Carrots and the Myth of Eye Health

Carrots are absolutely wonderful foods for your eyes, but the reason why I called the book Beyond Carrots is because There is this myth out there, this misconception that if you just eat a bunch of carrots every day or every week, that you will have 20-20 vision.

People just automatically assume that, OK, if I just eat this one food, I'll be fine. I don't have to worry about my eyes. But that's not the case. Carrots, yes, they're great foods because they provide beta-carotene.

Beta-carotene gives carrots their beautiful orange color. but it's just one of the many nutrients our eyes need to stay healthy. So don't just eat your carrots, eat them plus other foods as well.

Welcome to Dr. Talks, the podcast where every episode leads to a healthier you. Join us as we navigate the world of optimal health, uncovering groundbreaking strategies to conquer chronic disease.

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Get ready to unlock the secrets of lifelong health and vitality. This is Doctor Talks. Real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most.

Dr. Banik, it's a pleasure to have this opportunity to interview you for a change. Now, you've authored three books, the first one, of course, being Beyond Carrots, Best Foods for Eye Health from A to Z, and then, of course, Dr.

Rani's Visionary Kitchen and Dr. Rani's Plant-Based Visionary Kitchen. Can you share, just as an introduction, a little bit about what sparked your passion for ocular nutrition and how your journey got started?

Absolutely. I'd be happy to. And first of all, thank you so much for interviewing me.

Dr. Banik's Nutrition Journey

When it comes to nutrition, my interest really came about because of the health issue that I was having and how nutrition really changed the trajectory of my own health journey.

So I have to disclose this. When I was younger, I used to eat very poorly. I grew up living on junk food, basically. That's what we had in the house. That's what I would eat.

Even when I was in my twenties, early thirties, late thirties, I just eat junk food most of the time. I lived off of pizza and ice cream and diet soda.

Those were the three staples in my diet. And what happened was in my early forties, I developed really bad migraine. And so basically I would have migraine attacks pretty often and it became more and more frequent to the point where it was happening every single day.

So if any of you have had migraine, you know that it's not fun having a migraine. It's quite debilitating actually. And I couldn't shake it. I had been to, I live in New York City, I had been to some of the top headache doctors and they kept prescribing me medication after medication.

Nothing was working. So I tried this for two or three years and then I knew I had to find a different approach. And then one of my colleagues suggested that I do something called an elimination diet.

And I never had even heard of what an elimination diet was. It's basically where you remove pro-inflammatory foods from your diet and replace it with more healthy whole foods instead.

So I was fascinated and I said, okay, I'm going to look into this. And what I realized was that there were so many foods that I was eating that were pro-inflammatory, that were processed foods, that had refined sugars.

Just the worst types of foods that you can imagine is basically what I was eating for years and decades. So what if I came to that realization that, oh my goodness, maybe my own dietary choices were contributing to my problem?

I started to address that and I removed a lot of those foods and I replaced them with more fruits and vegetables and whole grains. and less processed foods.

And that's when I started to get better. So this was really a big turning point in my life and my career when I realized the power of nutrition for my own health issue.

And I started to use these same principles for a lot of my migraine patients. And I started to use them a lot for my patients with ocular disease. And I saw a lot of the incredible results that my patients got by changing their diet.

And then I knew that I had to get this message out to the world. So that's how it all came about. from a personal health journey that's now become my passion and my mission in life.

So Dr. Vanek, I love that honest response and a little bit about your journey. And I just want to highlight two things based off of that. And we're medical doctors, we're physicians.

And a lot of the public has this preconceived notion that because you're a doctor, You're probably eating healthy and you're probably on top of your health.

And clearly a lot of doctors, they're so busy. They're not really paying attention to their nutrition. They're not really, they're eating fast, quick foods and processed foods.

And then the other part I want to highlight is, is that your journey into nutrition stemmed from a, from something that you went through. Personally, and it wasn't, even though we're medical doctors, there's not a lot of attention given to nutrition during our training.

If any, we learned a lot about biochemistry. We learned a lot about the Krebs cycle, but in medical school and residency training, there's not a lot of focus on nutrition.

Is that your experience too? Absolutely. And when I think back to my medical school training, I can remember about four hours based that we got nutrition education.

We learned about the macronutrients. What is a fat? What is a protein? What is a carbohydrate? What are some nutritional deficiencies that can happen?

