Omega-3 Fatty Acids May Lower Eye Disease Risk

New research suggests that intake of fatty acids found in fish oil may help prevent age-related macular degeneration, a deterioration of the eye’s retina that can lead to blindness. In a new study published in the Archives of Ophthalmology, Australian researchers who followed more than 3,600 older adults for five years found no evidence that dietary fat of any kind increased the risk of age-related macular degeneration. People who ate fish at least once a week were 40% less likely to develop early age-related macular degeneration than those who ate fish less than once a month. Those who ate fish three times a week had a substantially lower risk of advanced macular degeneration.

A diet rich in omega-3 fats, the researchers noted, may also help lower the risks of high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.

Prevalence of Diabetes Skyrockets in US

A new study indicates that more than one of every three people in the US has either impaired fasting glucose or diabetes. Diabetes incidence was estimated at 9.3% of the population (6.5% diagnosed and 2.8% undiagnosed), and impaired fasting glucose at 26%. Impaired fasting glucose greatly increases the risk of diabetes, which in turn dramatically raises heart disease risk.

While the prevalence of diagnosed diabetes has increased significantly over the past decade, the researchers noted that an estimated one third of all US diabetics remain undiagnosed—a troubling statistic that could be remedied through routine blood testing.

The importance of maintaining healthy blood sugar levels cannot be overstated. Life Extension urges all adults to undergo regular blood screening as part of a comprehensive health maintenance program.

Older Adults with Low Testosterone Prone to Anemia

Men and women above the age of 65 with low testosterone levels are at increased risk of being or becoming anemic, researchers report. Anemia is defined as a lower-than-normal number of red blood cells in the blood, and is usually measured by a decrease in the amount of hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying component of red blood cells.

In an Italian population-based study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, testosterone and hemoglobin levels were measured in 905 adults aged 65 or older. At the start of the study, 31 men and 57 women had anemia. Men with the lowest levels of testosterone were five times more likely to be anemic than men with the highest levels. For women, low testosterone doubled the likelihood of anemia.

According to scientists, low testosterone levels should be considered a potential contributing factor to anemia in older men and women, especially when other causes have been excluded, and in patients with nutritional deficiencies in whom nutritional supplementation with iron and vitamins has been ineffective. Understanding the causes of anemia in this population is important, since anemia in older persons is associated with a high risk of disability and accelerated decline in physical function.