

Spring 2021

# Health Chronicle



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## Allergies and Your Eyes

If you suffer from seasonal allergies, your eyes are usually the first indicator that spring is in the air. Redness, puffiness, itchiness, watering... these are all warning signs of allergic conjunctivitis. Other symptoms include blurred vision, a burning sensation, swollen eyelids and sensitivity to light.

The reason allergies act up the most during spring and fall is that trees and grass pollinate throughout the spring, while ragweed pollinates in the fall. Mold spores are present during the same time. It's common for the immune system to overreact to these allergens causing the impact right on the surface of our eyes.

Of course your eyes can be sensitive to allergens in your environment year round as well. Things like dust and pet dander can cause the same types of reaction as seasonal allergies.

Because many allergens are airborne, it's almost impossible to avoid allergic reactions entirely. But there are a few things you can do to limit your exposure. Most physicians recommend you avoid going outside on windy days, which is usually when most allergens are flying through the air. If you must be outside, you should wear sunglasses and keep those COVID-19 masks handy as they can protect your nasal passages allergic annoyances as well.

Here are ways to protect your eyes and soothe the discomforts of allergies.

**Avoid Outdoor Exposure** - Stay indoors as much as possible when pollen counts are at their peak, usually during the midmorning and early evening, and when wind is blowing pollens around. Avoid using window fans that can draw pollens and molds into the house.

**Water** - Staying hydrated is especially good if you end up with an allergy attack. The more water you consume the better.

**Eye Drops** - Eye Drops can be very soothing to dry and irritated eyes. Most over-the-counter drops for eye allergies have the same medications used to treat nasal allergies:

- Antihistamines and mast cell stabilizers block the release of itch-causing chemicals
- Decongestant drops can shrink blood vessels in your eyes, which helps with the redness

- Tear substitutes rinse away allergens and keep eyes moist

People with certain conditions should not use some types of eye drops, so it's always best to ask your eye doctor.

**Oral Medication** – Many over-the-counter antihistamines and decongestants can help control your symptoms. These can be found in pills, capsules and liquids. Be cautious about their side effects as they can cause drowsiness, dizziness or make you feel hyperactive and wired. It's important to consult your physician before trying any type of oral medication, especially if you have high blood pressure or other medical conditions.

**Allergy Shots** – Different types of allergy shots can help your immune system get used to the things that trigger your symptoms. There are usually several options for people with severe allergies. Treatment can take months, and you may still need to use antihistamine medicines. Ask your doctor if this is an option for you.

**Be Hands Off** - Keep your hands away from your eyes. It's hard not to touch them, but it'll only make things worse. Avoid rubbing because when you do the mast cells in your eyes release more of those itch-causing chemicals.

**Avoid contact lenses** – Wear your glasses when seasonal allergies are at their peak.

Don't forget about those pesky year-long allergies, such as pet dander, dust and mold. They can cause symptoms all year long.

**Indoor exposure tips** – consider these methods to reduce your symptoms:

- Keep windows closed and use air conditioning in your car and home. Air conditioning units and filters should be kept clean.
- Reduce exposure to dust mites, especially in the bedroom. Use "mite-proof" covers for pillows, comforters and duvets. Wash your bedding frequently, using hot water (at least 130 degrees Fahrenheit).
- To limit exposure to mold, keep the humidity in your home low (between 30 and 50 percent) and clean your bathrooms, kitchen and basement regularly. Use a dehumidifier, especially in the basement and in other damp, humid places. If mold is visible, clean it with detergent and a 5 percent bleach solution.
- Clean floors with a damp rag or mop, rather than dry-dusting or sweeping.

**Avoid Buster** - If you have a pet, keep them out of your bedroom. If you don't have a pet but can't resist playing with your neighbor's adorable new puppy, wash your hands as soon as you're done. And avoid touching your eyes before you do. It's also a good idea to change your clothes and put them in the laundry.

Eye allergies can be very annoying, but they pose little threat to your long-term eye health. However, they don't have exclusive ownership over their symptoms. Red, itchy, burning and puffy eyes can be caused by infections and other conditions that can threaten your eyesight. If you have any concerns, you should consult with your eye doctor.

# HVA SUPPORTS HEALTHY VISION AROUND THE WORLD

Every year, Healthy Vision Association sponsors a variety of charitable organizations. Here is a list of the organizations we currently, and are continuing to, sponsor.

