



nutrient function and food sources

lutein & zeaxanthin

Lutein and zeaxanthin are two of the many natural plant pigments (carotenoids) found in nature. Carotenoids, which are also antioxidants, provide the vibrant colors in many fruits and vegetables. The antioxidant properties of lutein and zeaxanthin are thought to protect the eyes against damaging free radicals that may cause cataracts and AMD.

Spinach, peas and many yellow/orange fruits and vegetables provide lutein. Corn, orange peppers and certain leafy greens provide zeaxanthin. Lutein and zeaxanthin, however, can be found in many of the same foods and are often referenced together as one value in research. See the tables below for a list of good food sources of lutein, zeaxanthin and lutein/zeaxanthin.

good food sources of lutein

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	LUTEIN (MG)
Spinach, cooked	1 cup	13.3
Savoy cabbage, shredded	1 cup	10.2
Greens, cooked	1 cup	8.4
Broccoli, cooked	1 cup	3.4
Peas, cooked	1 cup	3.2
Spinach, raw	1 cup	1.8
Butterhead lettuce	1 cup	0.9
Green pepper, sliced	1 cup	0.9

good food sources of zeaxanthin

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	ZEAXANTHIN (MG)
Pepper, orange	1 cup	1.5
Corn, frozen, cooked	1 cup	0.7
Collard greens, cooked	1 cup	0.6
Spinach, cooked	1 cup	0.4
Turnip greens, cooked	1 cup	0.4
Kale, cooked	1 cup	0.3
Spinach, raw	1 cup	0.1
Tangerine	1 fruit	0.1

Source: USDA-NCC Carotenoid Database, 1998

vitamin E

vitamin C

lutein & zeaxanthin

beta-carotene

zinc



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RDA: none

Research level shown
to benefit eye health:
6 mg/day

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	LUTEIN/ZEAXANTHIN (MG)
Kale, cooked	1 cup	20.5
Collard greens, cooked	1 cup	15.4
Spinach, cooked	1 cup	12.6
Turnip greens, cooked	1 cup	12.1
Broccoli, cooked	1/2 cup	4.0
Spinach, raw	1 cup	3.6
Zucchini, raw	1 cup	2.6
Peas, cooked	1 cup	2.2
Broccoli, raw	1 cup	2.1
Corn, cooked	1/2 cup	1.5
Lettuce, cos or romaine	1 cup	1.5
Brussels sprouts, cooked	1/2 cup	1.1

Source: USDA-NCC Carotenoid Database, 1998

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