

### Get Your Vitamin See

New research suggests you may need to look to citrus fruits and other foods rich in vitamin C to maintain good eye health. This is because nutrients from your diet, especially vitamin C, may play an important role in protecting against cataracts, as stressed by a recent study from researchers at King's College London.

Cataracts can prevent individuals from seeing things around them clearly. This can affect even the simplest tasks of daily life, such as reading, driving, watching television and making meals. If you have cataracts, the progression can start as early as your 40s, but it's often not until after age 60 when you will actually notice their impact on your vision.

The researchers found that consuming foods with vitamin C seems to protect against cataract progression. This is because all of the cells in your body actually depend on vitamin C for healthy growth and repair. Vitamin C also supports the health of blood vessels in the eye.

"While we cannot totally avoid developing cataracts, we may be able to delay their onset and keep them from worsening significantly by

eating a diet rich in vitamin C," said Christopher Hammond, MD, professor of ophthalmology at King's College London and the study's author.

It is recommended that men get at least 90 mg of vitamin C and women get at least 75 mg daily. Our bodies don't create all of the vitamin C we need, making it important to get vitamin C through diet, nutritional supplements, or fortified foods and



beverages to maintain good eye health. Before taking supplements, make sure to always consult a health care professional.

With summer approaching, you can stay hydrated and boost your vitamin C levels by squeezing fresh fruits like oranges and grapefruit to make your own 100-percent fruit juice! You might also try eating a few more servings of vitamin C-rich fruits and vegetables, such as kiwifruit, apricots, tomatoes and spinach, each day. Visit [www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/vitamin-c-in-fruits-and-vegetables](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/vitamin-c-in-fruits-and-vegetables) to view more food sources of vitamin C.

"Do You Need More Vitamin C to See,"  
Joan Blake, huffingtonpost.com, April 20, 2016.

"Vitamin C," American Optometric Association, [aoa.org](http://aoa.org), accessed May 4, 2016.



#### What You Will Need

- 1 16-ounce spray bottle
- 1 ¼ cups water, divided into ¾ cup and ½ cup
- 4 tablespoons of dried basil
- 1 coffee filter
- 1 funnel
- 1 tablespoon vodka or rubbing alcohol
- 5 drops of lemon essential oil

Brand-name air fresheners may keep your home smelling nice, but many of them contain toxic chemicals. In the spirit of summertime, try making this lovely lemon-basil-scented air freshener that will have your home smelling garden-fresh.

#### Directions

1. In a small pot, bring 1/2 cup water to boil. Add the dried basil to the water and let it steep for a few minutes.
2. In another pot, bring 3/4 cups of water to a boil.
3. Line the funnel with a coffee filter and place the funnel in the open spray bottle.
4. Pour the steeped basil-water mixture into the funnel, making sure that the coffee filter catches the tiny pieces of basil.
5. Remove the filter.
6. Add the boiling water, vodka (or rubbing alcohol) and lemon essential oil to the spray bottle.
7. Fasten the spray bottle top and shake the bottle to mix up the ingredients.

*Note: If you are using a plastic spray bottle, allow the boiling water to cool slightly to avoid melting the bottle.*

# Pro-Health PROBIOTIC FOODS

*There's a lot of buzz* about probiotics these days. Probiotics are live bacteria. We often think of bacteria as bad, but that's not always the case. The human gut contains an estimated 100 trillion (with a "t") bacteria.

These bacteria, referred to as gut flora, influence your health in a multitude of ways including extracting energy from food and boosting immunity. There's still a lot of research that needs to be done, but so

far the science suggests that probiotics are the most helpful to people with digestive problems, and those who are obese or have diabetes.

## Here are some foods that are packed with probiotics:

**1 Yogurt** is perhaps the most popular source of probiotics. A single serving of yogurt can contain billions of healthy bacteria. When selecting yogurt, be careful of high-calorie varieties that are loaded with sugar. For a healthier version, make your own parfait with live-cultured yogurt and fresh fruit.

**2 Miso** is a probiotic paste made from fermented rice, beans or barley that's frequently used in Japanese cuisine. Miso is full of antioxidants and synthesizes B12, which is particularly valuable to vegans since this is a difficult nutrient to get without consuming animal products. Add miso to dressings, sauces and rice bowls. If you have high blood pressure or a heart condition, be mindful when consuming miso because it's high in sodium.

### **3 Kombucha**

is fermented tea. Flavorful and fizzy, it's a low-calorie beverage option that packs a probiotic punch when unpasteurized.\* Though it may seem like a recent health fad, Kombucha has been around for thousands of years. It is now widely available at grocery stores and comes in a variety of flavors. Create a tasty beverage using kombucha, sparkling water, fruit (berries add nice flavor) and herbs (like basil and mint). Serve over ice for a healthy refreshment.

**4 Kefir** is a yogurt-like beverage made from fermented milk and kefir grains. It is comprised of yeasts and healthy bacteria that aren't available in regular yogurt. Kefir is high in protein, calcium and vitamins. Tangy and slightly effervescent, it's good to drink straight up (flavored versions are available) or use as a base for smoothies. Another idea is to use it to make overnight oats using equal parts rolled oats and kefir (vanilla and coconut-flavored varieties work well for this).

**5 Tempeh** is made from fermented soybeans or grains. It is high in protein and probiotics, as well as iron. Tempeh is versatile and a great substitute for meat in meals. It can be marinated, baked, sautéed and grilled. Tempeh can also be used in lieu of tofu.

**6 Sauerkraut** is fermented cabbage and has a surprising amount of nutrients, such as fiber, vitamins C and K, and iron. If you want to reap the benefits of its probiotic properties, skip pasteurized versions.\* Sauerkraut can be added to sandwiches, soups and a variety of meals. Other fermented vegetables are beneficial as well, such as pickles. Kimchi, a traditional Korean food, is a spicy form of sauerkraut. It is loaded with vitamins and research suggests it has a variety of health benefits. Kimchi is a rich source of probiotics if you can handle the heat. Add

kimchi to salads, stir-fries, noodle bowls or Asian-inspired street tacos.

\* If you're pregnant, consult your doctor before eating unpasteurized food.

"9 Probiotic Foods That Aren't Yogurt," Health Staff, health.com, Aug. 26, 2015.

"5 Ways Gut Bacteria Affect Your Health," Rachael Rettner, livescience.com, Sept. 5, 2013.



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