

The UConn Buzz



Eye Health

CT Quit Line: 1-800-QUIT-NOW

CT Poison Control 24/hotline: 1-800-222-1222

Our eyes are often described as the windows to the soul, but they are also our primary connection to the world around us. The significance of maintaining good eye health cannot be overstated, as our vision plays a crucial role in our daily lives. From the simple joys of witnessing a beautiful sunset to the complex tasks of reading, driving, and working, our eyes are indispensable. In this article, we delve into the importance of eye health and explore simple steps to preserve and enhance our vision.

Vision is one of our most valuable senses, enabling us to navigate the world, recognize faces, and experience the beauty of our surroundings. A healthy set of eyes contributes significantly to our overall well-being and quality of life. Visual impairments not only affect our ability to perform everyday tasks but can also impact our mental and emotional health.

Prevention is key. Taking proactive steps to preserve eye health is essential. Regular eye examinations can help detect and address potential issues early on, preventing the progression of conditions such as glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration. Eye exams also provide an opportunity to identify refractive errors like nearsightedness or farsightedness, ensuring that corrective

measures, such as glasses or contact lenses, are prescribed.

In today's digital age, many of us spend prolonged hours in front of screens. This constant exposure to digital devices can lead to digital eye strain, characterized by symptoms such as headaches, dry eyes, and blurred vision. Implementing the 20-20-20 rule—taking a 20-second break every 20 minutes to look at something 20 feet away—can alleviate digital eye strain and contribute to long-term eye health ([CDC](#)).

Just as we protect our skin from the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays, it is crucial to shield our eyes as well. Prolonged exposure to UV rays can contribute to the development of cataracts and other eye conditions. Wearing sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays is a simple yet effective measure to safeguard our eyes from the sun's potentially harmful effects.

Don't forget physical protection too. "Safety glasses and goggles are designed to protect your eyes during certain activities, like playing sports, doing construction work, or doing home repairs" ([NIH](#))

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle positively impacts overall well-being, including eye health. Eating a balanced diet rich in vita-

mins and minerals, particularly those beneficial to eye health (such as vitamin A, C, and E), can contribute to maintaining good vision. Additionally, staying hydrated, getting regular exercise, and avoiding smoking are lifestyle choices that support optimal eye health.

Our eyes are priceless gifts that deserve our attention and care. Prioritizing eye health through regular check-ups, preventative measures, and a healthy lifestyle is an investment in our overall well-being. By adopting these practices, we can enjoy the world with clarity and ensure that the windows to our souls remain vibrant and resilient throughout our lives.

Resources: [NIH](#), [United Healthcare](#), [American Optometric Association](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

GET YOUR EYES CHECKED

Visit your eye care provider at least once a year for a checkup to help keep your eyes healthy!



www.cdc.gov/contactlenses

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

46th Bolton Road Race, Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 1PM, 72 Brandy Rd, Bolton, CT First run in 1979, the BRR has migrated through the years from May to March, but it has always included THE HILL, small town charm and beautiful vistas. 5 mile race. [Register](#)

55th Annual Tolland Antiques Show, Sunday March 17 from 9-3pm @ Tolland Middle School, 1 Falcon Way, Tolland. This distinguished show features 18th- and 19th-century American furniture, accessories, textiles, Americana, folk art, and more – the best of early country.

Rocky Neck Runfest: Relay 30K, 5K, Sunday, April 21 2024 at 8am in Niantic, CT. Rocky Neck Runfest! Pre/post race activities, the exchange area, the road and trail courses, as well as the finish line will all take place inside the limits of Rocky Neck State Park, Niantic, Connecticut. [Register.](#)

The Legend of the Banana Kid by Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers, Saturday, May 18th 2024 at 11am in Mansfield. Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry presents this tale of Little Chucky heads to the Wild West to outwit outlaws in this cowboy adventure! With a fistful of bananas, Chucky rides into town on his trusty goat for a showdown with Big Bad Bart and his gang of bandits. hand-crafted glove, mouth and rod puppets. [Info](#)



Garlic Bok Choy

Ingredients

- 1 head of bok choy (1 pound)
- 5 cloves garlic (use 4-6 cloves, minced or 1 to 1 1/2 teaspoons of garlic powder)
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Wash hands with soap and water.

Cut bok choy crosswise into easy-to-eat pieces.

In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, sauté garlic in oil until fragrant. If using garlic powder, add with salt in the next step. Add bok choy and stir quickly. Add salt. Stir until greens are wilted and stem pieces are tender-crisp. Serve hot.

Does Dark Chocolate have Health Benefits?

Indulging in a piece of dark chocolate isn't just a guilty pleasure; it may also be a delicious way to boost your health. Dark chocolate, with its rich cocoa content, has been associated with an array of medical benefits that go beyond satisfying your sweet tooth. In moderation, incorporating dark chocolate into your diet may contribute to improved heart health, cognitive function, and overall well-being.

One of the benefits of dark chocolate is its impact on cardiovascular health. Studies suggest that the flavonoids found in cocoa can help lower blood pressure, improve blood flow, and enhance vascular function. ([NIH News in Health](#)) Dark chocolate has been linked to a reduction in LDL

cholesterol, often referred to as the "bad" cholesterol, which can contribute to a lower risk of heart disease ([Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health](#)).

The flavonoids in dark chocolate may have positive effects on cognitive function ([Nutrients 2020](#)). Research suggests that regular consumption of dark chocolate may enhance memory and improve cognitive performance. Cocoa contains natural stimulants like caffeine and theobromine, which can contribute to increased alertness and concentration.

Dark chocolate is also associated with mood improvement, via its ability to stimulate the production of endorphins, the "feel-good" hormones ([Science Direct, 2022](#)) Dark chocolate contains serotonin

While the health benefits of dark chocolate are enticing, it's crucial to emphasize moderation. Choosing high-quality dark chocolate with a cocoa content of 85% or higher ensures maximum health benefits while minimizing sugar intake. As with any treat, enjoying dark chocolate as part of a balanced diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, is key to reaping its potential rewards. So, go ahead and savor the bitter-sweet delight of dark chocolate, knowing that, in moderation, it can be a delectable ally in promoting your overall well-being.

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

