



March 2016

March: Eye Health -Take a Look at How You Can Protect Your Vision

Our eyes are amazing organs! They take in light, convert it into an electrical signal that is carried by a nerve to our brain, and our brain then interprets these signals into what we “see.”



Because vision is so important in our day-to-day lives, we need to do everything we can to protect it.

March is National Save Your Vision Month. Here are some tips on how to do this:

- ♦ **Have regular dilated eye exams.** Dilation opens your pupil wider so the doctor can better examine the inside of your eye to check for damage or signs of eye diseases like macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic eye disease.
- ♦ **Eat right.** We’ve all heard that carrots help vision, but so do a lot of other fruits and vegetables like dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, etc.) and the omega 3 fatty acids found in fish such as salmon and tuna.
- ♦ **Know your family eye history.** Have any family members been diagnosed as having eye disease? Many conditions are hereditary.
- ♦ **Involved in sports or other activities?** Be sure to wear protective eyewear like safety glasses, shields or goggles.
- ♦ **Out in the sun?** Wear those shades! They protect your eyes from the Ultraviolet (UV) light that can cause damage like cataracts. Be sure sunglasses protect against both UV-A and UV-B subtypes.

- ♦ **Stay at a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese increases your chances of developing diabetes and other conditions which can cause blindness.
- ♦ **Stop smoking.** Research points to a link between smoking and an increased chance of experiencing macular degeneration, damage to the optic nerve, and glaucoma.
- ♦ **Take a break.** If your job requires you to fix your vision on one spot for long periods of time – like staring at a computer screen – your eyes can get dry and fatigued. Follow the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes look at another object that is 20 feet away from you for 20 seconds.
- ♦ **Do you wear contacts?** Be sure to wash your hands before handling and disinfecting your contact lenses.
- ♦ **Know what to watch for.** If you experience a decrease in your vision, have drainage or redness, pain, double vision, have diabetes, see flashes of light, floaters (specks that float across your eyes), or halos (circles) around a light, see your eye doctor.

These simple steps can help you
Save Your Vision!

Nutrition Nook

Can't, or just don't, drink cow's milk? Soy milk is a good substitute.

- ▶ Soy milk comes closest to matching the 8 grams of protein in a cup of cow's milk.
- ▶ Check the label; light or sweetened soy milk may have just 5-6 grams.



Prepping for Allergy Season

The allergy season usually begins when the temperature hits 60 degrees for 3-4 days in a row. Here are some tips to try this year:



- ◆ Keep up to date on the pollen counts and forecast.
- ◆ Taking medication for your allergies? Start taking it before you have symptoms – at least a week before the season begins.
- ◆ Limit time outdoors, especially if it is windy and early in the morning (when pollen level is often highest).
- ◆ When you are outdoors, wear regular or sun glasses to keep pollen out of eyes. Use a N95 surgical mask.
- ◆ Limit the pollen you bring into the house. When you come inside leave shoes at the door, take a shower to wash off pollen and change clothes. Keep windows shut and use air conditioning in both the home and car.
- ◆ Don't dry cloths outside. They will collect pollen.
- ◆ Use HEPA (High-Efficiency Particulate Air) filters on vacuum and furnace.
- ◆ Consider using over-the-counter medications like antihistamines (Claritin, Benadryl), decongestants (Sudafed, Afrin), and saline solution nasal sprays. Check with your doctor first.

Recipe of the Month — Arroz Con Pollo (Chicken with Rice)

Serves 6 | Calories 200 | Saturated Fat 1 g | Protein 11 g | Sodium 70 mg

Ingredients

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| • 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil | • 2 1/4 cups chicken broth (low-sodium) |
| • 1 chicken (whole, cut up, skin removed) | • 1 bay leaf |
| • 1 green pepper (chopped) | • 1 cup rice (uncooked) |
| • 1 onion (chopped) | • 1 cup peas |
| • 3 garlic cloves (minced) | • Salt (to taste, optional) |
| • 2 tomatoes (chopped) | • Pepper (to taste, optional) |



Directions

1. In a large skillet heat oil and brown chicken on both sides. 2. Add green pepper, onion, and garlic; cook for about 5 minutes. 3. Add tomato, chicken broth, bay leaf, salt/pepper to taste. 4. Cover and cook 20 minutes. 5. Add rice, stir well, cover and simmer for 20-30 minutes longer, or until all liquid has been absorbed and chicken is tender. 6. Add peas and cook until hot.

Fit Tip - Piriformis Stretches

The **piriformis** is a muscle that lies under your glute or butt muscle. It can become very tight and painful. But you can stretch it effectively either lying down or sitting.

If you have been told to not cross your legs for a medical reason, do not do these stretches without first checking with your doctor!

- The first two pictures show the person crossing one leg over the other to make the shape of the number 4.
 - The leg doing the crossing is the one being stretched.
 - If lying down, bring the knee of the other leg towards your chest. Use your hands to pull that knee closer to the chest to increase the stretch.
 - If sitting, push down gently on the knee of the leg being stretched while hinging forward at the waist. Keep looking straight ahead.
 - You should feel a stretch deep in your butt behind the hip.
- The third picture shows another way to stretch the piriformis.
 - Pull the knee of the leg being stretched up and across your body towards the opposite shoulder.
 - For some people, this may be a more comfortable way to stretch this muscle.

