



nutrient function and food sources

beta-carotene

Beta-carotene is also a carotenoid and contributes the deep orange pigment to fruits and vegetables. Unlike lutein and zeaxanthin, beta-carotene can be converted to vitamin A in the body as it is needed. Beta-carotene, in addition to serving as a source of vitamin A, has been shown to function as an antioxidant. Antioxidants protect cells from damaging free radicals that may cause certain diseases, such as cataracts and AMD.

See the table below for a list of good food sources of beta-carotene. Based on negative results from studies that tested between 33,000 IU (20 mg) and 50,000 IU (30 mg) of beta-carotene as supplements in heavy smokers and other high-risk people, the government recommends that smokers not take a high dose beta-carotene supplement.

good food sources of beta-carotene

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	BETA-CAROTENE MG/(IU)
Carrot, raw	1 medium	12.1 (20,250)
Mango, raw	1 fruit	4.8 (8,050)
Sweet potato, mashed	1/2 cup	4.5 (7,430)
Spinach, boiled	1/2 cup	4.4 (7,370)
Cantaloupe, raw	1 cup	3.1 (5,160)
Kale, boiled	1/2 cup	2.9 (4,810)
Apricots, canned	1/2 cup	1.2 (2,055)
Broccoli, frozen	1/2 cup	1.0 (1,740)

RDA: None

Levels reported to provide an eye health benefit: up to 25,000 IU/day (15 mg)

Source: Clinical Nutrition Service, Warren Magnuson Grant Clinical Center and Office of Dietary Supplements, National Institutes of Health

vitamin E

vitamin C

lutein & zeaxanthin

beta-carotene

zinc