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Eye for guava, says AIIMS



Smart food: Research by doctors at AIIMS states that guavas, black grapes, coriander and mint leaves are good for eyes and arrest their age-related degeneration.— File Photo

Guavas, black grapes, coriander and mint leaves — this is the doctor's prescription to good eyesight and arrest of age-related degeneration of the eyes.

Research conducted by doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) found that it wasn't just apples and carrots, right distance from the television and not reading in dim light also helped. These fruits and vegetables were found to have direct and specific benefits.

Research

"The research will help the common man and our understanding of what food contributes to good eyesight," said Alok Kumar Ravi, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Ocular Biochemistry, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, AIIMS, who was part of the research group. The study was conducted at Delhi (north) and Madurai (south) and samples of 25 fruits and 73 vegetables were obtained to understand their effect on eye health.

"Multiple epidemiological studies have emphasised the intake of dark green leafy vegetables rich in xanthophylls in reducing the risk of developing age-related macular degeneration. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to quantify levels of major carotenoids — naturally occurring pigment in commonly consumed green as well as yellow fruits and vegetables — found in India," said Dr. Ravi.

Fruits and vegetables

The research also found that food traditionally is considered a good source of carotenoids in terms of provitamin-A activity exhibited by some of them. Consumption of fruits and vegetables always depends upon the affordability, availability and food habits of people in different parts of the world.

The study indicated that fruits and vegetables, including broad and cluster beans, carrots, green chilli, curry leaves, drumstick leaves, edible amaranth, fenugreek leaves, ginger, pumpkin, ivy gourd, mango and snake gourd, are good for eye health. Age-related macular degeneration is the common cause of irreversible vision loss among the elderly. In humans as well as in plants, xanthophylls are believed to function in two important ways. First, as filter for high-energy blue light and second, as anti-oxidants that quench and scavenge photo-induced reactive oxygen species.