



Take Care of Your Eyes

Do you look forward to the green grass, red and yellow tulips, and all the other beautiful, blooming colors of spring? In honor of nature's rebirth and the beauty around us, let's consider how to maintain healthy vision. April has two national observances for eye health: Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month and Women's Eye Health and Safety Month.

Eat healthfully. Protecting your eyes starts with the food on your plate, especially brightly colored fruits and vegetables. Consider your eyes if you plant a garden, and when you write your grocery list or visit a farmers market this summer.

- Green leafy vegetables (such as spinach, kale), corn, peas, collard greens, orange and yellow bell peppers and egg yolks naturally contain the eye-healthy pigments "zeaxanthin" and "lutein."

Get regular physical activity. Exercise improves blood circulation and increases oxygen levels to the eyes. Enjoy warmer weather by taking a walk in the morning, during a lunch break or in the evening. Gardening is a form of exercise and a way to grow your own food.

- Did you know? SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits can be used to purchase seeds and plants that produce food for the household to eat.

Wear sunglasses. Protect your eyes from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays when outdoors. Be sure your sunglasses have UV-A and UV-B protection to block both forms of ultraviolet rays.

Take breaks from your "screen." Staring at your computer, TV or phone screen can cause eyestrain, blurry vision, trouble focusing at a distance, dry eyes, headaches, and neck, back and shoulder pain. Consider these tips:

- Every 20 minutes, rest your eyes by looking 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- At least every two hours, get up and take a 15-minute break to be away from a screen.

See www.ndsu.edu/boomers for more information about nutrition, exercise and your eyes.

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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Make this a main-dish salad by adding some protein.
Use your favorite dressing or try making this homemade dressing.

Spinach Salad With Poppy Seed Dressing

- 8 c. bite-sized pieces fresh spinach
- ½ c. julienne* strips of carrots or jicama**
- ½ c. sliced fresh radishes
- 2 to 3 medium fresh oranges, peeled, seeded and cut up or 1 medium mango, diced



Optional: Add protein, such as hard-cooked chopped egg, leftover grilled chicken or beef, and/or canned white beans

Optional: strawberries as garnish

Prepare as directed and toss.

*"Julienne" refers to food cut into long thin strips like matchsticks.

**Jicama (Mexican yam or Mexican turnip) is a root vegetable found in the produce section of many grocery stores. It looks somewhat like a potato, but it does not brown after cutting.

Dressing:

- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 2 Tbsp. white vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. yellow mustard
- 2 Tbsp. finely diced onions
- 2 tsp. poppy seeds
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ⅓ c. canola oil

In tightly covered container, shake all dressing ingredients. In a large bowl, toss dressing and remaining ingredients. Garnish with egg and/or strawberries, if desired.

With four eggs and 1 cup strawberries: Makes four servings. Each serving has 360 calories, 25 grams (g) fat, 10 g protein, 28 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber and 320 milligrams (mg) sodium.

With 1 cup strawberries as optional ingredient: Makes four servings. Each serving has 290 calories, 20 g fat, 4 g protein, 28 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber and 250 mg sodium.

For more recipes, visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/food and click on the recipe database, then search for an ingredient such as spinach.

My doctor mentioned that leafy greens are good for my eyes. I have space for a small garden this spring. Do you have any tips?

If you decide to plant an eye-healthy salad garden, sow the seeds for a variety of leafy greens in the spring, and consider planting a second crop later in the summer. Be sure to water the plants well because the crispness of the lettuce will vary depending on the amount of watering. Weed regularly and keep the soil loose around the plants.

You can begin harvesting your greens when the leaves about 2 inches long.

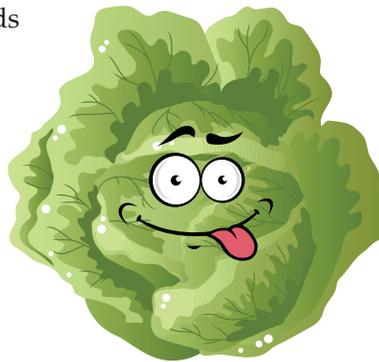
Consider harvesting the outer leaves so your plants will continue to produce.

Be sure to rinse the leaves thoroughly under cool water, and try a salad spinner to remove excess water. You also can use a clean paper towel to blot dry the lettuce.



FoodWi\$e Tip of the Month

Bagged salads labeled "ready to eat," "washed" or "triple washed" do not need to be rinsed prior to eating unless the package directions instruct you to do so. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping leafy greens separate from raw meat and poultry and their juices.



Just for Fun

Q: What did the salad greens say to the kid?

A: We'll make your mouth and your tummy happy, if you lettuce (let us)!

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Contact the local office of the
NDSU Extension Service
for more information
on food and nutrition or
managing your food dollar.

