

Benefits Spotlight

NEWS FOR *You.* NEWS TO *Share.*

The role of nutrition in eye health

Your eyes not only reveal the world around you, they're also a window into your overall health. While regular vision exams and protecting your eyes from harsh UV rays are crucial, the key to healthier vision may also be found on your plate.

Nutrition plays a role in eye health. Certain foods, such as soda and processed foods, cause inflammation that can lead to chronic eye diseases. On the flip side, some foods actually protect your eyes and ward off age-related problems. So, fill up on the choices below to help promote the long-term health of your eyes.

Antioxidants

Foods containing antioxidants are excellent for your health because they protect your eyes from harmful free radicals, which are molecules that damage eye cells and may lead to conditions like macular degeneration and cataracts.

Foods rich in antioxidants include:

- *Leafy greens:* Kale, spinach and collard greens are excellent choices and contain lutein and zeaxanthin, which help filter harmful blue light.
- *Citrus fruits:* Oranges, grapefruits and limes are excellent sources of vitamin C, which may reduce cataract risk.
- *Berries:* Strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries contain antioxidants called anthocyanins, that support collagen in your eyes and help protect your vision from UV sun damage.

Omega-3s

Some research has shown that people who eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids have a lower risk of developing dry eye disease and age-related macular degeneration. Fatty fish like salmon, tuna and sardines are great sources of DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid that keeps eye membranes flexible and supports healthy tear production.

Zinc

When it comes to minerals for eye health, zinc is essential. Found in shellfish (especially oysters), red meat, seeds and nuts, zinc helps bring vitamin A in the liver into the eyes where it produces melanin, a protective pigment. Zinc is a key player in supporting sharp night vision.

Eating for Eye Health: Viewing Food as Medicine

Getting your nutrients from food sources is best, but you may choose to add nutritional supplements to your diet to further support your vision health. If that's the case, it's important to talk to a health professional first to ensure that the products are safe and effective.

Filling your plate with these healthy foods is a great step toward preserving your life-long vision health. So, swap that soda for fresh orange juice, pack a kale salad for lunch and treat yourself to a salmon dinner — your eyes will thank you!

SOURCES:

[National Library of Medicine](#)

[American Optometric Association](#)

[American Academy of Ophthalmology, Vitamins](#)

[American Academy of Ophthalmology, What should I eat](#)

[American Academy of Ophthalmology, Fish oil](#)

[American Academy of Ophthalmology, Minerals](#)

[National Library of Medicine, Omega-3 and eye health](#)

[National Library of Medicine, Omega-3 and dry eye](#)

[American Association of Retired Persons](#)

Support employees through the caregiving journey

Did you know that one in five Americans¹ will need to care for another adult at some point? As the Baby Boom generation ages, caregiving has become an issue impacting more working-age individuals.

Whether caring for an aging or ill spouse, parent, grandparent, or friend, the caregiving process can be an emotional rollercoaster. Employees who take on these roles are likely to experience signs of burnout and depression. Additionally, they may experience increased absenteeism, reduced productivity at work, or choose to leave their job altogether.

At Delta Dental of Iowa, we see caregiving as an area of opportunity for employers to support their employees' overall health.

How to Support Caregiving at Work

Because caregiving can be a deeply personal time, it remains a gray area for many employers. Many employers are unsure how or if they should be involved. So, how do you best support an employee in this situation?

Providing managers and leaders with training and resources can help them practice these conversations, similar to how they would approach training for conversations around mental health, performance, or other medical needs. Employees should know that it's ok to discuss caregiving with their managers or leaders, especially if the additional responsibility impacts their work availability or performance.

Managers and leaders can support their employees by:

- Increasing conversations and check-ins
- Reminding employees of resources available like an employee assistance program (EAP) or directing employees to a caregiving resource like the Caregiven app
- Providing flexibility and modeling the importance of self-care and time off

Caregiven

Caregiven is a mobile app that was designed by caregivers for caregivers. Delta Dental of Iowa is now offering Caregiven as an employer-sponsored benefit. With the app, employees can access caregiving-focused resources and a community of support to empower them along their caregiving journey. Employers, wanting to provide Caregiven as part of an employee benefits package, can sign up on the Delta Dental website. Don't wait – there's a limited number of spots and the trial period only lasts through December 31, 2024. [Sign up now](#) and get the most value by receiving Caregiven for free for the rest of the year.

The average caregiver journey is four years², and during that time, the caregiver can experience increased levels of stress, emotional ups and downs, and even depression – things that your employees may not be equipped to manage. A resource like Caregiven can provide the necessary information and support for your employees to make the caregiving journey a little easier.

Remember that when supporting employees through their caregiving journey, there may be moments where flexibility is required. In the end, your organization will foster a culture of care and support, which will be repaid by retaining a skilled and knowledgeable workforce who recognizes your dedication to their overall health and wellbeing.

To learn more about Caregiven and how your company can receive Caregiven for free for the rest of 2024, visit the [Delta Dental website](#).

SOURCES:

1. [American Association of Retired Persons](#)
2. [Family Caregiver Alliance](#)