Stanley Evans, Robert Smith and Abram Hoffer have found that nutrients are able to reverse some eye conditions.

## **Cataracts**

Although cataracts are commoner as we get older, good nutrition can help prevent it. Evans found that if cataracts were caught early, nutrients can arrest their development or reverse them. Note that some drugs predispose to cataracts. Statins increase the risk by 27% after one year and 50% overall and this risk is greater in diabetics. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) increase the risk by 40%. Prednisolone, smoking and pilocarpine drops also increase the risk. Sugar in the diet is another important contributory factor.

It is also important to avoid predisposing causes: these include cigarettes, alcohol and some drugs. Statins increase the risk by 50% SSRI antidepressants by 15% and HRT also increases the risk. Vitamin deficiency can also contribute. Those with low vitamin E were twice as likely to get cataracts and those with low vitamin C were eleven-fold more likely to develop them.

The ophthalmologist, D Atkinson treated 450 patients with early cataracts with 1 gram of Vitamin C and 20,000 iu of Vitamin A and compared them with those not on supplements. Most of the non-treated group needed surgery within 4 years. Few in the treated group needed surgery, and if they did, needed it much later (11 years). Dr Lesser reported on case of a lady with cataracts needing surgery. On taking 10,000iu daily Vitamin A and 400mg of Vitamin B2 daily (a high dose) her cataracts receded. Dr Hoffer reported on several cases of cataracts that receded with nutrients, including a lady who took Vitamin C 1500mg daily, Vitamin B2 25ng daily, Vitamin E 800iu daily, Vitamin B1 100mg daily and cod liver oil capsules 3 daily. Her cataract disappeared in one year. Another study found higher intakes of protein and Vitamins B1, 2 and 3 reduced the prevalence of cataract.

Alpha lipoic acid (ALA) can prevent cataracts. Animals given chemicals that cause cataracts but treated with ALA developed 60% less cataracts.

People treated with N Acetylcarnosine drops (Can C) twice daily improved in 90% of cases in 6 months but the trial was funded by the makers of the drops.

Remember computer and screen use can be a factor in cataracts so it is worth having regular breaks from this. Sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS), widely

used in shampoos, bubble baths, toothpaste and liquid soaps can also cause cataracts.

## **Glaucoma**

A study of 20 patients given high doses of Vitamin C daily (average 10 grams daily) showed a drop in pressure in both eyes of 5.6mm Hg (range of drop of pressure: 1 to 13mm Hg). Small doses seem less effective - a study by Dr Linner found giving 1 gram daily only decreased pressure 2-3mm Hg. Vitamin A can help glaucoma. Giving 60,000iu for a few weeks can be effective. This is a high dose (and cannot be used in pregnancy). Vitamins B1 & B2 are also important. Glaucoma can also be caused by drugs including taking the pill for more than 3 years and by alcohol.

People who spend more than four hours a day looking at screens have double the risk of glaucoma.

## **What else to take**

Antioxidants are beneficial in a wide range of eye diseases (see the Vitamin Cure for Eye Disease by Robert Smith). Vitamin C up to 10 grams daily, Vitamin E (mixed tocopherols are best) 400iu daily and Vitamin A or betacarotene 10,000iu daily are the mainstay of treatment but a range of other nutrients including B Vitamins, alpha-lipoic acid (100-300mg daily), zinc (30mg daily), selenium (200mcg daily), magnesium (400mg daily). In addition bilberry herbal extract (*Vaccinium Myrtillus*) and ginkgo biloba (40mg three times daily) can help glaucoma and N Acetylcarnosine drops (Can-C Eye drops) can help cataracts. Using eye exercises (see separate leaflet) can work well with these nutrients as will a diet low in sugar and refined carbohydrates.

A trial on West Africa patients with glaucoma found a combination of Vitamin A 180,000iu daily (large dose), Vitamin C 3 grams daily and Vitamin E 200iu daily found the pressure in their eyes returned to normal in one week. These results may not apply to western patients as many were malnourished and also needed protein supplements but i think the results are remarkable.