



IN GOOD HEALTH NEWSLETTER...

June

Valerie Smith, MS, ACM JIF Wellness Director

Volume 3, Issue 6

- Protect Your Eyes
- Foods That Are Good For Your Eyes
- Eye Myths & Facts
- Vision Problems
- Hearty Kale Salad
- Chicken Fajita Kebabs



June: Eye Awareness



Tips to Protect Your Eyes From The Sun All Year Long

- Almost 50 percent of U.S. residents over 75 have cataracts.
- Of Americans ages 40 and over, more than 2.7 million residents have glaucoma.
- Almost 1.3 million Americans 40 and older are legally blind.
- Annually, there are nearly 2.4 million eye injuries in the United States.
- More than 24.2 percent of Americans over 40 have cataracts, according to [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#).

- Sun damage to eyes can occur anytime during the year, not just in the summertime, so be sure to wear UV-blocking sunglasses and broad-brimmed hats whenever you're outside.
- Don't be fooled by clouds: the sun's rays can pass through haze and thin clouds.
- Never look directly at the sun. Looking directly at the sun at any time, including during an eclipse, can lead to solar retinopathy, which is damage to the eye's retina from solar radiation.
- Don't forget the kids and older family members: everyone is at risk, including children and senior citizens. Protect their eyes with hats and sunglasses.



Foods That Are Good For Your Eyes



Raw Red Peppers

Bell peppers give you the most vitamin C per calorie. That's good for the blood vessels in your eyes, and science suggests it could lower your risk of getting cataracts. It's found in many vegetables and fruits, including bok choy, cauliflower, papayas, and strawberries. Heat will break down vitamin C, so go raw when you can. Brightly colored peppers also pack eye-friendly vitamins A and E.

Sunflower Seeds & Nuts

An ounce of these seeds or almonds has half the amount of vitamin E the USDA recommends for adults each day. A large study found that vitamin E, together with other nutrients, can help slow age-related macular degeneration (AMD) from getting worse. It may also help prevent cataracts. Hazelnuts, peanuts (technically legumes), and peanut butter are also good sources of vitamin E.

Dark Leafy Greens

Kale, spinach, and collard greens, for example, are rich in both vitamins C and E. They also have the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin. These plant-based forms of vitamin A lower your risk of long-term eye diseases, including AMD and cataracts. Most people who eat Western diets don't get enough of them.



Salmon

Your retinas need two types of omega-3 fatty acids to work right: DHA and EPA. You can find both in fatty fish, such as salmon, tuna, and trout, as well as other seafood. Omega-3s also seem to protect your eyes from AMD and glaucoma. Low levels of these fatty acids have been linked to dry eyes.



Sweet Potatoes

Orange-colored fruits and vegetables -- like sweet potatoes, carrots, cantaloupe, mangos, and apricots -- are high in beta-carotene, a form of vitamin A that helps with night vision, your eyes' ability to adjust to darkness. One sweet potato also has more than half the vitamin C you need in a day and a little vitamin E.

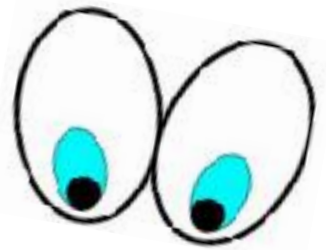
Lean Meat & Poultry

Zinc brings vitamin A from your liver to your retina, where it's used to make the protective pigment melanin. Oysters have more zinc per serving than any other food, but you don't have to be a shellfish lover to get enough: Beef, pork, and chicken (both dark and breast meat) are all good sources.

Webmd.com

VALERIE SMITH, MS WELLNESS DIRECTOR
ACMJIFWELLNESS@GMAIL.COM 609-251-7811

Foods That Are Good For Your Eyes



Beans & Legumes Chickpeas are also high in zinc, as are black-eyed peas, kidney beans, and lentils. A can of baked beans will do the job, too.



Eggs The zinc in an egg will help your body use the lutein and zeaxanthin from its yolk. The yellow-orange color of these compounds blocks harmful blue light from damaging your retina. They help boost the amount of protective pigment in the macula, the part of your eye that controls central vision.



Squash Your body can't make lutein and zeaxanthin, but you can get them from squash all year long. Summer squash also has vitamin C and zinc. The winter kind will give you vitamins A and C as well as omega-3 fatty acids, too.



