Vitamin Therapy for Adults with Retinitis Pigmentosa

Adults with retinitis pigmentosa (RP) may benefit from taking vitamin A and the omega-3 fatty acid docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). Patients who take vitamin A along with a diet high in omega-3 fatty acids may have a slower rate of vision decline due to RP. Patients with RP should not take supplements that contain vitamin E. Supplements with high doses (400 IU) of vitamin E can increase the rate of vision decline. Normal amounts of vitamin E in the diet should not have any affect.

What is the treatment?

1. Vitamin A palmitate supplement (15,000 IU) every day (can be purchased online; see page 2)
2. Daily lutein supplement (12 mg) in non-smokers
3. A diet high in omega-3 fatty acids (≥ 0.20 g/day), which can be found in rich oily fish (salmon, tuna, sardines), or a DHA supplement (600 mg twice daily)
4. Avoid supplements that contain vitamin E

Who can benefit from this?

This treatment may benefit adult patients who have RP that is not caused by a medical syndrome. This therapy was not studied in children or in patients who have other forms of retinal dystrophies (e.g., Leber congenital amaurosis, choroideremia etc.). It was also not studied in patients who have RP due to Bardet-Biedl syndrome, Usher syndrome, or other forms of syndromic RP.

Can this be harmful?

Patients who have a retinal dystrophy caused by changes in the ABCA4 gene (Stargardt disease) should not take high doses of vitamin A. If this gene could be the cause of your retinal disorder, you should have genetic testing with a genetic counselor or ophthalmic geneticist.

High doses of vitamin A can be harmful to the liver. Before starting any treatment, you should talk with your doctor.

Patients should have both a fasting serum vitamin A test and a liver function test before starting this treatment. Patients should repeat these tests once a year. This type of therapy is not for people who have liver disease. Women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant should not start this treatment.

Eating oily fish may raise cholesterol levels. Patients should talk to their doctor before starting this type of diet.
Known Sources of Vitamin A Palmitate

Freeda Vitamins
Phone: 718-433-4337 or 1-800-777-3737
Fax: 718-433-4373
e-mail: info@freedavitamins.com
Website: http://www.freedavitamins.com/
Vitamin A Palmitate 15,000 IU – 250 Tabs = $6.76

Carlson Labs, Inc.
Phone: 1-800-323-4141
Fax: 847-255-1605
e-Mail: carlson@carlsonlabs.com
Website: http://www.carlsonlabs.com/
Vitamin A Palmitate 15,000 IU – 120 soft gels = $9.90

References


Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2015 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7774