For example, vitamin C deficiency can lead to scurvy. That was about it. And just after medical school, even during internship, residency, fellowship, We really never got proper education about nutrition, only the extremes.

When someone is severely deficient, what can happen? But we never really learned about making healthy choices, whether it be for our eyes or our brain or our heart or the rest of our body.

What Ocular Nutrition Means

We never really learned that. So I really hope that the training that we get is now slowly shifting to include some of those topics. And I know that a lot of medical schools are now offering more education to their students.

which I'm really excited about. Yeah, I think that has a big role. I think a lot of ailments could be maybe prevented

or mitigated. And I think more attention on nutrition is definitely good for all of us.

And for the viewers, that might be a little new to the concept of ocular nutrition specifically and how it relates to the eyes. Can you tell us about that in simple terms and why it's so important?

Absolutely. Many of us, first of all, we take our eyes for granted. We wake up in the morning expecting that we'll be able to see clearly. And we don't really think about all the inner workings of the eye.

The eye is such a complex organ. It's got over 40 different parts that work together. It's got over 200 different cell types. And all of those different parts and cell types have a lot of different nutritional needs.

And the eye is very highly metabolic, meaning that it has a very high metabolic rate, it processes light energy, turns over cells constantly. And in order to do that, we need a wide diverse nutrient intake.

And so ideally, you want to get those nutrients from food. And sometimes when you're not able to supply your eyes with that variety of nutrients from food, it is important to supplement as well.

So my take home message here to try to put this in a nutshell is the eye is really complex. It has a lot of metabolic demands and the best way to support that is through nutrition and through diversity in your nutrition.

For someone who's listening says, this makes sense to me. What would you highlight from all your research and the books you've written? What's a good, what are good things to include into our diet that will benefit our eyes?

You know, that's a great question, Dr. Parikh. So in my book, Beyond Carrots, I go through, okay, these are the 30 nutrients our eyes need. So it's not just one or two nutrients, again, lots of nutrients, but it's hard to remember what they all are.

So then I break it down into three main classes of nutrients that you really should be mindful, be sure to get these in your diet on a daily basis. So what are these three main classes?

Key Eye-Healthy Nutrients

First, there are macular carotenoids. And you may have heard of them. They have fancy names. They're called lutein zeaxanthin, mesozeaxanthin. But what these nutrients are, they're cousins to beta-carotene, they're cousins to vitamin A, and they're essential for the health of our retina.

they get deposited into the back of the eye in the macula, which is responsible for our 2020 vision. So if you don't have adequate supply of these nutrients, we can't protect the eye against various types of what we call toxins or oxidative stress or photo oxidative stress.

So for example, when light comes into the eye, It can cause potential damage to the retina. And these nutrients protect against that damage. So you can think of them as your internal sunglasses or internal blue blockers.

That's one way to think of them. And then the next nutrient class, so those are the macular carotenoids, the next nutrient class would be omega fatty acids.

And many of us have heard of the omegas, particularly omega-3s, EPA, DHA. We've heard about them for our brain health, for our heart health, for our immune system, for our skin health.

But they are also really important for our eye health, specifically DHA, which is one type of omega-3. If we think about the cells in the retina that capture light, these cells are called photoreceptors.

And the structural backbone of these photoreceptors is DHA. And here's an interesting fun fact. The highest concentration of DHA in the body is in our retinal photoreceptors.

So we need a great constant supply of DHA because our bodies can't make DHA. We need it from diet and or supplements to provide our retinal photoreceptors with the key nutrients so they can turn over and process light energy.

So again, that's the second class would be the omega-3 fatty acids, EPH. And then the third class would be nutrients that fall into plant compounds, which we call bioflavonoids.

And these compounds are found usually in very colorful plants. And what they do in the plants is that they protect the plant against disease. They protect the plant against oxidative stress, against infection, against inflammation.

So They're the plant's natural defense mechanisms, and they're very potent antioxidants. So when we ingest these types of plants and their nutrients, those benefits get conferred to our bodies.

So they help us protect against, again, oxidative stress, which is a key driver of any kind of eye disease, whether that be macular degeneration or glaucoma.

or cataract, the base problem or the root cause is really oxidative stress. So again, these plant compounds that we call bioflavonoids and some examples would be cursitin, which is found in certain types of colorful foods like red onions and berries.

Many other apples, for example, many common foods have cursitin. Also anthocyanins, I know these are long fancy terms, but anthocyanins are found in berries.

