People who eat more calcium-rich foods may be less likely to develop age-related macular degeneration (AMD), according to a recent study. But wait, didn’t another report say the opposite is true? Too much calcium makes AMD more likely?

Why does science sometimes give us such contradictory messages? KU Eye retina specialist, Mary Champion, MD, states, “There are a lot of studies about nutritional supplements that are confusing and some of which have no clinical relevance.”

Emily Chew, MD, a researcher at the National Eye Institute, explains that different results would suggest that one study does not have all the answers. It means no one study has the whole story. Researchers conduct many types of studies to get clearer, more reliable answers.

“Jumping to conclusions too soon after one study can be dangerous,” Dr. Chew said. “There just isn’t enough evidence yet to consider taking calcium for the treatment of AMD. Think of studies as individual puzzle pieces coming together to eventually create one larger picture.” KU Eye retina specialist, Radwan Ajlan, MBBCh, FRCS(C), FICO, DABO, stated he agreed with Dr. Chew, adding “More studies are needed to identify the role of calcium and AMD.”

Though more research is planned, Dr. Chew said calcium is not something to worry about when it comes to AMD. Patients should continue any current calcium supplements or diet health plans. “I would not start or stop calcium based on these studies just for AMD. It’s more important to have regular dilated exams and to see someone immediately if vision changes,” stated Dr. Champion.

“Habits that are good for our overall health are good for the eyes, too. That means people who are eating nutrient-rich diets, exercising, and not smoking are less likely to develop diseases, including AMD,” said Dr. Chew.

Should I be taking calcium supplements if I have AMD?

Talk to your doctor before changing your diet, including adding more calcium to your meals. People with AMD should talk to their doctor about whether to start taking vitamin supplements.

Source: https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/calcium-and-age-related-macular-degeneration