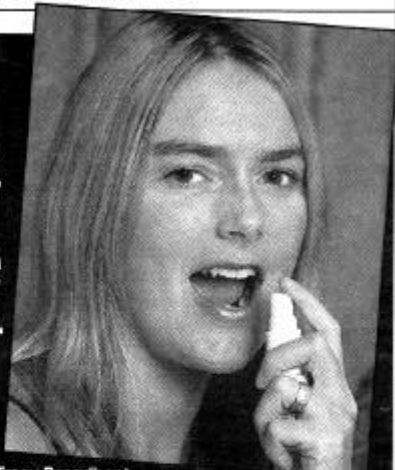


GOOD HEALTH DEVELOPMENTS

Can this mouth spray help save your eyesight?



Tracy Broadbent: 'My vision is better than it has been for years'

DAILY doses of a food supplement could stop thousands of people going blind in old age, according to eye specialists.

Tracy Broadbent is taking the antioxidant lutein in the form of mouth spray to boost and protect her vision, after reading about its remarkable properties in a new book. Lutein, found in leafy green vegetables, is vital for healthy eyes, say doctors.

Since starting on lutein spray six weeks ago, Tracy, 36, from Bradford, West Yorkshire, has noticed that her vision has got sharper, and she no longer has to wear her glasses.

'I wore glasses for ten years for close work on the computer or when I was reading or watching TV,' says the medical receptionist. 'I can see things more clearly and, overall, the quality of my vision appears better than it has for years. I was surprised how much better I could see as a result of taking the spray.'

Doctors believe lutein not only can protect and improve our eyesight but also reverse some of the damage caused by the illness age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

The condition affects around 1.8 million people in Britain and is the biggest single cause of blindness. Not everyone loses their sight completely, but most suffers have severely restricted vision.

Eye specialists have spent years looking for ways to prevent the illness and restore people's sight. But so far there have been very few successful treatments for the illness, and none that has been permanent.

Early test results from trials with lutein offer great hope. Doctors have established that it can slow down, and in some cases reverse, the damage and loss of sight caused by macular degeneration.

Now a major trial into lutein has been started, sponsored by the U.S. Government's National Institutes of Health. Dr Ed Kondrot, a leading ophthalmic surgeon in America, is convinced that lutein plays an important role in eye health and can protect against AMD.

'We know that lutein is present in high quantities in the healthy eye,' he says. 'Tests have shown that levels vary, but those with eye disease such as AMD appear to have lowered levels.'

'Research is ongoing, but there is very strong evidence that lutein plays a very important part in protecting the eye from damage as well as improving the quality of vision.'

'I have seen many patients with AMD whose loss of vision has been slowed down by taking lutein. But we are now fairly convinced it can protect against, as well as prevent, further damage caused by AMD.'

Dr Kondrot, who is based in Philadelphia, adds: 'The big question is, can lutein actually reverse the damage in people who have lost most or all of their sight.'

EARLY indications are that this can happen, and we have a number of examples of patients who were forced to give up driving because of their AMD, but who can now drive again. There are also cases of teachers, for example, who had lost most of their sight to AMD, being able to go back to work.'

In the more severe cases of AMD, Dr Kondrot uses a treatment called Microcurrent Stimulation, in addition to lutein, to clear the damage to the eye.

Like vitamin A, lutein is part of a family of antioxidants which stop the action of free radicals, which damage and destroy healthy cells.

'We knew lutein was important for eye health but didn't realise, until recently, how important it was to protect against AMD,' says Dr Kondrot.

Although a diet of leafy-green vegetables will protect the eye, even greater protection may be gained

By **MARTYN HALLE**

from taking it in the concentrated form of a supplement.

Researchers have found high doses of the supplement are needed to slow down or reverse AMD damage.

'Lutein was only isolated about six years ago, so that it could be used in a concentrated form in a supplement,' says Dr Kondrot.

'In a spray form it works really well. It is absorbed straight into the bloodstream through the mouth. The tablet form tends to be diluted by the digestive system.'

Businessmen Larry and Lance Griffin hunted out lutein when their mother, Mary, now 80, was struck down by macular degeneration.

THE BROTHERS, from California, brought in chemists and scientists to develop a spray form which could help those with the disease.

'My mother is a perfect example of how lutein is helping thousands of people regarded as being beyond hope. AMD left her completely blind,' says Larry, from San Diego.

'After starting on lutein, she started to regain her sight. In the end, her vision became so good she was able to get back her driving licence. We were quite amazed. We were told by the doctors there was nothing we could do to restore her sight.'

Grace Halloran, an American research scientist who has lost her sight twice, says she regained her vision two years ago after taking lutein supplement.

'It's not perfect — a little fuzzy — but I can get around now, whereas before I couldn't see a thing.'

'I took the supplement, along with a low-voltage electrical treatment.'

Microstimulation — which is also undergoing American government supervised trials — uses small currents to the side of the head to dislodge the damage in the retina caused by AMD.

It works to free the clotting on the retina obscuring the macula — the part of the eye responsible for central vision,' says Dr Kondrot.

Dr Bob Tomson, chairman of the Macular Disease Society, is cautious about developments using lutein to help people with AMD. He is a former GP forced to quit his job when he lost his sight because of AMD.

He says: 'The research looks very interesting, but we must not raise false hopes for people. We all need lutein for eye health, but we should get enough of it in our normal diet without supplements.'

Microcurrent Stimulation has been used by Ophthalmic Doctors in the USA for over 3 years and the results being reported by Doctors there give a success rate of over 70% with the UK made HealthPoint (see brochure). The treatment is so simple that it is done by the patients themselves with very good results and is the perfect adjunct to Pure Focus Lutien Eye Nutrition.