So berries have lots of bioflavonoids. Also curcumin, which is found in the spice tumeric, which we've talked about before. That's also an example of a bioflavonoid.

That's a big overview of ocular nutrition. So get these three classes and again macular carotenoids, omega-3 fatty acids, and bioflavonoids and rotate through these foods to make sure that your eyes are getting the nutrients that they need.

Dr. Rani, thank you for that thorough response. And so if I could just summarize for the audience. So eyes are very metabolically active. There's these three classes of nutrients that you really recommend because of how metabolically active and how hard our eyes work from morning to night.

To break it down even simpler, are there foods, specific foods, I know you mentioned a couple of them, but is there one magic thing I can eat every day or our viewers can eat every day, whether it's whatever you say, avocado.

One thing we should include in our diet that might have all three of these or tell us a little bit about the specific foods we can or should incorporate.

Yeah, so there is no one magic food that you should include in your diet because there are so many foods that can be beneficial. But if I had to choose one single food or maybe a group of foods, I would say leafy greens.

And that includes foods like spinach, kale. I would say kale is number one. If you're going to choose one food, that would be your number one magic food or super food for your eyes.

But spinach, kale, any kind of greens, whether they're collard greens, dandelion greens, mustard greens, any kind of green leafy vegetables will have the macular carotenoids, and they will provide you with those nutrients to protect your retina.

They do have a lower amount of omega fatty acids. They do have some omega-3s in them. And the colorful part will provide you some of the bioflabonoids.

Not a lot of them, but some of them. So again, if you're going to choose that one superfood, it would be leafy greens. I think that's great. And I think leafy greens incorporates a wide variety there.

So you have, because I've definitely kale, although it's known for its wonderful nutritional value, I have patients that either love kale or hate kale.

And it seems, kale seems very. has a certain taste. And for some people, it's too bitter. It's just too bitter to stomach. So the good news is you have options.

And I want to highlight another leafy green that oftentimes we don't think about. It would be rainbow chard. And if you've ever seen rainbow chard, yes, it's green.

Best Foods for Vision

Its leaves are green. But the stem is this beautiful like, it's actually multicolored. It's got some orange and yellow and red in there. So if you're going to choose a leafy green, maybe try that one out because It's, I believe it's slightly less, at least to my palate, it's a little bit less bitter than kale and it's got some of those other beautiful colors in it to give you those other nutrients.

So Dr. Rani, for our patients, our viewers that are listening that maybe right now have a diet like you used to, for example, like you mentioned with ice cream being a staple, et cetera, et cetera.

And they're new to greens and they want to, they see the benefits potentially and So the stem is something they can eat also, and the stem also has nutritional value, is that correct?

It does, yes. And I'll give you an example. So let's take broccoli, right? Most of us, when we think of broccoli, eating broccoli, we eat the florets, the top part of the plant.

But actually, so the broccoli has many great values. It actually has, I don't want to use too many scientific terms here, but there is one compound called glucosinolate, which is a detoxifying nutrient.

So broccoli has a very high concentration of this nutrient, helps us to detoxify. And it's present in the florets, but it's also present in the stem and also the leaves of the plant.

So if somehow you can incorporate into your, however you prepare your produce, if you can incorporate the stem, steam it, break it up into pieces, maybe blend it, have some of the leaves in there as well.

Try to incorporate the whole plant into your diet, not just the florets, which we typically think of. Yeah, and that's super informative for some patients where maybe they don't like the florets, but at least even if they eat the stems and there's benefit to that.

You can even make a vegetable stock. Let's say many people make like a chicken stock or beef stock, but you can even make like a vegetable stock and put the stems in there with the leaves, let it boil for some time with other, maybe a little bit of herbs and spices as well, and use that as a base for your soups or other types of foods that you make.

There's lots of ways to be creative using the whole plant. That's great. What about bell peppers? That's a favorite of mine because I find them so flavorful.

Does that have a lot of these beneficial compounds as well? What if someone just isn't a fan of green leafy vegetables? Are there other alternatives and options?

Absolutely. And this is actually what I talk about in my first book, Beyond Carrots, Best Foods for Eye Health, A to Z. Because I do go through, it's not just one particular food or food group you should be eating.

There's a lot of options. So if you don't like leafy greens, bell peppers are a great alternative, especially a lot of people think about, oh, I'm going to have some green bell peppers.

