

An orange a day keeps macular degeneration away, 15-year study shows



People who regularly eat oranges are less likely to develop macular degeneration than people who do not, a new study carried out in Australia has shown.

Researchers at the Westmead Institute for Medical Research interviewed more than 2,000 adults aged over 50 and followed them over a 15-year period.

The research showed that people who ate at least one serving of oranges every day had more than a 60% reduced risk of developing late macular degeneration – a medical condition which may result in blurred or no vision in the center of the visual field.

Lead researcher associate professor Bamini Gopinath from the University of Sydney said the data showed that flavonoids in oranges appear to help prevent against the eye disease.

“Essentially we found that people who eat at least one serve of orange every day have a reduced risk of developing macular degeneration compared with people who never eat oranges,” she said.

“Even eating an orange once a week seems to offer significant benefits. The data shows that flavonoids found in oranges appear to help protect against the disease.”

Gopinath said that until now most research has focused on the effects of common nutrients such as vitamins C, E and A on the eyes.

“Our research is different because we focused on the relationship between flavonoids and macular degeneration,” she said.

“Flavonoids are powerful antioxidants found in almost all fruits and vegetables, and they have important anti-inflammatory benefits for the immune system.

“We examined common foods that contain flavonoids such as tea, apples, red wine and oranges.

“Significantly, the data did not show a relationship between other food sources protecting the eyes against the disease.”

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