

HEALTH ALERT!

One More Reason To Take Your Vitamins... They May Help Save Your Eyesight

(NAPSA)—We have all heard that “an apple a day keeps the doctor away,” but what if a vitamin a day reduced your risk of vision loss?

A recent study sponsored by the National Eye Institute (NEI) and published in the *Archives of Ophthalmology* showed that people at a high risk of developing advanced stages of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the leading cause of blindness in adults over 50, reduced their risk of vision loss by 25 percent when taking high levels of certain vitamins and zinc.

AMD is a retinal eye disease that causes loss of central vision, and can affect normal everyday activities like recognizing faces, walking, driving a car, identifying currency, reading and watching television.

One of the most important study findings was the need for annual eye exams. Because vitamin supplements were shown to be effective in those with advanced or intermediate stages of AMD, the study underscores the importance of knowing your eye health. The best way to ensure better eye health is through annual eye exams that test for eye diseases such as AMD, cataracts and glaucoma.

“Physicians who work with AMD patients are excited about these findings. Finally, we have proof that we can slow the progression of this disease in certain cases through something as simple as taking daily vitamins,” says Dr. Jason Slakter, board certified vitreoretinal surgeon, macular disease specialist and surgeon



director at the Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital.

In the study, scientists treated AMD patients with a high-dose combination of beta-carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E and zinc.

“It is still very important to understand that vitamin supplements are not a cure for AMD,” said Dr. Slakter. “Early detection by an eye care professional is the key for saving sight and enabling the current use of treatment options.”

Unfortunately, the study showed that cataracts were not affected by nutritional supplements. In addition, it is important to note that some supplements interfere with medications, can be harmful in high doses and should be avoided by smokers. That is why it is important to consult your eye doctor before taking supplements for eye health.

AMD affects more than 13 million Americans each year. For more information about AMD, please visit www.amdfacts.com or call 1-800-AMD-1153.