That's probably the most commonly available. But in reality, if you have your choice, opt for the orange and the yellow ones. And the reason I say this is because the color of the orange and the yellow bell peppers, the reason it's that color is because it's very high in the macular carotenoids.

Lutein and zeaxanthin are orange-yellow pigments. and those bell peppers will provide you with a good concentration of that. Maybe not as high as kale or spinach, but it's pretty high.

So that would be a good option. And then if you think about other yellow and orange foods, for example, corn. Corn is most, there are different varieties of corn, but the most common variety is yellow.

And it's yellow because of high concentrations of lutein and zeaxanthin. And actually the scientific name for corn is Zia maize and that's where the word Zia xanthan came from.

And then if you eat eggs, the beautiful yolk, the orange yellow color of the yolk in eggs is from, is because of high concentrations of lutein and Zia xanthan.

So there are many ways to get these nutrients and you don't have to stick to just one particular food or food group. I really appreciate you breaking some of this down for us a little bit because nutrition gets very complicated because it seems every few years we hear something different, right?

So 15 years ago, oh, don't eat the yolk, right? Stay away from the yolk because it's bad for you. Just eat the egg whites, et cetera. But now in the last few years, I'm reading a lot and learning a lot.

about potential benefits of the, like you mentioned. And I think that's what makes nutrition so difficult is we're always learning more and more about our foods that we're eating.

Yeah, absolutely. And I want to just echo what you said about science always changing. There are those studies from 10, 15 years ago that said if you eat too many eggs, your cholesterol is going to go high and stay away from eggs if you have heart issues, et cetera, cholesterol issues.

But now a lot of those studies have been completely refuted. You know, what we used to believe, what we were taught is no longer the case. And so it is important to try to stay for us as providers to try to stay aware of all of these sometimes conflicting studies.

But the studies have shown that even if you eat, like some people can eat two or three eggs a day and not have their cholesterol being affected. Talk to your doctor, get some personalized advice, but try to include some of these foods, even though they may have been labeled as unhealthy in the past.

How Much to Eat Daily

Maybe they're not so unhealthy in moderate amounts and not high quantities, but in moderate amounts, they should be okay. And then the question that everyone is wondering, you mentioned yellow and orange foods.

Carrots, carrots are still good. Are we okay? Are we okay with carrots? Yeah, so carrots are absolutely wonderful foods for your eyes. But the reason why I called the book Beyond Carrots is because there is this myth out there, this misconception that if you just eat a bunch of carrots every day or every week, that you will have 20-20 vision.

People just automatically assume that, OK, if I just eat this one food, I'll be fine. I don't have to worry about my eyes. But that's not the case. Carrots, yes, they're great foods because they provide beta-carotene.

Beta-carotene gives carrots their beautiful orange color. But it's just one of the many nutrients our eyes need to stay healthy. So don't just eat your carrots.

Eat them plus other foods as well. You might have heard that eating carrots is good for your eyes, but what if we told you that there are more foods that can do wonders for your vision?

Introducing, Beyond Carrots, Best Foods for Eye Health A to Z. The new book by Dr. Rudrani Banak, ND. In this eye-opening book, Dr. Banak highlights over 30 nutrients necessary for healthy vision and shares 40 delicious foods richest in those nutrients.

Hi, I'm Dr. Urdrani Thanick and I'm here to tell you there's so much more to eye health than just carrots and just beta-carotene. In Beyond Carrots, you'll learn how to keep your vision healthy and vibrant by using the power of nutrition.

Imagine being able to see the world clearly in all its beauty for years to come. To keep your vision healthy and strong, you need to go Beyond Carrots.

Get your copy today of Beyond Carrots, best foods for eye health A to Z, available on Amazon. Take the first step towards healthier vision and protect your precious eyesight for the years ahead.

One question I have is how much, right? So is it better to eat a little bit of this stuff incorporated, add it to your diet a little bit every day, or better to just maybe eat one big salad once a week?

How should we? aim to incorporate these foods and how much do we need to eat? Is it that I have to eat kale all day to protect my eyes? Or tell us a little bit about how do I have to quit my job and only eat kale and carrots?

Tell us a little bit about the practicality of this. Yeah, this is such an important question, Dr. Preik. And no, you do not have to quit your job just so you can eat for your eye.

