

Vitamin E, selenium supplements unlikely to effect age-related cataracts in men

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Taking daily supplements of selenium and/or vitamin E appears to have no significant effect on the development of age-related cataracts in men, writes Author William G. Christen, Sc.D., of Brigham & Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and colleagues.

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Some research, including animal studies, has suggested that dietary nutrients can have an effect on the onset and progression of [cataracts](#). Vitamin E and selenium are of particular interest.

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The authors report the findings for cataracts from the Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT) Eye Endpoints (SEE) Study. The SEE study was an ancillary study of SELECT, a randomized placebo-controlled trial of selenium, vitamin E and a combination of the two in prostate cancer prevention among 35,533 men (50 years and older for black men and 55 years and older for all other men). Men were asked to report cataract diagnosis or removal since entering the SELECT trial. A total of 11,267 SELECT participants took part in the SEE study.

During an average of 5.6 years of treatment and follow-up, there were 389 cases of cataracts. There were 185 cases of cataracts in the selenium group and 204 in the group that didn't take selenium. There were 197 cases of cataracts in the vitamin E group and 192 in the group without vitamin E. Results were similar for cataract removal.

"These randomized trial data from a large cohort of apparently healthy men indicate that long-term daily supplemental use of vitamin E has no material impact on cataract incidence. The data also exclude any large beneficial effect on cataract for long-term supplemental use of [selenium](#), with or without [vitamin E](#), although a smaller but potentially important beneficial effect could not be ruled out."

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