Broccoli & Brussels Sprouts These related veggies come with another winning combination of nutrients: vitamin A (as lutein, zeaxanthin, and beta-carotene), vitamin C, and vitamin E. They're all antioxidants that protect the cells in your eyes from free radicals, a type of unstable molecule that breaks down healthy tissue. Your retinas are especially vulnerable.



Eye Myths & Facts

Myth: Sitting too close to the TV is bad for your eyes

Fact: There's no evidence that plunking down right in front of the TV set damages someone's eyes. The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) says that kids can actually focus up close without eyestrain better than adults, so they often develop the habit of sitting right in front of the television or holding reading material close to their eyes. However, sitting close to a TV may be a sign of nearsightedness.

Myth: If you cross your eyes they will stay that way

Fact: Contrary to the old saying, eyes will not stay that way if you cross them. If your child is crossing one eye constantly, schedule an evaluation by an ophthalmologist.

Myth: If parents have poor eyesight, their kids will inherit that trait.

Fact: Unfortunately, this one is sometimes true. If you need glasses for good vision or have developed an eye condition (such as cataracts), your kids might inherit that same trait. Discuss your family's visual history with your doctor.

Eye Myths & Facts



Myth: Eating carrots can improve vision.

Fact: Although it's true that carrots are rich in vitamin A, which is essential for sight, so are many other foods (asparagus, apricots, nectarines, and milk, for example). A well-balanced diet can provide the vitamin A needed for good vision, says the AAO.

Myth: Computer use can damage the eyes.

Fact: According to the AAO, computer use won't harm the eyes. However, when using a computer for long periods of time, the eyes blink less than normal (like they do when reading or performing other close work). This makes the eyes dry, which may lead to a feeling of eyestrain or fatigue. So encourage your kids to take frequent breaks from Internet surfing or video games.

Myth: Two blue-eyed parents can't produce a child with brown eyes.

Fact: Two blue-eyed parents can have a child with brown eyes, although it's very rare. Likewise, two brown-eyed parents can have a child with blue eyes, although this is also uncommon.

Myth: Only boys can be color-blind.

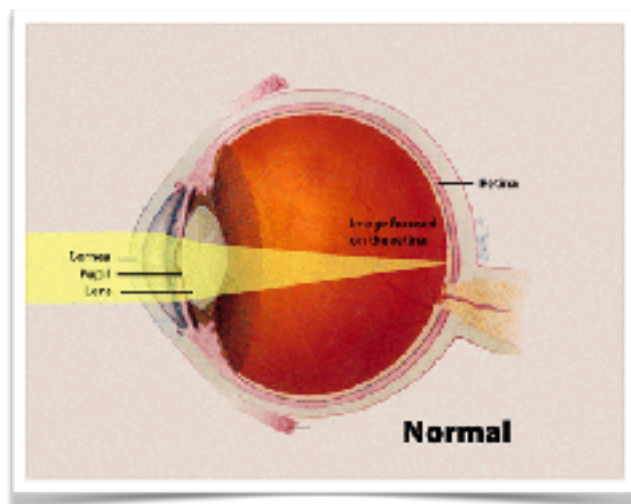
Fact: It's estimated that up to 8% of boys have some degree of color blindness, whereas less than 1% of girls do.

Myth: Wearing glasses too much will make the eyes "dependent" on them.

Fact: Refractive errors (near-sightedness, far-sightedness, or astigmatism) change as kids get older. Many variables come into play, but most of this change is likely due to genetics and continues despite wearing glasses earlier or later or more or less. Wearing glasses does not make the eyes get worse.

Most Common Vision Problems

The most common vision problems are **refractive errors**, more commonly known as nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism and presbyopia. Refractive errors occur when the shape of the eye prevents light from focusing directly on the retina. The length of the eyeball (either longer or shorter), changes in the shape of the cornea, or aging of the lens can cause refractive errors. Most people have one or more of these conditions.



Nearsightedness (also called myopia) is a condition where objects up close appear clearly, while objects far away appear blurry. With nearsightedness, light comes to focus in front of the retina instead of on the retina. [Learn more about nearsightedness.](#)

Farsightedness (also called hyperopia) is a common type of refractive error where distant objects may be seen more clearly than objects that are near. However, people experience farsightedness differently. Some people may not notice any problems with their vision, especially when they are young. For people with significant farsightedness, vision can be blurry for objects at any distance, near or far. [Learn more about farsightedness.](#)

Astigmatism is a condition in which the eye does not focus light evenly onto the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. This can cause images to appear blurry and stretched out. [Learn more about astigmatism.](#)

Presbyopia is an age-related condition in which the ability to focus up close becomes more difficult. As the eye ages, the lens can no longer change shape enough to allow the eye to focus close objects clearly. [Learn more about presbyopia.](#)



Vision Problems

Glaucoma: Glaucoma is increased pressure of the fluid inside the eye, which can cause optic nerve damage. Glaucoma is a common cause of blindness, particularly in diabetic patients.