Please do not quit your job for this. So let me try to simplify it a little bit. So our eyes, again, need a lot of nutrients. And sometimes my patients, when I tell them how much they need to eat, and it should be every day, they cringe because they're not doing this.

And I also would have cringed before when I was eating my unhealthy diet. But try to strive for three to five cups colorful fruits and veggies in your diet every single day so not once a week not two or three times a week every day try to have three to five cups and again it's a diversity so you know leafy greens are important so let's say you're gonna have three cups of your favorite leafy green whatever it is spinach kale collard greens, etc.

Three cups of that, one cup of, or half a cup to one cup of berries. Blueberries are my favorite for eye health and brain health, but you can have blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, goji berries, mix it up with your berries.

So three cups of leafy greens, one cup of berries, and the other can be your choice. Maybe you're having some bell peppers. Maybe you're just having some fruits.

Apples, for example, grapes, especially the darker colored grapes like red grapes, dark purple grapes, black grapes. Black grapes are delicious, by the way.

Include some of those. or have some nuts and seeds. Nuts and seeds also count. So whether you're having maybe a quarter cup of pistachios or almonds or cashews, maybe some seeds, hemp seeds, chia seeds, flax seeds.

So try to strive for three to five cups. And I know initially a lot of people will recoil and say, oh my goodness, I barely have a leaf of lettuce on my sandwich.

That's my like intake of fruits and veggies every day or these types of foods. really be mindful of it, and once you start thinking about it, you'll discover that there are lots of ways you can incorporate these foods.

Maybe have a snack packed like a little container of some nuts and just have that as a snack, and that counts as well. You mentioned nutrition, and the topic we're talking about really is ocular nutrition, but in listening to what you said, you brought up that blueberries may be good for the eyes and also may be good for the brain, I think you said.

Yes. Tell us a little bit about that because, and again, some of the things you mentioned, like omega-3 fatty acids. I know that the cardiologists tend to like that.

There's benefits to the heart from omega-3s. And it seems like there's a lot of overlap in that nutrients that you mentioned and that they're not just good for the eyes, but they may be beneficial for brain health, preventing dementia or Alzheimer's, for example.

Nutrition Benefits Beyond the Eyes

Can you shed some light on that overlap? Absolutely. And you're so right, Dr. Parikh, in your point that when you're eating mindfully for your eyes, you're benefiting not just your vision, you're benefiting your whole body because there's so much overlap in these nutrients, what they can do for us, how they can fight inflammation and oxidative stress and keep us healthy.

So yes, you're eating specific things for your eyes like the leafy greens or the berries or the omegas, but they're benefiting everything. And you get a two for one or three for one or four for one with those choices.

And I'll just add a little bit about the berries because there has been a lot of research that's been published recently in the past five years or so about the cognitive benefits of berries.

So studies have shown that if you have half a cup of blueberries a day, half a cup, that you can reduce the risk of cognitive decline in dementia. So a simple change in your nutrition can, again, not just benefit your vision, they are benefiting your overall brain health.

And it can slow cognitive decline. So it's something I recommend for everyone. Include those berries in your diet. And if you don't like blueberries, that's okay.

Switch it out with another berry, but have berries in your diet because those plant pigments are going to benefit your body. And it's just such a powerful way, rather than having to go on certain drugs that we don't even know if some of these drugs work for cognitive decline and dementia.

Do it naturally through the power of nutrition instead. So Dr. Banek, it's great to hear that some of these real super foods that we can incorporate into diet can help our eyes, can help the rest of our body too, even our brain functioning.

And I think you mentioned there's a lot of ways to prepare this and add these things into your diet. How do you personally, from your own personal journey, from going to the diet you shared with us, the daily migraines, How did you personally make that change?

And was it a smoothie that you added into your diet or a green juice? How did you add these foods into your diet? Yeah, one of the most powerful ways to move the needle on nutrition in general is rather than to take away foods, a lot of people say, I love my whatever it is, my chocolate cake or my bacon with my breakfast.

Rather than to take those away, I always tell patients, add something, add this so that you're getting your nutrition. And yes, you can still enjoy those other things that you normally love to eat.

So the one thing you hit it on the nail, Dr. Parikh, is the smoothie. I always advocate, I'm a huge fan of green smoothies, particularly smoothies that incorporate some of these eye nutrients.

So if you had to build your perfect smoothie, I would include, again, three cups of your favorite leafy green, Add half a cup to one cup of berries. Add one to two tablespoons of your favorite seeds.

