

Spring, 2008

# **SOUTHWEST EYE CENTER**

## ***The News You Can Use Newsletter***

### **Glaucoma:**

#### **Lack of Early Symptoms May Result in Unnecessary Vision Loss**

Most people know that glaucoma can cause vision loss, and that vision loss may be minimized if treated early. However, few people know that glaucoma has no early warning signs, making treatment unlikely without early detection.

“The lack of warning signs that typically drive people to seek medical attention makes preventing vision loss associated with glaucoma particularly challenging.”, says Dr. John Galanis, of Southwest Eye Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness and vision loss in the United States, affecting more than 2.2 million people. The number is likely to grow considerably as the nearly 47 million baby boomers age.

The National Eye Health Education Program at NEI is working to raise awareness about the lack of symptoms and the need for comprehensive dilated eye exams to detect glaucoma before vision loss occurs. Those at higher risk should have such an exam every one to two years. They include the following:

- African Americans over age 40
- Everyone over age 60 (especially Mexican Americans)
- People with a family history of glaucoma.

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## **Glaucoma: What You Can Do to Make a Difference**

Dr. Galanis of Southwest Eye Center in St Louis says, “Glaucoma has no warning signs. If left untreated, it can result in permanent vision loss or even blindness. Fortunately, a comprehensive dilated eye exam can detect glaucoma, and early detection may minimize vision loss. People at higher risk for glaucoma include African Americans over age 40, those over age 60, and those with a family history of the disease.”

Dr. Galanis recommends scheduling a comprehensive eye health and vision exam every twelve months to help ensure your eye health.

Southwest Eye Center is located in St. Louis, Missouri, in Mackenzie Point Plaza, 7331 Watson Road, St. Louis, MO 63119. 314- 633-8575.

Summer, 2008

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### **Vision for Food:**

#### **Eat Healthy**

Food is taking center stage in our overall health. Food choices have always been important, and this is why your mom told you to eat those veggies. Dr. Galanis of Southwest Eye Center in St Louis says, "There is a strong correlation between food and health."

Growing evidence supports the idea that some vitamins and minerals help to protect vision for the long haul. That's more important than ever as millions of baby boomers age.

#### **So, what does research show with regard to these vision protecting nutrients?**

Research shows that eating carrots won't make you see better than you already do, but there is evidence that they can help to protect your vision. Carrots contain a lot of vitamin A. There have been studies that show that this vitamin along with vitamins C and E can help reduce the impact of macular degeneration.

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## What's on the Menu?

It is recommended to eat a lot of carrots, green, leafy vegetables such as spinach and kale. These in particular pack a hefty punch of key vitamins, and a vision protecting substance called lutein. Here's a rundown on health choices you should be getting at least three servings per week of, from each group.

- **Vitamin A:** Carrots, kale, spinach, dairy products and egg yolks
- **Vitamin C:** Citrus fruits (especially kiwi fruit) and juices, green peppers, broccoli, potatoes
- **Vitamin E:** Eggs, whole grains, vegetable oils, sunflower seeds
- **Lutein:** Spinach, corn, kale, broccoli, brussel sprouts
- **Fatty acids:** Coldwater fish, such as salmon, mackerel and rainbow trout; sunflower oil, corn oil
- **Zinc:** Meat, poultry, fish, whole grains, dairy products

"Eat a healthy balanced diet, low in saturated fat for overall health, including the health of your eyes." recommends Dr. Galanis. "And get your eyes checked regularly."

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