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---BREAKING NEWS---
SOME SUPPLEMENTS MAY CAUSE EYE TROUBLES

(EAST HANOVER, NJ) According to the October 2004 issue of the American Journal of Ophthalmology, many herbal remedies and nutritional supplements can damage the eyes, including some alternative therapies that are used by people trying to correct eye problems, new research reports. According to a review of reported cases and medical literature, commonly used supplements including chamomile, ginkgo biloba, licorice, vitamin A and echinacea can cause a multitude of eye problems including severe conjunctivitis, eye irritation, retinal bleeding and temporary loss of vision, the study found.

Dr. Cary Silverman, an ophthalmologist and founder of EyeCare 20/20 in East Hanover, New Jersey (who was not involved in the study) advises “ It is important to tell your physician what kinds of vitamins and other supplements you take as these particular products may or may not interact with other drugs and could lead to potential vision problems down the road.” Silverman continues, “Even all-natural and herbal supplements may have adverse reactions.”

According to **Dr. Silverman**, people who choose to take supplements that can damage eyes should schedule an eye exam before beginning the treatment, then visit an eye doctor every year to monitor their eyes to make sure no problems arise. "Most consumers assume that just because a product is natural it is safe," Silverman warns. As a result, about forty percent of people who use alternative therapies do not discuss them with their doctors.

To investigate which supplements can cause the most eye damage, Professor Frederick Fraunfelder at The Casey Eye Institute in Portland, Oregon reviewed all eye-related case reports that are submitted to the World Health Organization, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the National Registry of Drug-Induced Ocular Side Effects presented his current findings in the American Journal of Ophthalmology (October 2004). Essentially, Professor Fraunfelder found 30 instances in which canthaxanthine, a carotenoid that produces an artificial suntan when taken orally, caused changes to users' retinas, including crystal deposits. He also uncovered seven cases in which people rinsed their eyes with chamomile tea to treat styes and irritation, and instead developed severe conjunctivitis.

Furthermore, Echinacea is widely touted as useful for treating the common cold and flu, but Fraunfelder found seven cases in which users developed irritation and conjunctivitis after using it topically. Additionally, Fraunfelder discovered five cases of temporary vision loss apparently caused by licorice consumption, and 71 cases of niacin causing eye problems. He also noted that vitamin A is a particularly big threat to the eyes at high doses, and ginkgo biloba, a blood thinner, can cause retinal bleeding when combined with

other blood thinners. Most people were using the supplements for reasons unrelated to their eyes, including arthritis, inflammation and digestive problems.

ABOUT CARY M. SILVERMAN, M.D. & EYECARE 20/20:

Dr. Cary M. Silverman, Medical Director of EyeCare 20/20, located in Northern New Jersey, has been performing refractive surgeries since 1992 and is cited in the 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 editions of “The Best New York Area Metro Doctors.” He has performed thousands of LASIK procedures to date and currently serves as a mentor physician for VISX, Inc., a program designed to lend additional training to VISX-certified doctors in laser vision correction. With the M.D. Mentor Program, doctors pair up with experienced, successful refractive surgeons, like Dr. Silverman, who provide valuable answers to clinical concerns. In addition, Dr. Silverman was named a “VISX Star Surgeon” for his performance as a refractive surgeon. This honor is given each year to the highest-volume surgeons in the United States. Ranking as a VISX Star Surgeon places Dr. Silverman and EyeCare 20/20 in the top 5% of refractive surgeons and centers nationwide. Dr. Silverman’s education and training includes a medical degree from the New Jersey Medical School and a BA in Biology from Boston University.

*** SOURCE #1: Yahoo News/Reuters, October 21st, 2004

*** SOURCE #2: American Journal of Ophthalmology, October 2004

If you are interested in speaking with Dr. Cary Silverman to comment on this new medical discovery, please contact Jessica Berger at KMR Communications, Inc. at 212.213.6444 or via email at jessica@kmrcommunications.com

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