So whether that be chia seeds, hemp seeds, flax seeds, these are all great. They provide omega-3s, by the way, plant-based versions of omega-3s. And then add maybe a quarter cup of nuts.

Add some milk, whatever milk you prefer. I'm a big fan of plant-based milks like oat milk or almond milk, but there's lots of milks out there you can choose from.

And then blend it all together. Add some ice, maybe blend it all together.

Smoothies, Juicing, and Supplements

And there you have a, depending on how much you put in there, eight to 16 ounces of a green smoothie. And there you go, you can get your five cups of ocular nutrition in one go and you are done for the day.

And you now have to think about it. You've done your needs, you've met your needs and you can eat whatever else you normally eat. But if you're gonna do that one smoothie a day, it will do wonders.

Now, I wanna just address one other, bring up, speak a little bit more about this other option. You can do smoothies or you can do green juices. Green juices also have a lot of those amazing nutrients, but when you juice, you're not having the fiber.

And when you have the smoothie, you're having the whole plant and you're getting that fiber and a lot of the water that the plant has. But the juicing does, it actually eliminates the fiber.

So I prefer the smoothies over juicing. That's just a personal preference, but the fiber is so important to keep our gut healthy. And we know that our gut health also impacts so many other organ systems, including our eye health.

and there is something called the eye-gut connection. So you wanna support that and having fiber is a great way to support that. So do the smoothie instead.

I love that. Tell us a little bit, for those that might not be aware, smoothie versus juicing. So in a smoothie, you're putting the cups of greens into your smoothie and you're blending it all together.

In a juice, what do you do? Is it really squeezing? Like when you're making orange juice, you're squeezing the orange juice out of the orange. It's basically like pressing it down and just taking the fluid or with some nutrients in it, but it's not all the entire plant.

So that's the difference. And versus a smoothie, you're actually blending it all together. So you're keeping all the original benefits, the contents of the plant and you're blending it all together.

That's great. That's great. That makes a lot of sense. So using a blender and making this and having this once a day even, it seems like a good place to start.

Yeah, and you don't even need any, you don't need a fancy blender to do this. Like I just use, I have a little NutriBullet that I use and it's got a little container that's about, I think it's like 16 ounces.

So I know whatever I make there is what I need to have. It's like a single serve or maybe it'll serve two people depending on how much you wanna have, but it's very easy cleanup.

It's not very expensive. It doesn't take up a lot of counter space. So it's really not that difficult to do. So this is great. One question I do have for some of our viewers that may be listening and say, hey, this is great, but, and I'd love to do it in an ideal world, but I work two jobs.

I have four kids running around and things are very stressful right now. And I would love to do this, but I also have on top of all of this, I have health issues and I have doctor appointments.

Can I take a vitamin supplement And I know the best way to get nutrients from my understanding is really through our food because we absorb things better that way.

But for someone who really may not have the ability to do that at this moment, is there, is there a vitamin supplement they can take that or specific or different kinds?

It's so hard to know because you go to GNC or you go to CVS and there's a million different brands. There's a million different vitamins with different dosages.

Do you have any advice for any of our viewers that want a little information on that? Yeah, absolutely. And completely get it. I'm also busy and I don't always have time to cook and prepare food.

I think supplementation is important if you need to fill in the gaps. So let's say you're not getting enough leafy greens, you're not getting enough lutein zeaxanthin.

And by the way, studies have shown that these two nutrients, the macular carotenoids, can help protect against blue light and eye strain from being on devices.

So we're all on devices. We're on devices right now during this interview. For those of you watching, you're on a device probably. So how can you counteract that?

Rather than to get blue blocking glasses, which have not been scientifically proven to work, include these nutrients in your diet and again supplement if you need to.

So yes there are so many supplements out there and every year it seems like there are more and more options to choose from. The last I counted there were at least 75 iHealth supplements on the market like different brands but you're going to look for some ingredients.

You're going to look for the ingredients lutein and zeaxanthin and mizuzeaxanthin. It may come as a branded ingredient called Ludamax 2020. So you can look for that on the label.

You can look for Ludamax 2020 because that combines all the macular carotenoids and you know you're getting the right dosage. So there are lots of supplements out there on the market that have this blend.

But in addition to that, you want to maybe take a separate omega supplement. So many people will take fish oil, for example. So you can do a separate omega supplement to get your omegas.

