



Happy Food
Healthy Eyes

Focus On: Zinc

By Amy Hellem, Editor-in-Chief, and Michael Hoster, Senior Editor

This yearlong series of nutrition articles is intended to help reinforce your message to patients about the important role that nutrition plays in the onset and progression of ocular disease. We encourage you to make copies and offer these as patient handouts; or, you can refer patients to the handout section of our website, located at www.revoptom.com/patient_handouts.

Zinc is an essential trace mineral that helps reduce the number of free radicals in the human body. It is vital to helping your body absorb vitamin A and helps transport vitamin A from the liver to the retina to produce melanin, a protective pigment in the eyes. In fact, for this reason, zinc helps prevent nyctalopia (night blindness).

Some clinicians also suggest that patients at high risk for AMD should take a daily supplement that contains zinc. This recommendation is supported by several reports

from the Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS), which indicate that zinc taken alone, or in combination with other essential antioxidants, significantly decreases the risk of advanced AMD development.¹

In addition to its protective effect against AMD, data from several other studies showed that zinc could help prevent cataract formation. Indeed, the Blue Mountains Eye Study demonstrated that zinc and other antioxidants may reduce the risk of incident nuclear cataracts, and the Beaver Dam Eye Study suggested that zinc may offer

a small protective effect against cortical cataracts.^{2,3}

So, whether you take a supplement containing zinc, anyone at risk for AMD or cataracts may want to consider eating foods that are rich in this powerful mineral. The recipe below for Beef Bourguignon is excellent start! ■

For more recipes and further details on the role of specific nutrients in protecting ocular structures, visit www.seefoodcookbook.com.

1. Arch Ophthalmol. 2001 Oct;119(10):1417-36.

2. Am J Clin Nutr. 2008 Jun;87(6):1899-905.

3. Ophthalmology. 2008 Jul;115(7):1203-8.

BEEF BOURGUIGNON

Makes 4 Servings

Ingredients

3 lbs. beef for stew, cubed
2 Spanish onions, quartered
3 celery stalks, sliced
2 carrots, sliced
5 cloves garlic
½ bunch parsley, chopped
½ bunch thyme
4 cups beef or chicken stock
2 cups red wine
1 cup cognac (optional)
2 tbsp. tomato paste
Kosher salt, as needed
Black pepper, as needed
Extra virgin olive oil, as needed
3 tbsp. cornstarch
Water, as needed
Fresh sourdough loaf

Method

1. Season the beef with salt and pepper. Place a braising pan over high heat.
2. Add some olive oil, add the beef and sear until brown. Remove from the pan.
3. Add the carrots, celery and onions. Cook until they start to brown. Add the garlic, half the parsley and the thyme. Mix well.
4. Add the tomato paste and mix to cover all the ingredients in the pot.
5. Add the red wine and Cognac (if used), and deglaze the pan—reduce liquid by ½ over medium heat.
6. Add the stock and bring to a boil. Taste the liquid and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.
7. Cover the pan and place in the oven at 300°F for 2 ½ hours.

8. Remove from the oven. Pull the pieces of meat out of the pot.

9. In a small bowl combine, 3 tbsp. of cornstarch with 3 tbsp. of water. Mix well.

10. Place the braising liquids over high heat. When they begin to boil, whisk in the cornstarch and whisk continuously. Remove from the heat and place the beef back in the pot.

Chef's Note: This dish is traditionally served with potatoes or egg noodles, but is also exceptional when served on toasted sourdough bread rubbed with fresh garlic clove.

This recipe was provided courtesy of Liron Meller of My Cooking Party. (www.mycookingparty.com)

