

# HealthSmart®

## Wellness Advocate



## IT'S HEALTHY VISION MONTH! MAKE YOUR VISION LAST A LIFETIME



When it comes to our health, we often visit our doctor or nurse regularly to make sure our bodies are healthy. But what about our eyes? They're not always top of mind, but they're just as important.

During Healthy Vision Month, held each May, the National Eye Institute (NEI) reminds you to make your eye health a priority and encourages you to take important steps to protect your sight.

**Get a dilated eye exam.** Getting a dilated eye exam is the only way to detect eye diseases early, because with many, there are no warning signs. If you want to see what your eye care professional sees during a dilated eye exam, check out [NEI's new eye exam animation!](#)

While dilation helps eye doctors see the retina, it also makes it difficult for patients to see at a close distance for several hours after an exam, and may cause sensitivity to light. There is a new technology which uses a retinal scanner instead of dilating the eye. It uses two lasers of different wavelengths and a mirror to take a scan of the back of the eye, or retina, through the undilated iris. Optometrists can see nearly the whole retina at once, compared with just a small piece of it at a time using traditional methods. A retinal exam isn't necessary at every visit to the eye doctor, but is recommended as part of a routine eye exam schedule. Talk to your eye care professional about how often you should have one.

**Live a healthy lifestyle.** Eating healthy foods, maintaining a healthy weight, managing chronic conditions, and not smoking can lower your risk of eye disease.

**Know your family history.** Talk to your family members about their eye health history. It's important to know if anyone has been diagnosed with an eye disease, since many are hereditary. This will help to determine if you are at higher risk for developing an eye disease yourself.

**Use protective eyewear.** Protect your eyes when doing chores around the house, playing sports, or on the job to prevent eye injuries from happening. This includes wearing safety glasses, goggles, safety shields, and eye guards that are made of polycarbonate.

**Wear sunglasses.** When purchasing sunglasses, look for ones that block out 99 to 100% of both UVA and UVB radiation, so you can keep your eyes healthy. Prolonged exposure to sunlight can increase your risk for getting an eye disease. A wide-brimmed hat offers great protection too!

These steps can help you keep your eyes healthy and prevent vision loss and blindness from eye disease.

To learn more about Healthy Vision Month and find additional eye health information, visit [www.nei.nih.gov/hvm](http://www.nei.nih.gov/hvm).



# May is National Stroke Awareness Month

Strokes can affect people of all ages and backgrounds. Learn how to safeguard yourself against stroke.



Every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a stroke and one person every four minutes dies from a stroke, making it the fourth leading cause of death in the United States.

A stroke, sometimes called a brain attack, occurs when a blockage stops the flow of blood to the brain or when a blood vessel in or around the brain bursts. Although many people think of stroke as a condition that affects only older adults, strokes can and do occur in people of all ages. In fact, nearly a quarter of all strokes occur in people younger than age 65.

Demographic factors such as family history, age, sex, and race/ethnicity can all play a role in an individual's stroke risk. Regardless of your background, though, there are several things you can do to lower your chances of having a stroke.

For example, cigarette smoking contributes to one in every five strokes in the United States. Smoking—and even exposure to second-hand smoke—can thicken the blood and make it more likely to clot. Thicker blood flow can lead to increased plaque buildup in your arteries and damage to the blood vessels leading to the brain, which can cause or worsen a stroke. So, quit smoking—or better yet, don't start.

### In addition, know your ABCS:

- ▶ **A**ppropriate aspirin therapy: Ask your doctor if taking aspirin is right for you.
- ▶ **B**lood pressure control: More than half of the world's stroke deaths are caused by elevated blood pressure levels.
- ▶ **C**holesterol management: Get your cholesterol checked regularly and manage it with diet and exercise or with medication, if needed.

To learn more about reducing your risk for stroke, visit [Million Hearts™](#), a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes over 5 years.

## Recipe: Apricot Pecan Bars



### Ingredients

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 3 cups quick cooking oats   | 1 large egg                        |
| 1/2 cup pecans, chopped (almonds or walnuts may be substituted)                   | 1/2 cup applesauce                 |
| 3 cups unsweetened grain cereal (try Cheerios or Shredded Wheat)                  | 1/2 cup canola oil                 |
| 2 cups dried apricots, chopped (dried cherries or cranberries may be substituted) | 3/4 cup honey                      |
| 1/4 cup whole-wheat flour   | 1/2 tsp. salt                      |
| 12 ounces silken tofu, drained  | 1 Tbsp. lemon zest, freshly grated |
|   | 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract            |
|   | Cooking spray                      |

### Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Spread oats and pecans on large (15x10 inch) baking dish. Bake until lightly brown and fragrant, 8 to 10 minutes.
3. Transfer to large mixing bowl and add cereal, apricots and flour; stir to combine.
4. Puree tofu, egg, applesauce, oil, honey, vanilla and lemon zest in a blender until smooth. Make a well in the center of the oat mixture and fold in the tofu mixture until combined. Coat 9x13 baking dish with cooking spray and spread the mixture uniformly in the dish.
5. Bake until firm in the center and golden brown, approximately 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool completely in the dish before cutting into bars with a sharp knife.

Nutrition Information per serving (makes 24 bars): 190 calories | 3 g fat (5%) | 29 g carbohydrates (7%) | 3 g dietary fiber (12%) | 4 g protein (7%) | 8 g sugar