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## **Macular Degeneration and Nutritional Supplements**

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a disease of the macula, the small part of the eye's retina that is responsible for our central vision. This condition affects both distance and close vision and can make activities like threading a needle or reading difficult or impossible. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of severe vision loss in people over 65.

Although the exact causes of AMD are not fully understood, hereditary, environmental, and dietary factors all play a role. A recent scientific study shows that antioxidant vitamins and zinc may reduce the progression of AMD in people with the disease.

The levels of antioxidants and zinc that were shown to be effective in slowing AMD's progression cannot be achieved through your diet alone and must be consumed in a supplement. These vitamins and minerals are recommended in specific daily amounts as supplements to a healthy, balanced diet. Look for a formula that has AREDS (Age Related Eye Disease Study) on the label.

It is very important to remember that vitamin supplements are not a cure for AMD, nor will they restore vision you may have already lost from the disease. However, specific amounts of certain supplements do play a key role in helping people at high risk for advanced AMD to maintain their vision. You should speak with your ophthalmologist to determine if you are at risk for developing advanced AMD, and to learn if supplements are recommended for you.