



Vitamins and the Eye



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- is there a way to stop your eyes showing signs of age?

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- information about laser surgery and some alternatives.

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- new products and advances in spectacle lenses.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

- information about how macular degeneration affects your eyes.



Recent research has shown that nutrition plays an important role in the prevention of eye conditions such as macular degeneration and cataracts.

Antioxidants, such as vitamins C, E and natural mixed carotenoids, are important because they help reduce the effects of free radicals, unstable molecules that are thought to play a role in the development of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration.

Macular degeneration is of particular concern because it can have a drastic effect on the ability to read and carry out other simple tasks that make life a pleasure (see the back page of this newsletter for more information). This may happen quickly or develop over several months and is usually painless.

Because of these issues the subject of vitamin supplements and the eye has been open to a lot of recent research. One of the most comprehensive is the National Eye Institute's ground breaking 10-year, independent study called AREDS (Age-Related Eye Study).

In summary the results of this were that high levels of antioxidants and zinc significantly reduce the risk of

advanced age-related macular degeneration (AMD) by about 25 percent. These same nutrients also reduce the risk of vision loss caused by advanced AMD by about 19 percent. Further research undertaken in Glasgow also suggests that these products may be of benefit to dry eye and potential dry eye sufferers, particularly contact lens wearers.

This is why eye care professionals are recommending that people at high risk of developing conditions like macular degeneration, should consider taking one of these formulations*. While they are not guaranteed to either prevent or cure eye disease, the earlier they are taken the better the chances of delaying the potentially debilitating visual effects.

There are several brands available, all of which have a slightly different formulation. All contain the antioxidant vitamins A, C, E and other select minerals in amounts well above 100% of the recommended daily values.

OcuVite, ICaps and Visionace are three such products. OcuVite PreserVision is the vitamin and mineral supplement used in the AREDS study, Visionace was used in the Glasgow study, while ICaps contains Leutin, a powerful antioxidant believed to be of particular importance in maintaining macular health.



Normal Vision



Age-related Macular Degeneration

*always read the label before taking any form of vitamin supplement.

Winter Driving

Focus On ...

Within our practices we stock a wide range of different frames including designer names.

Calvin Klein
Gianni Versace & Versus
Nautica
SEIKO
Flexon
Laura Ashley
Oliver by Valentino
ELLE
Alexander McQueen
Beano, Barbie & Action Man
Jean-Paul Gaultier & JPG
Gucci
DKNY



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

We would like to introduce two new members of the team in Daventry, Lorna Minor & Emma McEvoy. Lorna joins us straight from University in Cardiff for her final year of training before qualifying as an optometrist. While Emma joins us from the emerald isle, as a full time optometrist to replace Vincent Proctor who has decided to retire after more than 25 years looking after people's eyes in Daventry.



EYES ON THE WEB

It is now possible to access information about almost anything on the Internet and it is not all bad!! If you are looking for more information about us, your eyes or the range of eyewear available then point your browser towards our award winning web site. It contains a wealth of information including details of some of the latest developments in spectacles and contact lenses. It also includes information about the different aspects of an eye examination and why they are so important. To see for yourself, visit www.wpsoptometrists.co.uk



As a minimum legal requirement, motorists must be able to read a

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numberplate from a distance of 20.5 metres (67 feet) and have a 120 degree wide field of view. This test is normally only carried out officially at the time of the driving test itself and recent research has shown that **more than 10 per cent of drivers would fail a driving test if they re-took it today because of poor eyesight.** In law it is a driver's responsibility to ensure that they can pass the numberplate test at all times. They must also be able to see clearly out of the corners of their eyes, see clearly at night and not have double vision. It is important to remember that if you fail to meet these visual standards you are breaking the law every time you start your engine.

In the winter months driving can become quite a hazard so it is worth ensuring that you are optimising your visual performance. If you do need to wear spectacles or contact lenses to meet the visual standard for driving, it is vital to ensure you wear them at all times. This may sound obvious but every day tens of thousands of motorists drive without their glasses because of vanity, they have forgotten them, or because they are only driving a short distance. No matter what the reason, these people are breaking the law and are a potential danger to themselves and other road users.

