

Nine Things
Your Doctor
Didn't Tell You
About
Retinitis Pigmentosa

by

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MEDICAL DISCLAIMER:

The following information is intended for general information purposes only. Individuals should always see their health care provider before administering any suggestions made in this book. Any application of the material set forth in the following pages is at the reader's discretion and is his or her sole responsibility.

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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR



I'm glad you're here.

I have dedicated my life to helping people with degenerative eye diseases.

Retinitis pigmentosa (RP) is one of my specialties.

If you have been diagnosed with RP, you are in a battle.

This book is about winning.

There are three main sections. The first is about knowing your enemy. If you know your enemy, you can learn how to defeat it.

The second is about lifestyle changes that can help you win. These changes can greatly you greater eye health. They can also help you maintain health in the rest of your body.

The third section is about treatment options. RP is not curable. It is treatable. We have been doing it for years and with great results.

If you are skeptical, that's ok. I call that "guarded optimism".

Just keep reading. Keep learning. Keep asking questions.

THE THREE MAIN FACTORS THAT DRIVE DEGENERATION

INFLAMMATION

Your body lives in a dangerous world. A world filled with organisms which are threats to your life and health. Many illnesses are caused by infection with germs such as bacteria or viruses. A healthy body can only remain healthy if its immune system is working well.

One way your body protects us from these germs is with white blood cells. These cells help fight infections by attacking the germs that get inside your body.

This process is called inflammation. It is what you get when white blood cells all show up to do battle in an infection. Inflammation can appear as redness and swelling, as well as other symptoms, depending where it occurs in your body.

Sometimes a body's immune system can produce inflammation that is not caused by any infection at all. This "misdirected" inflammation can cause all kinds of problems such as arthritis and fibromyalgia. This is where the immune system is overactive and attacks its own body parts. We call this condition autoimmune.

Inflammation can also come from other factors like pollution in the body (toxins), allergies, dehydration and stress.

Inflammation in the retina can be a contributing factor to RP. If it is, and the inflammation can be reduced or eliminated, the progression of vision loss can be slowed, stopped, or even reversed.

Vision tests cannot tell whether inflammation is a root cause. However there are tests which we perform at our clinic that can give those kinds of answers.

OXIDATIVE STRESS

Each day we are exposed to free radicals. This causes many of the physical effects we call “aging”. It can also cause acceleration of a disease process like RP.

Oxidative stress is when the body is overwhelmed by free radicals that destroy healthy tissue and cells. It’s like a terrorist invasion within our body that destroys our health and well being.

No matter how healthy we try to be, we are bombarded with free radical damage every day. The most common causes of oxidative stress are pollution, smoking, excessive sunlight, junk-food diets and high stress.

Free radicals can be neutralized by having antioxidants present. Antioxidants are able to neutralize free radicals.

When antioxidants are not present in sufficient amounts, free radicals can cause a lot of damage. This is called “oxidative stress”. This can be one of the main factors contributing to RP.

Just as vision tests can not reveal inflammation issues, they can’t say anything about oxidative stress, either.

It has been shown that carotenoid antioxidants are the most important neuroprotectors for the eyes. Measuring, monitoring and maintaining carotenoid levels is one of the ways we help our patients manage their RP.

We perform non-invasive carotenoid antioxidants testing in our clinic. The test takes about 30 seconds and has a very high level of accuracy in determining your carotenoid levels. Having adequate levels of antioxidant protection is your insurance against oxidative stress

POOR CIRCULATION

Without proper blood flow, no part of the body can function well. Blood is your body's source of oxygen and food. It's also how the body gets rid of waste products (including carbon monoxide).

With no blood flow, cells die.

With compromised blood flow, cells may survive, but not thrive. They can lose function, becoming sick and unhealthy. With reduced blood flow, healing and regeneration may take place more slowly or not at all.

This can certainly be a contributing factor to RP.

Vision testing only tests vision function. It does not help to determine the underlying cause. Good diagnostics and the right testing and even symptoms can provide insight to the most probable underlying causes.

