

Diet could reduce onset of eye disease by 20 percent

18 February 2009

University of Liverpool scientists claim that the degeneration of sight, caused by a common eye disease, could be reduced by up to 20% by increasing the amount of fruit, vegetables and nuts in the diet.

Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the UK, with 45% of those registered as blind suffering from the disease. The condition results in a gradual loss of central vision, due to the failure of cells in the macular - the light sensitive membrane at the centre of the retina. There is currently no cure for the more common 'dry' form of the disease, which is suffered by 90% of AMD patients.

Professor Ian Grierson, Head of Ophthalmology at the University, has produced a comprehensive cooking guide called 'Fruit for Vision', designed to add fruit and vegetables into everyday meals. The recipes will help AMD sufferers slow down the degeneration process by increasing micronutrient, vitamin and antioxidant intake in the diet. Non-sufferers can also use the book to add fruit, nuts and vegetables into each meal to protect against the disease.

Professor Grierson said: "Poor eating habits have a huge impact on health in general and the health of your eyes is no exception. Eye problems such as AMD, cataract and even glaucoma can all be affected by what we eat. But a relatively minor change in diet - adding a little more fruit into our meals - can make a profound difference and can keep eye diseases like AMD at bay for up to 20% longer.

"There are of course other risk factors related to AMD such as age, light exposure, smoking and being overweight. But if we can improve the kind of food that we eat, we could dramatically reduce the number of people who may suffer from eye diseases in the future."

Fruit for Vision is published by Indigo Creative Marketing and the Macular Disease Society. It provides easy recipes that incorporate fruit and nuts in to the diet without having to change lifestyle. The recipes suggest minor additions to what we already eat, such as peaches with ham or ginger with melon, rather than major dietary changes.

Source: University of Liverpool

APA citation: Diet could reduce onset of eye disease by 20 percent (2009, February 18) retrieved 13 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-02-diet-onset-eye-disease-percent.html>

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