

Focus On Eye Health



We all value our eyesight. Unfortunately, this sense that we so fear losing is one we often don't do enough to protect. Eye protection is more than wearing sunglasses at the beach or safety glasses at a job site. It also means making healthy lifestyle choices every day. Not smoking, eating a healthy diet, being physically

active and seeing an eye care professional all play important roles in protecting your vision.

Your Eye Exam

Comprehensive eye exams do more than measure your visual acuity and determine your need for corrective lenses. It can alert an eye care professional to common eye diseases such as diabetic eye disease, glaucoma and macular degeneration. These diseases have few warning signs but can be detected in their early stages through a dilated eye exam.

There are several risk factors that affect eye disease that you cannot change.

- **Age** is a significant risk factor for cataracts, glaucoma and Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD).
- People with a **family history** of glaucoma or AMD are at a higher risk of developing the disease.
- **Race** can be a factor as well. Caucasian Americans are much more likely to lose vision from AMD than African Americans; however, African Americans are at a higher risk for Glaucoma than Caucasians. In the U.S., Latinos

have higher rates of developing visual impairment, blindness, diabetic eye disease and cataracts than non-Hispanic whites.

Your eye care professional can answer specific questions about your risk for eye disease. The American Optometric Association recommends a comprehensive eye exam every two years for people aged 18 to 61 who are not at risk for eye disease and every one to two years for people who are at risk. An annual exam is recommended for everyone over the age of 61.

Practice Healthy Behaviors

- **Don't smoke!** Smoking is as bad for your eyes as it is for the rest of your body. Research has linked smoking to an increased risk of developing Age-Related Macular Degeneration, cataracts and optic nerve damage.
- **Follow a healthy diet.** Eating a diet that's rich in leafy vegetables, nuts and fish but low in starchy carbohydrates appears to decrease risk for Age-Related Macular Degeneration. The specific protective nutrients include vitamins C and E, zinc, lutein, zeaxanthin and the omega-3 fatty acids known as D.H.A. and E.P.A. And don't forget to eat plenty of carrots – they're high in vitamin A, which promotes good vision especially in low light

Watch & Control Your Blood Sugar Level

Too much sugar in your blood can damage the tiny blood vessels that nourish the retina, or the area at the back of the eye where images focus. This damage can lead to diabetic eye disease or diabetic retinopathy, the number-one cause of vision loss in working-age Americans. The disease affects up to 80% of all patients who have had diabetes for 10 years or longer.

Wear Sunglasses



Winter or summer, if the sunlight is so bright you have to squint, then you should be wearing sunglasses. They protect your eyes and surrounding skin from the sun's damaging Ultraviolet Rays (UV). Unprotected exposure can contribute to cataracts, macular degeneration and cancer of the eyelids and the surrounding skin. When buying sunglasses, look for ones that block out 99% – 100% of both UV-A and UV-B radiation.

Wear Protective Eyewear

Eye injuries occur at a rate of more than 2,000 per day in the U.S. About half of those injuries occur in the workplace. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) found that 70% of workplace eye injuries occur from falling or flying objects, or sparks striking the eye.

The best way to prevent an eye injury is to always wear the appropriate eye protection. Protective eyewear is not just for a hazardous workplace environment, but also for working around the house with machines, chemicals and power tools. Remember:

- Always wear safety glasses when using a snowblower, mower, string trimmer, chainsaw or other power garden tool.
- Always keep a pair of goggles in your car in case you need to jump-start the battery. Battery acid, sparks and debris flying from damaged batteries can severely damage your eyes.
- Household products can seriously burn your eyes if used improperly. Always read instructions and labels carefully before using cleaning fluids, detergents, ammonia or harsh chemicals. Wear safety goggles and work in a well-ventilated area.

Most protective eyewear lenses are made of polycarbonate, which is 10 times stronger than other plastics. To make sure safety glasses meet the standards of the American National Standards Institute, look for "ANSI Z87.1" stamped on one of the bows.

Protective eyewear should also be worn for sports. Always wear appropriate sport-specific protective eyewear when participating in high-risk sports such as baseball, basketball, hockey, lacrosse, football, soccer, paintball and racquet sports. Eye protection for athletes will have "ASTM F803" stamped on the arm if it meets the sports-specific safety standards.

Clean Contacts Properly

Many people wear contact lenses to correct vision problems; however, if used improperly, they can lead to infections, eye abrasions and even vision loss. The American Optometric Association advises contact lens wearers to always:

- Wash your hands before handling contact lenses.
- Carefully clean and store lenses as directed by an optometrist.
- Remove lenses before swimming or entering a hot tub.

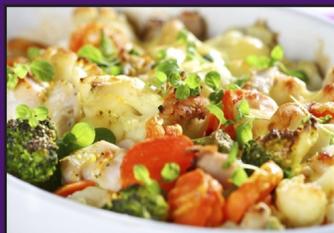
Rest Your Eyes

If you spend a lot of time at the computer or focusing on any one thing, you sometimes forget to blink and your eyes can get fatigued. Try the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes look away about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds. This can help reduce eyestrain.

Make vision health a priority for yourself and family members. Protect your eyes by making healthy lifestyle choices and wearing appropriate eyewear. And *don't neglect seeing your eye care professional!*

Italian Chicken Stir-Fry

Makes: 4 Servings | 10 minutes



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Tbsp. canola oil
- 3/4 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breast - *cut into 3/4" pieces*
- 1-16oz. bag frozen mixed vegetables for stir-fry

- 1 Tsp. finely minced garlic
- 1/2 cup fresh mushrooms, *sliced*
- 1 Tsp. dried basil
- 1 Tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 cup fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, *to taste*
- 2 cups cooked, hot rice - *preferably brown*

PREPARATION:

1. Place large skillet over high heat. Add oil; swirl to coat pan and heat oil until very hot. Add chicken and stir-fry until it loses the pink color. With a slotted spoon, remove chicken from pan and set aside. Add garlic to pan and stir-fry until garlic is fragrant, *about 1 minute*.
2. Add vegetables to pan; stir-fry about 2 minutes. Return chicken to pan. Add basil, oregano and chicken broth. Stir-fry until chicken is opaque throughout, *about 4 minutes*. Add cheese and toss. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Serve immediately, including juices from pan, over the hot cooked rice (preferably brown).

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (per serving):

316 Calories; 7g Fat; 1g Saturated Fat; 27g Carbohydrates; 27g Protein; 6g Fiber; 244mg Sodium