

GLAUCOMA

Glaucoma is a disease of the eye that causes damage to the optic nerve. If left untreated, the disease can destroy the optic nerve, leading to loss of vision. Severe glaucoma without treatment can result in blindness.. Glaucoma usually involves the buildup of excessive fluid pressure within the eye. Most persons who have glaucoma are above the age of 65, although glaucoma can occur at any age. If other persons in the family have glaucoma, the risk of developing glaucoma increases.

Treatment of glaucoma can generally prevent the loss of vision. Eye drops or even medications by mouth can reduce fluid pressure within the eye.

Glaucoma laser surgery may be recommended for glaucoma treatment. Laser surgery options include: laser trabeculoplasty, which is used for treating the common form of glaucoma, and laser iridotomy, which is used to treat narrow angle glaucoma.

Glaucoma microsurgery (trabeculectomy) is used to treat glaucoma that cannot be adequately controlled with medications or laser surgery. This outpatient operation creates a small opening in the eye to prevent buildup of excess fluid pressure.

1. Open angle glaucoma patients who received 150mg of alpha lipoic acid each day, 45-47% of the eyes had enhancement of color visual fields and visual sensitivity when compared to controls using only topical medical therapy. More advanced cases had an even better response compared to their controls. ALA has strong neuroprotective properties, which is essential for protecting the optic nerve from damage from glaucoma.

2. The amino acid acetyl l-carnitine has been shown to protect damaged nerve cells from death by improving myelination and reducing apoptosis. Combined with alpha lipoic acid, it was shown to improve vascular dilation. (These combined effects may help

prevent optic nerve damage in both normal tension and open angle glaucoma.

3. Nutrients which show potential benefit for glaucoma include vitamin C, glucosamine sulfate, lipoic acid, vitamin B12, magnesium, ginkgo biloba, and melatonin. The eyes of open angle glaucoma patients were also found to have significantly lower vitamin C levels compared to normal.

4. Melatonin helps reduce intraocular pressure.

5. Magnesium, dark chocolate, melatonin, omega 3 fatty acids, CoQ10, resveratrol and anthocyanosides (compounds found in bilberry, grape seed and pine bark) were shown to significantly improve blood flow regulation in the optic nerve and in possibly in the ciliary body of the eye (the source of excess fluid production).

6. Vascular obstruction and hindrance of the blood flow and impaired nutrition of neuronal tissue might be the primary causes of glaucoma. Magnesium supplementation reduced peripheral vasospasms and improved visual fields in patients with normal tension and open angle glaucoma.

7. The fatty acid DHA (abundant in fish oil), along with B Complex and vitamin E were shown to be helpful in preventing or delaying vision loss associated with glaucoma by protecting against optic nerve ischemia (blood flow deprivation) as well as increasing the rate of outflow of aqueous humor.

8. Besides alpha lipoic acid, other nutrients which may be protective against glaucoma include vitamin E, ginkgo biloba, pycnogenol (from grape seed extract or pine bark), thiamine, Vitamin B12 and flavonoids. (Ed. Note: Ginkgo must be used with caution by those taking blood thinners, as it may increase its effect - try reducing the blood thinner instead of avoiding ginkgo biloba)