- **Prevent Blindness** – <http://www.preventblindness.org>
- **Optometry Giving Sight** – <http://www.givingsight.org>
- **America's VetDogs** – <http://www.vetdogs.org>
- **Himalayan Cataract Project** – <http://www.cureblindness.org>
- **The Seeing Eye** – <http://www.seeingeye.org>
- **United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA)** – <http://www.usaba.org>
- **Eye Thrive** – <http://www.eccoma.org>
- **Support Sight** – <http://www.mvrf.org>
- **Children's Center for the Visually Impaired (CCVI)** – <http://www.c cvi.org>
- **Guiding Eyes for the Blind** – <http://www.guidingeyes.org>
- **Team Activities for Special Kids (TASK)** – <http://www.tasksports.org>
- **Mercy Ships** – <http://www.mercyships.org>
- **Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments** – <http://www.dgckids.org>
- **1Touch Project** – <http://www.1touchproject.com>
- **Kids Vision for Life St. Louis** – <http://www.kidsvisionforlifestlouis.com>
- **Unite for Sight** – <http://www.uniteforsight.org>
- **United in Stride** – <https://www.unitedinstride.com>
- **St. Louis Blues Blind Hockey Club** – <https://www.stlbbhc.org>
- **NY Metro Blind Hockey Team** – <https://www.nymbh.org>
- **Thompson Center for Autism - University of Missouri Autism and Visual Impairment Outreach**
- **Folsom Project for the Visually Impaired**
- **MUOT Tiger OT Low Vision Program**

HVA is very fortunate to have an extremely impressive board of directors. Their real world success and experience and their overall commitment and care have been pivotal to the growth and success of HVA.

## HVA Sponsors Optometry Giving Sight

We are delighted to announce that Healthy Vision Association (HVA) and Optometry Giving Sight (OGS) have renewed their funding partnership for 2021, which began in 2014. HVA's commitment makes it possible for OGS to support eye care projects around the world that help to end preventable blindness and impaired vision. It is estimated that uncorrected refractive error affects over 1.2 billion people across the globe. A simple eye exam and a pair of glasses, in most cases, can help turn a life of poverty into one of opportunity. OGS has supported the implementation of projects in over 40 countries for a total of over \$25 million. This includes the establishment and development of 14 schools of optometry, over 100 vision centers and countless service delivery programs throughout the developing world. In 2021, OGS' efforts will make an impact in Africa, Latin America, Asia and beyond including countries like Haiti, Guatemala, Mexico, Vietnam, Tanzania and Ghana. The support of HVA and the optical industry at large makes this possible. Please visit our website at [givingsight.org](http://givingsight.org) to learn more.



OPTOMETRY  
**GIVINGSIGHT**

# Age with Style and Grace



(Family Features) Aging may be inevitable, but with advancement in research and technology, there are plenty of ways you can slow, or even reverse, the hands of time to stay healthy and promote longevity.

Consider these ideas from Longevity Labs+, a company dedicated to cutting-edge aging research and the makers of spermidineLIFE, a first-of-its kind, clinically studied supplement containing natural spermidine, which renews cells and can reverse the signs of aging:

## Protect Your Skin

Not only does your skin protect vital internal organs, it's an essential barrier to intruders like bacteria and other infection-causing microbes. The skin is also the body's greatest tool in managing hydration levels and providing critical cues to your nervous system about things like temperature and pain.

With such a big role in your overall health and well-being, the skin often shows the first signs of aging. Wrinkles and age spots are often indicators of a person's true age.

However, you can reduce the visible impacts of aging on the skin with daily care. Regularly moisturizing helps

keep skin supple, and diligent sunscreen application year-around can protect your skin from damaging sun rays. Some compounds and nutrient plans can help nurture youthful skin.

It's also important to closely monitor your skin for changes, especially changes to moles or other spots that may be signs of skin cancer, which is generally treatable when caught and managed early. In addition, collagen peptides and a spermidine-rich diet can be key in ensuring healthy skin into your later years.

## Maintain Clean and Healthy Cells

You may not realize it, but as each day passes, your body's cells age, die and accumulate toxic matter, which disrupts cellular function and causes a myriad of age-related diseases such as dementia and cardiovascular disease as well as decreases immune function. However, a compound naturally produced by the body and found in nature called spermidine can clean cells of toxic matter so they can operate with renewed youth and efficiency. Spermidine triggers a cellular renewal process called autophagy, which allows cells to shed layers of waste and regenerate instead of slowing down and dying off. As the body ages, natural levels of spermidine

decline, cellular regeneration slows and signs of aging are accelerated.

