

SOURCE



NATURALS®

*Strategies for Wellness™*

# LUTEIN

*The Nutritional  
Vision Quest*



*One of the more surprising discoveries of modern nutritional science is that the very pigments which give brilliant color to our fruits and vegetables are powerful nutrients which can protect us from the rigors of time and environment.*

*Lutein is one of the most recent discoveries in this field. In our diets, it's found most abundantly in dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, collards and kale. Like beta-carotene, lutein is a powerful antioxidant which studies show can contribute to the protection of cells. But the most promising application of lutein may be its beneficial influence on the eyes, particularly in regard to macular degeneration.*

*Source Naturals LUTEIN is a concentrated source of this important natural nutrient.*

Like the beta-carotene that makes carrots orange and the lycopene that makes tomatoes red, lutein is a *carotenoid*. It is the pigment that makes corn yellow, and gives marigolds their brilliant golden color. One of the most interesting aspects of the way carotenoids interact with the human body – beyond their broad spectrum antioxidant activity – is their tendency to be “organ specific.” Different carotenoids have an affinity for different organs in the body. In the case of lutein, it is found concentrated in the structure of our eyes.

### Vision and Macular Health

The process of vision involves light being focused through the lens and onto the retina, the paper-thin tissue lining the back of the eyeball. The central portion of the retina, called the *macula*, receives the most light. Its millions of cells produce the sharp vision needed to read and see objects clearly. With age, tiny blood vessels grow over this area, causing a gradual distortion and loss of vision.

This degeneration of the macular region of the retina is the leading cause of irreversible visual impairment in the USA today. It affects almost 20% of people past the age of 65. Research has shown that these people have lower than normal amounts of macular pigment, which suggests the protective role played by these pigments. In fact, the latest research suggests that low levels of macular pigment is a cause, rather than a result, of macular deterioration.

### Lutein – The Eyes Have It

Lutein and another carotenoid called *zeaxanthin* are the most dominant pigments in the macular region of the retina. (Source Naturals LUTEIN contains 5-7% zeaxanthin.) Their antioxidant properties help maintain the integrity of the blood vessels that supply the macular region of the retina: providing protection from photo-oxidation, the result of light striking the fatty acids in the retina. It seems that lutein is particularly active against the blue part of the spectrum, which can be the most damaging to our eyes.

One study using lutein supplements resulted in a 15% increase in macular pigment levels after 72 days. In another study, people who consumed the equivalent of 6 mg of lutein per day were

40% less likely to experience macular problems. Another study using sets of identical twins demonstrated that macular lutein concentrations were related to dietary lutein. After consumption, lutein is found in significant quantities in blood serum, suggesting high bioavailability.

### Our Connection with Plants

In this era of biochemistry, we're rediscovering our vital connection with plant life. Although research into phytonutrients is relatively new, many plant compounds are being found in significant concentrations in the human body. Their presence in our blood serum, organs, and mothers' milk suggests they play an important role in our body chemistry, and perhaps explains why we've appreciated them as foods throughout history. Like many carotenoids, lutein has evolved as an integral part of human biochemistry, with many benefits to our well-being. Since mammals cannot synthesize it, lutein must be obtained from the diet.

Source Naturals LUTEIN is extracted from specially grown marigold flowers high in lutein, and purified by an exclusive patented process. So the next time you bathe your eyes in a golden bouquet of marigolds, remember their beauty really is in the eye of the beholder.

### References

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Strategies for Wellness<sup>SM</sup>

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