

Health + Prevention 16 Oct, 2017

## Are carrots good for your eyes?

From a young age, we are told that carrots are good for our eyes. Unfortunately, this is only true to an extent.

**Carrots are good for the eyes – or have you ever seen a rabbit wearing glasses to prove otherwise? Not only is this comparison not very funny, it hasn't got a leg to stand on. And yet this health myth has been around for generations. The following is true, however: carrots contain a lot of beta-carotene. This is a precursor of the essential vitamin A. If this vitamin is lacking in your diet, it can have a negative impact on growth and the condition of your skin and hair. In extreme cases, it can even provoke night blindness. Most visual impairments, however, are usually the result of completely different causes.**

There is an endless amount of popular wisdom that infiltrates our subconscious during childhood. Nowadays, most of these myths can be scientifically and unequivocally refuted. Some, however, do at least contain an element of truth. And what better example is there than the popular health myth "carrots are good for your eyes". But what is the reasoning behind this myth? The tasty vegetable contains a lot of beta-carotene. This substance is what gives carrots their orange colour, but it is also the precursor of the essential vitamin A, which really is good for the eyes. Nevertheless, this piece of wisdom only contains a grain of truth.

Nutritionists also refer to vitamin A as retinol. In fact, this name portends directly to the function it performs in the eye. The eye's retina contains cells that can produce a black and white image from even the slightest glimmer of light. Without retinol, no-one would be able to distinguish between the contrast of light and dark, and people requiring medical treatment for a critical vitamin A deficiency are even at risk of developing night blindness.

Luckily for us, this type of health complaint is very rare in our part of the world. What's more, there are plenty of foods which are even richer in vitamin A than carrots – such as spinach, cabbage or salad. Animal products, like liver for example, are even better, for they do not merely contain the precursor of vitamin A, they contain the vitamin itself.

So what is our conclusion? Munching regularly on carrots does indeed benefit your eyes, but it will not give you the improved vision you're hoping for. Now, like before, whether you're short-sighted or long-sighted, the only thing that can really help with the majority of visual impairments is a good pair of glasses.

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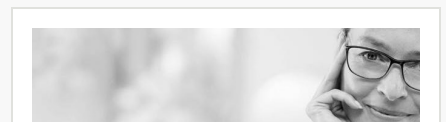
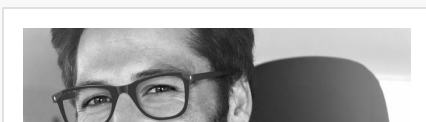
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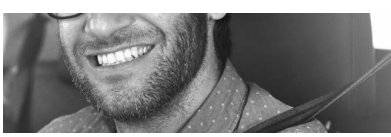


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