

# The UConn Buzz



## Eye Opening Health Information

Our eyes are one of the most important organs we have. In addition to providing us sight, they help us to express emotion, and have been called the windows to the soul. Unfortunately, there are many problems that can affect the human eye and impair vision. Vision loss can lead to a diminished quality of life, as well as causing suffering, disability, and takes an economic toll on millions of people. In 2005, a National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) survey found that more than 70% of respondents consider that the loss of their eyesight would have the greatest impact on their day-to-day life.

### How does the eye work?

Simply, it is all about light. An object will reflect light and that reflection of light enters your eye. The light starts by passing through the Cornea (a clear dome over the iris), then into the pupil which is the opening in the center of the iris (the iris is like the shutter of the camera, it can open and close depending on the amount of light present). The light then moves through the crystalline lens (like the lens of a camera) to the retina (the retina is like the film of the camera, it processes all the light rays into impulses sent to the optic nerve). Eye issues can affect many different areas of the eye and lead to impaired vision.

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Some of the more common conditions affecting the eyes and vision are:

- [Refractive Error \(Myopia, Hyperopia, Astigmatism\)](#)
- [Cataracts](#)
- [Floaters](#)
- [Glaucoma](#)
- [Macular Degeneration](#)

Vision loss is common, according to [the National Eye Institute](#) "blindness or low vision affects more than 3.3 million Americans aged 40 years and older; this number is predicted to double by 2030 due to the increasing epidemics of diabetes, other chronic diseases." It a health issue that not only affects people as they age but younger people as well. The [American Optometric Association reports](#) that "vision disorders in pediatric and youth populations are the 4th most common disability in the U. S. and the most prevalent handicapping condition during childhood." [The CDC states](#) "approximates that 14 million individuals aged 12 years & older have visual impairment, among which more than 80% could be corrected with refractive correction."

### How to protect your eyes

There are several ways to help protect your vision.

One of the most important things you can do is having a comprehensive dilated eye exam on a [regular basis](#). You may think your vision is fine or that your eyes are healthy, but visiting your eye care professional for a eye exam is the only way to really be sure. These professionals are trained to detect these diseases in their early stages.

Wearing protective eyewear, including sunglasses.

Give your eyes a rest. If you spend a lot of time at the computer 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 short exercise can help reduce eyestrain.

Know your family's eye health history since many eye diseases are hereditary.

Eat right to protect your sight. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables (particularly dark leafy greens) and eating fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, tuna, and halibut are important for keeping your eyes healthy

Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of developing diabetes and other systemic conditions, which can lead to vision loss.



## HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

It's Fair Season again

[58th Annual Lebanon Country Fair](#) - August 11-13th

[168th Annual Brooklyn Fair](#) - August 24 - 27th

- [Steeple Chase Bike Tour](#) -Saturday, August 19th. Choose from a 100,62.5, 50, 35, 20 mile ride or a and 5.6-mile walk/ride.
- [Dog Adoption Event](#) - Pet Valu (Fieldstone Commons) with Sadie Mae Foundation. Sat., Aug 19th, 11:00am - 2:00pm.
- [The Farmer's Cow Summer Corn Roast & Farm Tour](#) - Saturday, August 5th from 1 to 3pm, Cushman Farms North Franklin. This event featuring fresh picked local sweet corn slow roasted, complimentary ice cream, wagon rides, and tour.
- [Edible Animal Contest at Ellington Farmers' Market](#) - Saturday, August 5th, 9am till noon. Bring edible animal to the big gazebo at 9:00 to be entered. Winners are announced at 12:00..
- [Kids Who TRI Succeed](#) - Saturday, August 26th 8am check in, at Mansfield Middle School. Children's Triathlon for ages 4-14, \$25 per child.

**Sources include:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Optometric Associations, National Eye Institute, Prevent Blindness, WebMD.



August is ripe with peaches, nectarines, tomatoes, corn, zucchini, bell peppers, eggplant, carrots and more. Check out the [EHHD Produce of the Week](#) page for some recipes. Also, check [CT Grown](#) page for lots of information about CT farms, farmers' markets, and pick-your-own locations.

## Santa Fe Chilled Nectarine Soup

### INGREDIENTS

2 lbs nectarines cut up  
½ tsp red pepper flakes  
1 C cranberry cocktail juice  
½ tsp salt  
1 C apple juice  
¼ C fresh cilantro leaves  
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar  
Salt and Pepper to taste



### DIRECTIONS

Combine nectarines with juices, salt, pepper flakes & vinegar in electric blender. Whirl until smooth. Add cilantro leaves & whirl in a stop-and-go fashion a few seconds. Serve chilled.



## VACCINES are not just for kids.



August is [National Immunization Awareness Month](#) (NIAM) and it is important to remember vaccines are an important step in protecting adults against serious and sometimes deadly disease. Tens of thousands of adults are hospitalized and even die each year from diseases that are preventable by vaccines.

- About 900,000 people get pneumococcal pneumonia

every year, leading to as many as 400,000 hospitalizations & 19,000 deaths.

- Each year, an average of 226,000 people are hospitalized due to influenza and between 3,000 and 49,000 people die of influenza and its complications
- Of the approximately one million cases of shingles that occur annually, up to 9% will involve the eye.

All adults should get the influenza vaccine each year to protect against seasonal flu. Every adult should have one dose of Tdap vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis or whooping cough) if they did not get Tdap as a teen. The Td (tetanus and diph-

theria) booster vaccine should be received every 10 years.

Take [CDC's vaccine quiz](#) to find which vaccines may be recommended for you.

Be sure to visit the [Eastern Highlands Health District website](#) for more information about immunizations.

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.