Some spectacles are better than others for driving, with rimless or thin rimmed designs being particularly suitable as they allow greater all-round vision than heavy frames. Spectacles with plastic lenses are lighter and safer. Anti-reflection coatings can be applied to lenses and help you to see more clearly by cutting down on glare, especially when driving at night. Ensure you keep your spectacles clean at all times – it's best to keep a cleaning cloth in the car. It's also sensible to keep a spare pair of glasses in the car so that you never forget them - in some EU countries this is a legal requirement.



Sunglasses - If you need to wear prescription glasses to drive, never replace them with non-prescription sunglasses when it is sunny. It is dangerous and you will be breaking the law. Instead, get a pair of prescription sunglasses, ideally with polarised lenses. They are the best way to cut through the sun's glare, even on the brightest days and when the sun is low in the sky. Polarised lenses bring superb visual comfort as the polarising filters tame harsh rays far more than ordinary sunglasses, while still offering full UV protection. Remember that the Highway Code says that you should never use tinted glasses at night. Nor should you use them in conditions of poor visibility such as heavy rain, fog and snow showers.

Considering Laser Surgery



The idea of waking up and seeing perfectly twenty four hours a day is something most people with sight correction would love to experience and

laser eye surgery is one way to achieve that goal. However, you need the best treatment possible, delivered by an experienced surgeon from a clinic that really cares.

Let us explain why we believe that our partnership with Advance Visioncare is the only choice for you. You benefit from receiving friendly, unbiased advice from an optician you can trust, together with exceptional care and surgical expertise from one of the UK's most experienced consultant refractive surgeons, Mr Pillai. While treatment takes place at the Advance VisionCare clinic in Harley Street, the initial assessment and aftercare can be performed locally by ourselves.

The eyes are treated using the latest "wavefront" technology called Zyoptix. This is a customised form of LASIK (Laser In Situ Keratomileusis), the highly successful and popular procedure for vision correction that has been available for over ten years. Quality of sight is not just about sharpness of vision but also how you see in varied light situations, such as driving at dusk. Zyoptix is clinically proven to produce an unsurpassed quality of vision in all lighting conditions compared to standard LASIK.



If laser eye surgery does not appeal to you, the good news is that this is not the only way to achieve perfect vision twenty four hours a day. There is a new breed of contact lenses that can do just that. They are called Night & Day contact lenses and are safe to wear at night, even while sleeping staying in your eye for up to 30 nights and days without removing. Over half a million people just like you have turned to Night & Day contact lenses because these lenses offer what you are striving to get – hassle free, continuous clear vision without having to undergo non-reversible surgery on your eyes.

The lenses are made from a material that is so 'breathable' it allows up to six times more oxygen to pass through to your eye than a standard lens. Night & Day lenses will allow you to see whenever you wake up, without the need to reach for glasses or regular contact lenses. Night & Day lenses provide exceptional comfort throughout the day and late into the evening even for computer users, travellers and those who work in air conditioned environments. The rest of the time, you can simply forget them.

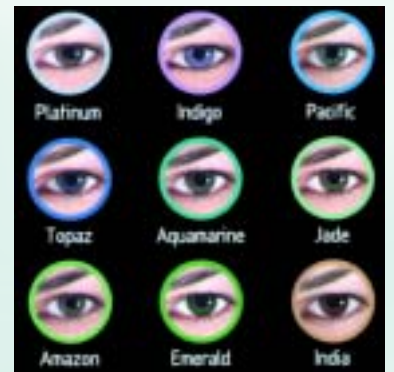


Focus On ...



STAND OUT IN NATURAL COLOURS

If you are sceptical about eye colour change then SofLens Natural Color contact lenses will change your mind. They offer a subtle way to enhance natural eye colour, offering you irresistible, sparkling eyes for dating, clubbing or simply hanging out. Because these lenses are so comfortable and easy to wear you can change your look and make an impact at any time - whether you need corrective lenses or not.