THREE LIFESTYLE CHOICES

DIET

It is a well known truth that, “you are what you eat!”

All the nutrients your body needs to be healthy have to come from what you put in your mouth. A healthy body cannot be sustained by an unhealthy diet.

By knowing the underlying causes in your RP, a personal diet plan can be custom created for you to support good health in those areas. Improvement there can have in impact on the progression of RP.

In general, an alkaline diet is recommended. Of course eliminating junk food and processed food can help tremendously. Eliminate processed sugar, trans fats and greasy/fried foods.

People often have food allergies and there are simple test that can be done to identify foods that make you sick. When we eat foods that we are allergic to, it increases inflammation in the body and accelerate vision loss.

EXERCISE AND REST

A healthy body is a strong body.

Just as diet can impact the underlying causes of RP, exercise also helps maintain a healthy body. And when the overall health of the body improves, this can have an impact on RP.

Getting good rest is equally important. It is obvious that bodybuilders exercise more than most people. But did you know that they also rest more than most? It is while the body is resting that the muscles actually grow. It is also during rest, and especially sleep, that the cells of the body regenerate.

Anything that can be done to promote a healthy body and healthy cell regeneration is likely to help in managing RP.

The first of two constants that we hear from patients is that their vision improves with exercise. The second is that vision seems to get worse with stress.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is a part of life. When a person is stressed, their heart rate goes up. Chemicals that are useful in dealing with stressed are released. As a result, we are better able to cope with whatever is going on.

Chronic stress, on the other hand, can be very damaging. It disrupts nearly every system in your body. It can shut down your immune system, speed up the aging process and create all kinds of health problems.

How a person manages the stress in their life has a huge impact on the factors which drive RP.

Stress management is a huge topic. There are many things you can do to reduce stress.

There are creative outlets such as writing or other creative expression. Get your feelings out. Anger, fear, worry, chaos, overstimulation, fright, grief and depression can become consuming if not kept in check. Harboring negative feelings can be a huge stressor. Having an outlet can be very helpful. It's a way of like getting all that bad stuff out of your system.

There are also things you can do to put some good things *into* the system. There is tai chi and yoga, breathing and muscle relaxation exercises. You can also do meditation or just find a hobby and spend time doing something you enjoy.

Regardless of the approach, reducing stress can significantly reduce the progression of RP.

THREE PROVEN TREATMENTS

SUPPLEMENTS AND HERBS

There is no substitute for a healthy diet. However, supplementing with key vitamins, minerals and herbs can significantly help to preserve your vision.

There are herbs which have been used by the Chinese to help support and improve circulation and reduce the inflammation.

The main supplements that are best for RP include retinyl palmitate, vitamin D, fish oil, taurine, green & blue-green algae, bilberry, krill oil, luten, zeaxanthin.

Every case is different, and different supplements can be recommended based upon your unique situation and overall health.

ANTIOXIDANTS

Oxidative stress is can have all kinds of damaging effects in your body. This was covered in an earlier section.

Oxidative stress can be managed through maintaining sufficient antioxidant levels. They can combat and neutralize free radicals which would otherwise cause harm to the body. This includes harming cells in the retina, contributing to RP.

Free radical damage can not only impact the tissues and cells, it can actually affect your DNA. This may be one case for gene signaling and genetic mutations. We are seeing more and more first generation RP cases with *no* family history of RP. Oxidative stress is a major suspect for gene mutations and gene signaling that manifest as RP, Usher's syndrome, Stargardt's, etc.

Carotenoid antioxidants seem to be the important form of antioxidants that will protect the eyes from free radical damage. Carotenoids make certain fruits and vegetables yellow, orange, or red. Some carotenoids, such as beta-carotene, alpha-carotene, and beta-cryptoxanthin can be made into vitamin A by the body. Others, such as lycopene, lutein, and zeaxanthin, cannot.

