

Vitamins (for your eyes)

Eye vitamins come in many forms and combinations. Much are over-hyped and needlessly expensive. Additionally, too much of some vitamins and minerals are dangerous (examples: too much vitamin A or too much zinc is unhealthy).

As far as eye health goes, the following minerals and vitamins were studied in the 1990s: zinc, vitamin C and vitamin E. Later lutein was added to the mix. These components were found to be useful in preventing the *progression* of dry, age-related macular degeneration (ARMD). Dry ARMD accounts for over 90% of macular degeneration. The other 10% is termed *wet* ARMD, due to leakage in the retina. Wet ARMD requires different treatment (typically intraocular injections).

There are no studies proving whether these same vitamins can prevent the formation of ARMD. However, since many of our foods and soils are mineral deficient, vitamin and mineral supplements, in moderation, are not unwise. Also, as we age, many minerals are less well absorbed; for example, Zinc absorption decreases after the mid-30s, so supplements are more important as we get older.

I'll keep the vitamin list short and simple (and hopefully inexpensive). The listed brands have no lactose or gluten (to which some people are sensitive). Please check with your primary care doctor before changing any medications or vitamins as some people have medical conditions, beyond the scope of this FAQ, which might make such changes medically unsafe (usually related to vitamin K issues).

Unless specified, I tend to buy Nature's Bounty, Now, or Sundown Naturals vitamins, as these brands are not too expensive and seem to be of good quality. However, feel free to substitute as you see fit. Most of the list can be purchased at local drug stores or on-line (such as at Amazon).

1. General multi-vitamin. I recommend the "One-A-Day" brand of vitamins. Specifically, I recommend the one for "Men over 50" for all adults. (The women's version removes some essential minerals, adds probably unnecessary iron and slaps on a pink label.) Take one tablet per day.
2. Vitamin C (500mg tablets). Take one tablet each day, or one tablet twice-a-day (morning and night).
3. Zinc gluconate (30 to 50 mg tablets). Take one tablet each day. (Many vitamins contain zinc oxide, however, zinc oxide is not as well absorbed from the gut as amino salts, such as the gluconate version indicated here.)
4. Vitamin E (200 to 400 IU capsules). Take one capsule each day.
5. Lutein (20 mg tablets). Take one tablet each day.
6. Vitamin D3 (1000 IU capsules). Take one capsule each day.
7. B-Complex. Take one tablet per day.

Optional probiotics and supplements:

1. Florastor. Take one per day.
2. Theralac. Take one per day.
3. Advantage+ (resveratrol); see www.longevinexadvantage.com Resveratrol is an interesting compound. Its function is thought to mimic caloric restriction ('starvation' state), prolonging life, etc. I suggest you read about it and decide on your own. In many health food stores it is outrageously expensive and of variable quality and quantity. Bill Sardi has done a lot of work on this compound and is a good resource for further reading.
4. Calcium (600 mg tablets). Take one tablet per day. If your doctor recommends more than 600 mg, take 600 mg tablets at 8-hour intervals, as no more than 600 mg of calcium is well absorbed in less than 8 hours.
5. Magnesium (250 mg tablets). Take one per day. Often, magnesium is combined with calcium.