



October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## The Eyes Have It!

October is Autism, Breast Cancer, Celiac, Eye Health, Flu Prevention, Lupus, Psoriasis and SIDS Awareness Month

Many Canadians are concerned with their eye health, and may be specifically concerned about macular degeneration (MD). With all the research on the use of specific vitamins/minerals in specific strengths/combinations for MD, there are a variety of formulas on the shelf claiming to have what it takes to promote eye health. However, very few actually meet the criteria shown to be effective in studies. Use care when choosing supplements – know what you need, read the labels or ask for assistance.

### Vitamins and Minerals; Cataracts and MD

Vitamin E and selenium are often promoted for eye health and were examined for effectiveness in preventing cataracts – in men. The trial was a side-arm of a clinical trial looking at the impact of vitamin E and selenium for prostate cancer (hence the male population) but the trial found that the supplements did not affect age-related cataract development. More than 11,000 men were followed during the course of this study, and although they were not found to be effective for the prevention of cataracts, vitamin E and selenium were found to benefit macular degeneration.

### Preventing Keratitis

Contact lens wearers are at significant risk for developing keratitis – an infection of the cornea that can be caused by bacteria, viruses, amoebae or even fungi. It is extremely painful and can progress to blindness. Hygiene is typically at the root of the problem; improper care of the lenses or storage cases, overnight lens wear and/or use of expired or compromised solutions/supplies. Vision is valuable – you only have one set of eyes. Take care of them!

### Help for Dry Eyes

Many people suffer from dry eyes – in particular, contact lens wearers and computer users. A significant part of the reason is an incomplete blink reflex. Partial blinking leads to evaporative dry eye and reduced meibomian (tear) gland function. Blink exercises can be the cure. Sufferers are trained to consciously and deliberately close their eyes (some aided by computer program reminders) training their brains to blink properly and improving tear secretion.

Sometimes the best treatment does not include medication. Your pharmacist is well-versed in advising the best remedies – with or without drugs. Remember to consult them if you're struggling with a health issue.