

## The Problem:

A cataract is an affliction of the eye that occurs in up to seven out of every eight people over the age of 75, and about twenty five percent of the American population. It develops when the lens of the eye becomes hard and opaque. Depending on the location and size of a cataract, and affected person can have severely blurred vision, or just small dots that blur parts of what is seen. A cataract can form on the peripheral edges of the lens or can cover the entire lens in severe cases.

## The Causes:

Cataracts can be caused by extreme, unprotected exposure to heat, sun, x-rays, head injuries, or eye injuries. They also develop from childhood illnesses or even diabetes.

## The Symptoms:

If the cataract on the lens is small, a person may only notice small blurry dots in the things he or she sees. However, if the cataracts are severe, everything a person sees can be blurred a great deal. A person with peripheral cataracts has the same blurred vision that a general cataract does. However, it only affects the peripheral vision of the person. In turn, a person with peripheral cataracts relies on peripheral vision less than most people.

## Possible Prevention:

There are several ways people can protect their eyes from daily damage that could lead to cataracts. Though most cases of cataracts are found in elderly people, a person is

never too young to take steps to help protect his or her eyes.

- Protect the eyes from harsh sunlight and heat by wearing safety goggles or sunglasses. This protects harmful UV rays from damaging the lenses.
- Change the things eaten. Eat fruits and vegetables high in lutein and zeaxanthin concentrations. These two substances have been proven to help protect the eye from developing cataracts.
- Wear head protection. Like damage to the eyes, head injuries increase the risk of developing cataracts.
- Estrogen replacement therapy might be an option in preventing cataracts in women. No definite evidence has proven this idea, but doctors and scientists are researching the possible effects of replacement therapy. It is wise

to ask a doctor about new findings in estrogen replacement therapy if this is a possible medical treatment.

### Treatment Options:

If cataracts that are severe enough to blur a person's vision completely, surgical removal is the best option for improving the diminished vision. However, if the cataracts are not severe, nothing can be done for any real improvement

The chart on the following page lists various vegetables and fruits that provide small to large amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin, the best compounds found in food for helping prevent cataracts.

### Finding Lutein and Zeaxanthin

Fruit or Vegetable	Lutein and Zeaxanthin (combined in milligrams)
Kale, 1/2 cup cooked	10.3
Spinach, 1 cup raw chopped	6.7
Spinach, 1/2 cup cooked	6.3
Turnip greens, 1/2 cup cooked	6.1
Collard greens, 1/2 cup cooked	5.2
Corn (yellow), 1 fresh ear cooked	2.3
Broccoli, 1/2 cup cooked	1.7
Romaine lettuce, 1 cup fresh shredded	1.5
Zucchini, 1/2 cup raw	1.4
Broccoli, 1/2 cup raw chopped	1.1
Green peas, 1/2 cup canned	1.1
Brussels sprouts, 1/2 cup cooked	1.0
Corn (yellow), 1/2 cup canned	0.7
Orange, 1 medium	0.2
Papaya, 1 fresh whole	0.2
Tangerine, 1 medium	0.2

Source: USDA-NCC Carotenoid Database (1998).

For more information, contact:

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**Monet refuses the operation**

Doctor, you say there are no haloes  
around the streetlights in Paris  
and what I see is an aberration  
caused by old age, an affliction.  
I tell you it has taken me all my life  
to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,  
to soften and blur and finally banish  
the edges you regret I don't see,  
to learn that the line I called the horizon  
does not exist and sky and water,  
so long apart, are the same state of being.  
Fifty-four years before I could see  
Rouen cathedral is built  
of parallel shafts of sun,  
and now you want to restore  
my youthful errors: fixed  
notions of top and bottom,  
the illusion of three-dimensional space,  
wisteria separate  
from the bridge it covers.  
What can I say to convince you  
the Houses of Parliament dissolve  
night after night to become  
the fluid dream of the Thames?  
I will not return to a universe  
of objects that don't know each other,  
as if islands were not the lost children  
of one great continent. The world  
is flux, and light becomes what it touches,  
becomes water, lilies on water,  
above and below water,  
becomes lilac and mauve and yellow  
and white and cerulean lamps,  
small fists passing sunlight  
so quickly to one another  
that it would take long, streaming hair  
inside my brush to catch it.  
To paint the speed of light!  
Our weighted shapes, these verticals,  
burn to mix with air  
and change our bones, skin, clothes  
to gases. Doctor,  
if only you could see  
how heaven pulls earth into its arms  
and how infinitely the heart expands  
to claim this world, blue vapor without end.

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