

Dietary Supplements for Macular Degeneration

Since the Age Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) in 2001 it has been recognized and accepted that dietary supplements can slow down the progression of age related macular degeneration (AMD). A second large study, AREDS 2, provided more evidence about the most effective supplement formulation in 2013. It can be confusing to know what to look for in a supplement. We hope you find this document helpful.

Ingredients found in supplements for AMD:

Lutein and Zeaxanthin – These pigments are found in dark green leafy vegetables, like kale and spinach (lutein) and yellow/orange vegetables, such as orange peppers and corn (zeaxanthin). A person with AMD should consume about 10 mg lutein and 2 mg of zeaxanthin daily. Supplements without lutein and zeaxanthin should not be considered by the patient with AMD.

Vitamins A, C, E – These are antioxidant vitamins. Beta carotene is one form of vitamin A, and can be taken in amounts up to about 15 mg per day, but should not be taken by people who smoke, as it may increase their risk for lung cancer. Lutein and zeaxanthin are related to vitamin A, so it may be acceptable to take a supplement which substitutes lutein and zeaxanthin for vitamin A. Vitamin C can be taken up to 500 mg per day, and vitamin E up to 400 IU per day.

Zinc and Copper – Zinc oxide is an antioxidant mineral and has been shown to help reduce the progression of AMD. Zinc may deplete the body of copper, so copper (cupric oxide) is also included to prevent this depletion.

Recommended amounts of zinc are 25 to 80 mg daily, with about 1 or 2 mg of copper (cupric oxide).

Omega-3 fatty acids – The evidence is mixed on the inclusion of omega 3 fatty acids for help with AMD.

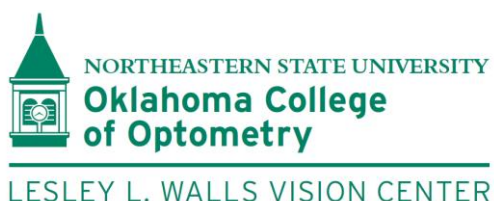
A general multivitamin can be taken together with an AMD supplement, but is **not** a substitute for an AMD supplement. Also, beware of multivitamins which list lutein and zeaxanthin in micrograms (mcg) rather than milligrams (mg), as 1,000 mcg is only equal to 1 mg.

Following are supplements for AMD which meet the requirements specified above. Note that for any one product line, such as "PreserVision" or "I-Caps", there can be many different individual products.

- **Alcon I-Caps Eye Vitamin Lutein & Omega-3 Formula – 1 soft gel tablet per day**
- **Bausch + Lomb PreserVision AREDS 2 Formula Soft Gels – 2 soft gel tablets per day**
- **Bausch + Lomb Ocuvite Eye + Multi – 2 tablets per day**
- **Bausch + Lomb Ocuvite Adult 50+ - 2 soft gel tablets per day***
- **Bausch + Lomb Ocuvite Eye Health Formula - 2 soft gel tablets per day***

***Instructions say to take 1 per day, but 2 are needed to get the recommended level of lutein and zeaxanthin.**

These are the major brands of supplements. If shopping for a store brand, such as Wal-Mart's Equate line, compare to find something similar to the above items and be aware that store brands can change ingredients from time to time, so you should check each time you purchase.



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