



Happy Food
Healthy Eyes

Focus On: Essential Fatty Acids

By Amy Hellem, Editor-in-Chief

This month marks the first in a year-long series of nutrition articles intended to help reinforce your message to patients about the important role that nutrition plays in the onset and progression of ocular disease. We encourage you to make copies and offer these as patient handouts; or you can refer your patients to the handout section of our website, located at www.revoptom.com/patient_handouts.

Increasingly, studies have shown the ocular health benefits of consuming essential fatty acids.

In particular, omega-3 polyunsaturated fat is high in both EPA and DHA, which are important structural components of cell membranes. This is why many O.D.s may recommend supplements containing omega-3 fatty acids, particularly for patients who do not eat a diet rich in these protective nutrients.

One 2007 study published in *Archives of Ophthalmology* found that people who eat at least two

servings of fish per week are less likely to develop AMD.¹ In fact, study participants who consumed the highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids had a 39% lower risk of AMD compared with those who ate the least fish. Another study, conducted in Australia, found that a regular diet high in omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids may be associated with a lower risk for AMD; however, the results were not strong enough to support that the routine consumption of omega-3s would prevent AMD in this older cohort.^{2,3}

As researchers continue to work

out the details, proactive patients or those who are on the fence about taking supplements, may want to start with a diet rich in essential fatty acids. The recipe below for Seared Tuna Steaks contains an abundance of healthy ingredients thought to fight many age-related ocular diseases, such as AMD. ■

For more recipes and further details on the role of specific nutrients in protecting ocular structures, visit www.seefoodcookbook.com.

1. Arch Ophthalmol. 2007 May;125(5):671-9.

2. Arch Ophthalmol. 2007 Jul;125(7):981-3.

3. Arch Ophthalmol. 2008 Jun;126(6):826-33.

SEARED TUNA STEAKS

Makes 4 Servings

Ingredients

- 2 carrots, julienned
- 2 celery stalks, julienned
- 1 zucchini, julienned
- 2 yellow squash, julienned
- 4 8oz tuna fillets
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup orange juice
- Salt
- Pepper
- Olive oil
- ½ bunch of cilantro, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tbsp corn starch (if needed)

Method

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Blanch the carrots, celery, zucchini and squash in boiling water for 1 minute.
3. Preheat a sauce pan on medium heat. Drizzle some olive oil onto the pan. Add the vegetables and garlic, and sauté for 2 minutes. Add ½ of the chopped parsley and set aside to cool.
4. Combine the sugar, soy sauce and orange juice in a sauce pan and bring to a boil. Keep cooking on medium heat to reduce liquids by half. Set aside.

5. Place a sauté pan on high heat and drizzle with olive oil.
6. Season the tuna steaks with salt and pepper, and add them to the hot pan.
7. Sear the steaks on both sides until they have reached the desired level of doneness.
8. To plate: Set the tuna steaks on a serving plate, top each one with the sautéed vegetables, drizzle with teriyaki sauce and sprinkle with chopped cilantro.

This recipe was provided courtesy of Liron Meller of My Cooking Party. (www.mycookingparty.com)