

Eating Away the Risk of AMD

Individuals who eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D may have a reduced risk of developing age-related macular degeneration (AMD), according to two studies in the May edition of *Archives of Ophthalmology*.

In one study, the Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) Research Group selected 4,519 participants between the ages of 60 and 80—1,115 showed no signs of AMD, 3,404 had AMD, and about 658 had neovascular AMD—to determine whether increased omega-3 lipid intake decreased the risk of developing AMD.¹ The researchers divided subjects into four groups according to the severity of their condition and had them complete a 90-question dietary survey that detailed how frequently they consumed foods containing high levels of certain vitamins, minerals, and specific lipids, such as omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.

Those subjects who reported the highest levels of omega-3 fatty acid

intake had a decreased risk of developing neovascular AMD when compared to those who reported the lowest intake levels. Their conclusion: A diet that includes more foods with significant levels of omega-3 fatty acids, such as fish and soybeans, could tremendously reduce an individual's risk for developing neovascular AMD.

In a second study, researchers at the University of Wisconsin monitored 7,752 subjects between 1988 and 1994.² They separated subjects into five groups, based on serum vitamin D levels, and found that those individuals who had higher levels of serum vitamin D were less likely to develop early dry AMD.

Other research has shown that that inflammation and swelling of the blood vessels in the retina can promote some forms of AMD. The authors of this study believe that increased intake of a foods rich in vitamin D, such as milk, may reduce this swelling.

These two studies add to the growing body of knowledge about the role of nutrition in maintaining ocular health. “We recently learned there’s an increased risk of both macular degeneration and cataract in overweight and obese patients,” says Stuart Richer, O.D., Ph.D., of the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine & Science, in North Chicago.

Generally, the diets of many overweight individuals do not include substantial portions of foods rich in either omega-3 fatty acids or vitamin D. Several contradictory health messages may be exacerbating this nutrient deficiency, Dr. Richer says. These include rising public concerns about mercury levels in fish, a source of both nutrients, and advice

Common Dietary Sources Of Omega-3 Lipids

- Salmon
- Halibut
- Mackerel
- Sardines
- Shrimp
- Scallops
- Raw Tofu
- Soybeans
- Walnut Oil
- Flaxseed oil
- Cod liver oil
- Krill oil

Common Dietary Sources Of Vitamin D

- Milk
- Fortified soy or rice beverages
- Salmon
- Tuna
- Sardines
- Mackerel
- Cod liver oil
- Shitake mushrooms

from physicians to minimize exposure to sunlight, one of the chief sources of vitamin D.

Both studies strongly advocate that increased omega-3 and/or vitamin D intake will dramatically reduce one's risk for AMD development. “Luckily, many of the best sources of both vitamin D and omega-3 are contained in the same foods,” Dr. Richer says.

He adds that people who are lactose intolerant or cannot (or will not) eat fish must use nutritional supplements to help protect against both AMD and other systemic conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and multiple sclerosis.

1. SanGiovanni JP, Chew EY, Clemons TE, et al. The relationship of dietary lipid intake and age-related macular degeneration in a case-control study: AREDS Report No. 20. *Arch Ophthalmol* 2007 May;125(5):671-9.
2. Parekh N, Chappell RJ, Millen AE, et al. Association between vitamin D and age-related macular degeneration in the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1988 through 1994. *Arch Ophthalmol* 2007 May;125(5): 661-9.

AMO Recalls Lens Solution

Advanced Medical Optics has voluntarily recalled its Complete MoisturePlus contact lens solution due to threat of *Acanthamoeba* keratitis.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) interviewed 46 patients with *Acanthamoeba* keratitis since January 2005. Of the 39 soft contact lens wearers, 21 used Complete MoisturePlus. The CDC estimates that patients with an *Acanthamoeba* infection are seven times more likely to be using Complete MoisturePlus than another solution.

No other AMO products are currently affected by the recall. For more information, call 1-800-899-9183, or go to www.amo-inc.com.