Cataract: Cataract is a clouding of the lens, causing blurry or color-tinted vision. People with cataracts often report “haloes” surrounding objects that they are looking at, particularly at night. It is most common in older people, and cataracts can be removed by surgery that replaces the lens with an artificial lens.

Age-Related Macular Degeneration: Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is gradual damage to the cells of the macula. This condition is most common in people over 60 years old. It causes blurry vision, especially in the center of the field of view. According to [the Foundation Fighting Blindness](#), AMD is the leading cause of blindness among people over age 55 in the United States.

Amblyopia: Commonly referred to a "lazy eye," amblyopia occurs when one eye has worse vision than the other, and the brain begins to favor the better eye. This will occur if one of the eyes is blocked from producing clear images during the critical years from ages 0 to 6. One eye may be inhibited by problems such as a lid droop, tumor, or crossed eyes (strabismus) that are not fixed when a child is young. It is crucial to have young children evaluated by an eye doctor in order to ensure that subtle signs of amblyopia are not present.

Diabetic Retinopathy: Diabetic retinopathy is damage to the blood vessels of the retina caused by diabetes. It causes blurred or dark spots in the field of vision and will eventually lead to blindness. The best way to avoid these vision problems is to keep your blood sugars under control and see your eye doctor every year for a dilated eye exam.

Retinal Detachment or Tear: A tear in or detachment of the retina causes blurry vision or partial loss of vision.

Dry Eye Syndrome: Dry eye is a lack of proper tears, usually due to a problem with the tear ducts or eyelids, or a problem with certain medications. This condition can cause pain and blurry vision.

Article resources

- Eye Conditions: Macular Degeneration. (n.d.). Foundation Fighting Blindness. Retrieved November 5, 2013, from blindness.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=45&Itemid=55
- Lacrimal gland. (2011, October 22). National Institutes of Health. Retrieved November 5, 2013, from nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/imagepages/19671.htm
- Tears. (n.d.). National Institutes of Health. Retrieved November 5, 2013, from nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tears.html

healthline.com

**VALERIE SMITH, MS WELLNESS DIRECTOR
ACMJIFWELLNESS@GMAIL.COM 609-251-7811**

CHICKEN FAJITA KEBABS



4 Servings

“These grilled kebabs have all the makings of a classic fajita—seasoned chicken, onions and peppers. Warm a stack of tortillas in a foil packet on the side of the grill to turn the kebabs into an easy fajita dinner. Or serve with lime-and-cilantro coleslaw for a grain-free alternative.”

Ingredients

- 1 large clove garlic, grated
- 2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fajita seasoning or Mexican seasoning
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into large bite-size chunks
- 2 bell peppers, any color, cut into large bite-size chunks
- 1 large sweet onion, cut into large bite-size chunks

1. Whisk garlic, vinegar, fajita (or Mexican) seasoning, oil and salt in a small bowl. Divide the marinade between two large sealable plastic bags. Add chicken to one, and peppers and onion to the other. Agitate to combine, seal and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 2 hours.
 2. Preheat grill to medium.
 3. Drain the chicken, discarding marinade. Thread the marinated chicken onto 4 skewers. Thread the peppers and onion alternately onto 4 skewers.
 4. Oil the grill rack (see Tip) and immediately add the kebabs. Cook the vegetable kebabs, turning every 1 to 2 minutes, until the vegetables are tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Cook the chicken kebabs, turning every 3 to 5 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through and browned, 8 to 11 minutes.
 5. Serve 1 chicken kebab and 1 vegetable kebab per person.
- Tip: Oiling a grill rack before you grill foods helps ensure that the food won't stick. Oil a folded paper towel, hold it with tongs and rub it over the rack. (Do not use cooking spray on a hot grill.) When grilling delicate foods like tofu and fish, it is helpful to coat the food with cooking spray. To make ahead: Prepare through Step 1 and marinate chicken and vegetables for up to 2 hours.