



Holistic Eye Care

Taking the Whole Body into Account

by Linda Sechrist

The “old wives’ tale” about eating carrots for healthy vision wasn’t wrong, but fell far short of a holistic approach to eye health. Today’s holistically trained healthcare providers and ophthalmologists believe that properly maintaining the marvelous phenomenon of eyesight requires taking into consideration genetics, diet, toxin exposures, life environments and our belief systems.

“The body does not work as a series of parts in isolation, but as a dynamically integrated living system,” says Marc Grossman, a doctor of optometry, licensed acupuncture physician and co-founder of Natural Eye Health, in New Paltz, New York. “The reductionist method of referring each symptom to the domain of a particular specialist, isolated from the whole person, is slowly being replaced with a complementary view of health care that may include acupuncture and other forms of Traditional Chinese Medicine. We are beginning to look at each person as an integrated being.”

Progressive health providers now consider dietary preferences, general exercise regimens, environmental factors and physical, emotional and mental issues, as well as an individual’s particular symptoms, in determining treatment strategies. “To improve vision, the condition of the whole person needs to be addressed,” says Grossman, whose books include *Natural Eye Care: Your Guide to Healthy Vision*.

Board-Certified Ophthalmologist and Homeopathic Doctor Edward Kondrot’s practice at Healing The Eye & Wellness Center, which he founded in

Zephyrhills, Florida, embraces traditional and alternative therapies. He uses micro-current, ozone therapy and U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved stem cells from a newborn’s umbilical cord in treating serious eye disease.

Kondrot, the author of *10 Essentials to Save Your Sight*, systemically understands the eyes as windows to overall health. For instance, his perspective is founded on the fact that a balanced diet is one of the best preventive measures for maintaining eye health. Systemic disorders such as high blood pressure, diabetes, stress-related effects and nutritional deficiencies are easily determined under the scrutiny of his holistic biomicroscope.

According to science published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, chiropractic spinal manipulation may also contribute to normal vision; in one case study, 20 treatment sessions helped an individual recover the function of optic nerves and normal vision. It’s generally accepted that chiropractic adjustment realigning the spinal column allows the nervous system to function properly, reduces tension and frees up the body to better transport blood to locations such as the eyes. Additionally, the second vertebra below the skull contains nerves that affect the eyes, optic nerves, auditory nerves and sinuses.

Common eye conditions generally develop so slowly that they may not present noticeable symptoms until deterioration has become severe. “Many factors can affect our eyesight, including other health problems. Having a family member with eye disease may mean

you’re genetically prone to having that condition as well, but living a healthy lifestyle may prevent the gene from being activated,” advises Kondrot.

Viewing the condition of the eyes as a reflection of whole body health means that lifestyle and diet choices play major roles. The Vision Diet and supplement program recommended in Grossman’s *Natural Eye Care* has been shown to reduce the intraocular pressure in the eyes of study participants by five to seven millimeters, which generally equates to 10 to 15 percent. In general, a diet high in beta-carotene, vitamins C and E, and sulfur-bearing amino acids can be helpful. Foods containing such nutrients include garlic, onions, beans, spinach, celery, turnips, yellow and orange vegetables, green leafy vegetables, seaweed, apples, oranges and tomatoes.

Other dietary and lifestyle options recommended by Grossman are daily drinking one pint of juice made from mostly green vegetables and drinking eight to 10 glasses of purified water to keep eyes hydrated. Managing stress and doing palming and other eye exercises, such as those found at Tinyurl.com/ComputerEyeStrainExercises, as well as daily aerobic exercise for at least 20 minutes, are also beneficial. Additionally, Kondrot’s use of multimodal protocols such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy, homeopathy, and detoxification can be applied to reverse visual loss.

Kondrot advises that avoiding foods that trigger allergic reactions is important. “A study of 113 patients with chronic simple glaucoma showed an immediate increase in pressure in the fluid inside the eye when they were exposed to foods to which they were allergic. Take up meditation, yoga, tai chi or any other practice that helps you manage stress and relax,” he advises. “Some consider glaucoma a stress-related condition.”

The best strategy for healthy eyes is to have regular eye examinations. Early detection and prompt treatment can prevent significant vision loss.

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