

eyefoods™

A FOOD PLAN FOR HEALTHY EYES

BY JOHN HUMPHREY
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

There is a definite link between diet, lifestyle and the prevention of eye disease, according to a new book co-authored by a former local resident.

Eyefoods: A food plan for health eyes strives to improve public awareness by shining light on scientifically-proven medical data in an easy-to-read and understand forum.

"A person is never too young or too old to improve their eating habits in an effort to promote healthy eye care and combat eye disease," offers Dr. Laurie Capogna. "The younger we start eating better, the sooner we stop the onset of vision problems.

"It's also never too late for an older person to improve their nutrition and diet to fight off eye disease that may have already started to develop," she says. "We should all strive to make the nutritional adjustment to our diet to improve our eye health throughout the course of our lives."

Capogna, originally from Ruthven and a graduate of Kingsville Secondary School, obtained her doctor of optometry degree from the University of Waterloo and co-authored Eyefoods along with longtime friend, business associate and fellow optometrist Barbara Pelletier. Capogna's family still operates Capogna's Flowers, a garden centre and bedding plant business in Ruthven.

It was the optometrists' keen professional interest that motivated the pair to write Eyefoods.

"We started analyzing the past and current research on nutrition and eye disease and as a result we identified the most important nutrients in the prevention of eye disease, 'Eye Nutrients,'" says Capogna

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Dr. Barbara Pelletier (left) and Dr. Laurie Capogna, originally from Ruthven, authored the book Eyefoods: A Food Plan for Healthy Eyes.



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"Then after analyzing hundreds of whole foods, we found the foods that contain the most Eye Nutrients.

"These are eyefoods."

Eyefoods was launched at the annual Ontario Association of Optometrists Symposium at Caesars Windsor in April.

"We had a phenomenal response at the conference," Capogna says. "And we've had an equally great response from patients ever since as well.

"We appear to be getting our message through, and we are just thrilled."

While Eyefoods is not intended to replace The Canada Food Guide, it does contain beneficial information that should augment a person's knowledge when it comes to his or her diet and eye problems that could be associated with it.

"The first step to better eye health through improved nutrition is simple," Capogna explains. "It's all about eating certain foods such as green and orange vegetables and cold-water fish.

"The goal here is to add antioxidants and zeaxanthin, which can be very helpful."

Capogna is also quick to dismiss the premise that in order for a food to be good and healthy for a person, it must taste bad.

"That's a myth. If a food is high in nutrients and is beneficial for your health, it doesn't follow that it has to taste poorly. Fresh foods and vegetables can be very tasty and the key here is to avoid processed foods."

Eyefoods contains a number of tried and tested recipes that not only appeal to a person's taste buds, but will improve his or her vision health.

"Dr. Pelletier and I spent months spent months coming up with these recipes and we've tried them out on family members and friend," says Capogna. "We know first hand that not only are they good for you, but they taste great too."

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