There is one carotenoid which is recommended for nearly everyone. It is a form of vitamin A that is readily accessible to the body in this form. It is called retinyl palmitate. Some are concerned that taking high doses may cause liver damage – that is a very rare situation. For those concerned with overloading your liver, TUDCA is a supplement that helps maintain liver health. Taking TUDCA can virtually eliminate the risk for liver damage from taking too many fat-soluble vitamins.

A “green drink” made up of spirulina, chlorella, algae blueberry extract is helpful for night vision and will alkalize your body. There are so many benefits to having a morning green drink. Consider making that part of your daily routine for long term vision preservation. Certain carotenoids, especially Lutein, Zeaxanthin and Astaxanthin are critical for retinal preservation.

As mentioned earlier, carotenoid antioxidant levels can be measured in simple non-invasive skin tests. The test takes only 30-seconds to complete. Over time, these levels can be monitored to make sure you have the antioxidant protections you need.

Monitoring your carotenoid antioxidant levels is critical to vision recovery and preservation.

ACUPUNCTURE

Many people think of acupuncture as a means of pain relief. But did you know that it can be instrumental in managing RP?

At our clinic, we have combined various acupuncture methods into a cohesive system that promotes eye health.

This system has been clinically shown to recover lost vision, and slow or even stop the progression of RP long term.

Using acupuncture, we have had RP patients report almost no significant vision loss for over 15 years (and counting). Years after their retinal specialist told them they were “supposed” to be blind, they are still quite functional and even driving!

HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK FOR RP?

Acupuncture

- increases blood flow
- stimulates nerve cells
- arouses dormant cells
- organizes chaotic nerve signals
- increases the ATP mitochondrial function
- stimulates the brain's visual cortexes and the entire visual system

Amazing!

Acupuncture increases blood flow to the eyes. Better blood flow gets more oxygen and vital nutrients to the cells of the retina. All cells need oxygen and food to survive. When the air and food supply is cut off the cells will become ill and die. Once a cell is dead, it's gone forever. Nothing can bring it back.

Vision is not only a function of the eye. The eye sends its signals to the brain, which process them into the image you actually see. Acupuncture can stimulate the visual cortex, which is the part of the brain where vision is processed.

WHO IS A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT?

This is a tricky question. RP is a disease of the retina. It is a disease of the cells of retina that detect light. If you have some vision left, then you have some cells left that still work. All the tests your eye doctor does basically test these cells. They can't test the cells that don't work.

But there are three kinds of cells that don't work:

- Some are damaged.
- Some are dormant.
- Some are dead.

The damaged cells may be able to be repaired. The dormant cells may be able to be woken up. The dead cells are dead. There is nothing we can do for those.

The thing is, we don't know how much improvement we can get based on the testing your doctor can do. We have to do some testing, do some treatments, and then test again. Any improvement as a result of the treatment will show up in the second set of tests.

So really, anyone suffering from RP is a good candidate for testing. Once we have done this, we can determine how good a candidate you are for long term treatment.

HOW LONG DO THE RESULTS LAST?

For most people, the improvement from acupuncture treatment will last three to six months. For some, it can last up to 12 months.

Many factors can affect how long the results last. Lifestyle and overall health play major roles in this.

People usually sustain benefits for 6-12 months if they

- are in good overall health
- exercise
- eats right
- manage stress well
- get plenty of rest
- are on few or no meds
- take supplements

Most people like this will require maintenance 1-2 times per year to preserve their vision.

People do not sustain benefits as long if they

- do not exercise regularly
- eat poor diets
- do not sleep well
- smoke
- drink alcohol
- take drugs (prescription or nonprescription)
- do not keep up with supplements
- do not manage stress well
- have other health issues

These people will need more regular treatments due to the excessive stress, poor habits and lifestyle choices they make.

In short, their body is breaking down faster than it can rebuild and repair.

WHAT'S A TYPICAL ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT PLAN FOR RP?

Most new patients have already been diagnosed with RP or something closely related like Usher's, Stargardt's, Cone-Rod Dystrophy, etc.