And specifically for those bioflavonoids, I always look for a multivitamin. Many people take a multi like centrum or centrum syl. Unfortunately, that multi does not have the bioflavonoids in it.

So you want to look for a multivitamin that has bioflavonoids. So those would be my suggestions. You don't, again, have to look for each of those 30 nutrients.

It would be very burdensome to try to tick up every single nutrient. But look for groups of nutrients. Again, look for the macular carotenoids, the omegas, and the bioflavonoids.

And sometimes patients may have to take three different things in order to supplement fully. That's okay. If you're not getting it from diet, get it from supplementation.

And there are even now gummy forms of some of these nutrients for kids. So if your kids are on screens for hours a day, which a lot of us are doing and a lot of our kids are doing because now even their homework is on screens, you can encourage them to take a supplement.

That's great. I love what you said about filling in the gaps, and I think that's really, really valuable advice. Is there a common myth or misconception that you often hear from patients that you'd like to share with us or share with the viewers?

Myths, Resources, and Final Takeaways

Yeah, I think I may have mentioned this earlier, but it goes back to carrots. And maybe many of us have heard this from our grandparents, our parents, like eat your carrots, they're good for your eyes.

They're absolutely good for our eyes, but they're not the only food we need. Carrots are what I explain to my patients, carrots are the tip of the iceberg.

But you need to eat the 90% of what's below that tip of the iceberg to support your eyes. So don't just rely on one nutrient, one food. Have that diversity in your diet.

So this whole interview so far has been informative, and I think our viewers will really appreciate the practical advice that we're getting. If they're interested in finding your books and learning more about this, how can they, where can they find this and where can they learn more about ocular nutrition?

Absolutely. I think the best resource would be my website. It's my name. So drronnybanek.com and there you can find everything that I share out there in the world.

So my books are there. The links to my books are there. I also have a podcast called the IQ podcast in which I interview experts and sometimes even my patients about vision issues, so you can find a lot of information there.

I also have my supplements, I'll include that link as well, and that's also on my website. I have a curated line of eye supplements that include the macular crotinoids, and I have one for the omegas, and then a multi that has those bioflavonoids.

If you're looking for curated eye health supplements, that's the great place to find them. Thank you, Dr. Preik. And I guess two more questions I have for you, one of them being a key takeaway that you'd like viewers to remember from this segment.

Sure. So this goes back to an old saying that goes back actually millennia, like thousands of years back to ancient civilizations. And that saying is, food is medicine.

And many people attribute that saying to Hippocrates, but again, it goes back actually millennia before Hippocrates. But the thought is, if you eat right, if you make the right dietary choices, not only will you be supporting your health, but you will be proactively preventing disease.

And so really, I live by that. Food is medicine. Eat the right foods. And also, going back to the way I used to eat in my unhealthy diet, stay away from foods that may actually be fueling inflammation and fueling disease.

So make the right choices, but also try to reduce your intake of some of those perhaps unhealthy foods. And that will keep your body and your eyes healthy.

That's amazing. And then just going back to your sort of personal story and your daily migraines, which I can't even imagine how hard it is to deal with daily migraines on top of all the other responsibilities in the day.

How has changing your diet and trying the elimination diet impacted you personally? It's been really a profound journey because I realized the importance of not just diet, but also lifestyle choices.

I didn't mention this earlier, but in addition to my very unhealthy diet, I was also under a tremendous amount of stress. I wasn't managing my stress very well.

I was sleeping maybe like three, four hours a night on top of all of that. And so there's really no wonder now that I had these daily migraines. And now fortunately, I've been doing this now for several years, making dietary changes, lifestyle changes, but I still get migraine.

There's no cure for migraine. So I still get it maybe two or three days out of the month, but it's still a huge improvement compared to having migraine 30 days out of the month.

So I'm so fortunate that my eyes were open to this empowering choice that I had about my nutrition because it's made such a huge difference in my own daily life.

And I have my life back. I have control back over my symptoms. So I think it was just serendipity that I came across this and now I can share it with my patients.

I'm really fortunate to be able to have the tools now to empower them to take control of their health as well. That's amazing. That's amazing. Thank you, Dr.

Banach, for sharing your expertise and passion with us today. Your insights really show how what we eat can have a real significant impact on our vision and overall health.

Stay tuned, everyone, and take care of those eyes. Thank you, Dr. Preik. Thank you for tuning in to Doctor Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health.

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