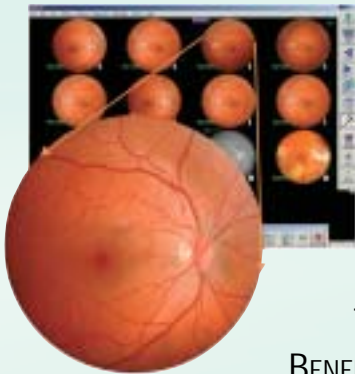
There are nine stunning shades of brilliant natural looking colours, created for all eye colours, especially dark eyes. So whether you want to change your eyes to suit your personality, your mood or because you fancy a change of image, then SofLens Natural Color contact lenses are ideal. Priced from as little as £12.50 a pair - why stop at one colour?

Remember, for that ultimate party stopping look, why not try Crazy Lenses. From wicked devil or wolf eyes to playful heart or happy faces the variety of patterns will amaze everyone. There are even some that glow under UV light, great for nightclubs. Prices start from only £40.00 per pair.



Eye Care

Focus On ...



THE BENEFITS OF RETINAL IMAGING

We all want to protect our eyesight and that is why it is important to have regular eye examinations. In addition to fine tuning your spectacle or contact lens prescription, we also look at the back of the eye, the retina, to check it is healthy and not damaged or showing signs of disease. Many eye diseases, such as glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy or retinal tears and detachments, if detected at an early stage, can be treated successfully without total loss of vision. Now with recent advances in retinal photography this vital screening process has been dramatically improved.

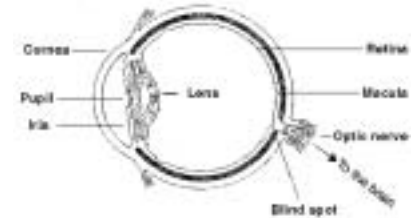
Obtaining retinal images is quick, comfortable and very simple. By looking into an eyepiece, the digital image of the retina is captured in less than a second, with a small flash indicating the image has been taken. Nothing touches your eye during the process, it is completely painless and usually no eye drops need to be used. Your retinal image is then immediately displayed for us to review with you. This image will be stored electronically giving us a permanent record of the condition of your retina. This is very important in assisting us to detect and measure changes in your eyes next time you attend for a routine eye examination. The images can also be e-mailed to a doctor or ophthalmologist for a second opinion.



What is Age-related Macular Degeneration?

Imagine that your eye is like a camera.

There is a lens and an aperture (an opening) at the front, which both adjust to bring objects into focus on the retina at the back of your eye. The macula is found at the centre of the retina where the incoming rays of light are focused. The macula is very important and is responsible for the things we see in front of us, the vision needed for detailed activities such as reading and our ability to appreciate colour.



What is macular degeneration? Sometimes the delicate cells of the macula become damaged and stop working. We do not know why this is, although it tends to happen as people get older. Because macular degeneration is usually an age-related process it often involves both eyes, although they may not be affected at the same time.

And now the good news! Macular degeneration is not painful and never leads to total blindness. It is the most common cause of poor sight in people over 60 but never leads to complete sight loss because it is only the central vision that is affected. Macular degeneration never affects vision at the outer edges of the eye. This means that almost everyone with macular degeneration will have enough side vision to get around and keep their independence.

What are the symptoms? In the early stages your central vision may be blurred or distorted, with things looking an unusual size or shape. This may happen quickly or develop over several months. You may be very sensitive to light or actually see lights that are not there. People with the advanced condition will often notice a blank patch or dark spot in the centre of their sight. This makes activities like reading, writing and recognising small objects or faces very difficult.

Can I be helped to see better? Don't be discouraged – you can be helped to see better. There are a variety of optical aids which make use of the parts of the retina that are not affected. These range from brighter reading lights and simple magnifying glasses to more sophisticated equipment. In addition, recent studies have shown that certain vitamin supplements can help prevent/slow the progress of macular degeneration - read more on the front page of this newsletter.