Some preliminary vision testing will be done to establish a baseline. Visual field, visual acuity, contrast sensitivity and color vision will be tested.

Next, we'll do five days of treatment, twice a day, using acupuncture, electro-acupuncture, micro-acupuncture, laser acupuncture and/or other beneficial acupuncture methods.

We may also recommend a few supplements to help feed the starving retinas.

After the five-day series, we will retest to confirm that there's a positive, measurable response.

After the first week, approximately 1/3 of patients actually notice improvement. Some people still have pretty good vision and therefore change may not be noticeable in those cases.

We will test both objective and subjective responses.

Subjectively means that the patient communicates that they've seen improvements. We are looking for things like increased brightness, sharper vision, better reading, more vibrant colors, better night vision or better adaptation when going indoors.

Objective testing means what the patient notices as far as improvement compared to the objective baseline measurements from our testing.

That first week, we are looking a positive indicator that you are a responder. If there's a positive indicator that vision is improving, then we continue for a second week.

The first year is very important. We usually see nerve regeneration during the first 8 - 15 months. To help maximize that improvement, we recommend coming 3 - 4 times in the first year.

The treatment strategy then moves towards stabilization and preservation of vision. For this, we recommend a frequency of 1-3 times per year. Some patients even get away with every other year if they are proactive and taking care of themselves.

It is always a case-by-case situation.

WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM RESULTS?

There are patients with RP that have been treated at our clinic for over 15 years (and counting). Those that have kept up with their treatment, supplements and home-care have slowed or even completely arrested their vision loss.

That means they have had little or no progressive vision loss over the 15 years. Their retinal specialist told them that they were "supposed" to be blind within a few years and would most likely need Seeing Eye dogs or canes by now. But they're quite functional and even still driving!

Patients who are consistent with their treatment usually benefit from vision preservation. Some people have good days and bad days. Most patients who stick with the program have confirmation from their doctors that their vision is stable. Of course the docs are usually pretty surprised they've actually maintained their vision with very little (if any) loss at all. Many of them are even referring patients because they have nothing to offer these people. The most common response we hear from eye doctors is, "Whatever you are doing — keep doing it."

We have also had patients who've dropped out of care and seemed to have given up on their vision. Others have switched between acupuncturists over the years, not giving any of them the time needed to really understand the underlying issues with their specific case. Often patients return after many years and they have a major drop in vision. At that point, we try to get some vision back, but in many cases permanent damage is done from not keeping up. The lesson we try to impart to patients is that it's easier to keep up than to catch up.

*Those who keep up the treatment consistently
have had the greatest long-term benefits.*

WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD OF IMPROVEMENT IN ELDERLY PATIENTS?

A large percentage of our patient base is elderly. Age does not seem to be a factor in terms of rate of response. No one is too old (or too young) for treatment.

We have patients in their 70, 80's 90's and even a few centenarians. Many are on medications and some are fairly advanced cases, but most do extremely well with treatment.

TESTIMONIALS AND LINKS

[Pamela RP "Wish I'd discovered this years ago."](#)

[Joe RP "I can't wait to come back!"](#)

[Kelly RP "I can't say enough good about it!"](#)

[Angela RP "It was as though someone wiped the windows of my eyes."](#)

[Ahmed RP "I could read 4 - 5 more lines on the eye chart."](#)

[Dennie RP "Amazing results."](#)

[Deepa RP "Peripheral tests improved tremendously."](#)

[Bill RP "Very excited with the acupuncture."](#)

[Dr Rosenfarb's Appearance on The Dr Oz Show](#)

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Getting started means planning at least a one week stay in New Jersey. It will take that long to find out how your condition responds to our treatment.

If you are not from the area, we can help you find a nice place to stay.

The best next step is to give us a call.

Just dial (908) 928-0060

Our hours are:

Monday	8:30AM – 4:00PM
Tuesday	9:30AM – 6:00PM
Wednesday	8:30AM – 4:00PM
Thursday	9:30AM – 6:00PM
Friday	9:00AM – noon

We will be more than happy to assist you.