Spermidine is a key to anti-aging and is believed to help reduce the onset of neurodegenerative and age-related diseases. You can boost spermidine levels by eating certain foods that are high in spermidine, like lentils, soybeans, mushrooms, aged cheese, pears, broccoli, peas and cauliflower.

However, few people eat enough spermidine-rich foods to maintain optimal levels in their later years. Taking a supplement like award-winning spermidineLIFE\* can support cellular renewal and help cells stay young and healthy. The first and only clinically studied spermidine supplement in the world, it includes spermidine naturally extracted from European non-GMO wheat germ along with carefully selected vitamins, minerals and healthy fats.

### Manage Physical Health

As you grow older, your metabolism slows, making it easier to hold onto extra weight. Excess pounds are associated with numerous health risks, in addition to slowing you down overall. Maintain a more youthful body and mobility by consuming a well-rounded, nutritious, whole-food diet and committing to regular exercise, which can help not only banish extra calories but also keep your muscle tone strong, your balance steady and your posture straight.

Just as important as what you

do to protect your health as you age is what you don't do. That means limiting alcohol, quitting smoking and avoiding the temptation to indulge in high-fat and sugary foods.

### Support Mind Matters

Worry lines aren't just wrinkles that come with age; they can be a sign of persistent angst. From stress to lack of sleep to slips in memory, there are plenty of reasons to focus on your mental health as you advance in years.

Getting enough rest can play a big role in your physical health as well as your mental wellness. Too little sleep prevents your body from reenergizing itself fully and can affect your cognition and mood. Worry and stress can also cause you to feel your years. Information is key, and smart devices such as heart rate and sleep trackers can provide you with the necessary information to find what helps and what hurts healthy circadian rhythms and deep, regenerative sleep.

Growing forgetful as you age is also common to an extent, but memory problems can be exacerbated by stress, lack of sleep and other factors. You can also keep your mind sharp by playing games, doing puzzles, reading and maintaining an active and engaging social life with others. Even during this pandemic, phone and video calls can help engage your mental state through important social activity.

Find more ideas for navigating your later years with grace at [spermidinelife.us](http://spermidinelife.us).



### Longevity Breakfast Bake

*Prep time: 30 minutes*

*Cook time: 1 hour*

*Servings: 8*

This tasty recipe features three of the top 10 spermidine-rich foods: broccoli, mushrooms and aged cheese. It also keeps well, so you can prepare it for a casual brunch then reheat for an easy breakfast the next day.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound uncured, organic bacon
- 1 pound sliced, organic white mushrooms
- 1 pound organic broccoli
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 cups grated aged cheddar cheese
- 14 organic eggs
- 1-2 teaspoons garlic salt
- fresh ground black pepper, to taste

1. In skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil.
2. While skillet is warming, chop bacon into small pieces.
3. Cook bacon until crispy. Transfer bacon to plate covered with paper towel to absorb excess grease.
4. Drain most grease from skillet, reserving some to saute mushrooms.
5. Saute mushrooms until translucent.
6. Cut broccoli into thick, bite-sized pieces; cover and microwave 4 minutes with water to soften.
7. Heat oven to 350 F.
8. Crack eggs and whisk until egg whites and yolks blend together in one consistent color.
9. Season with garlic salt and pepper, to taste.
10. In bottom of baking pan or cast-iron skillet, spread broccoli and mushrooms evenly.
11. Add crispy bacon bits and cheddar cheese.
12. Pour eggs into pan and carefully stir until ingredients are evenly mixed.
13. Bake 40-45 minutes, or until top of casserole starts to brown.

*Photo courtesy of Getty Images (Breakfast Casserole)*

*\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.*

# Survey: Americans Don't Follow Through on Crucial Annual Eye Exams

(BPT) - If you've fallen behind in scheduling and keeping your regular eye exams, you're not alone. In fact, eye health is not an important enough priority for most people, according to a recent study by Johnson & Johnson Vision.

That's a problem, since annual eye exams are the single most crucial step you can take to effectively protect your eyes. Alarming, the global survey reveals that 80% of people see eye exams as important for their overall health, yet only 46% actually get their recommended eye exam each year. Further, many can't give a reason for that lack of action.

"It's worrisome that so many people understand the importance of annual eye exams, but don't make them happen," notes Dr. Carol Alexander, head of North America Vision Care professional relations for Johnson & Johnson Vision. "We need to find ways to help people push past the obstacles that keep them from taking good care of their eye health, which is a key to their quality of life."

You may want to be aware of these other eye care facts revealed by the survey.

## People are misinformed about the need for check-ups

Myths prevent some people from moving forward with eye exams. For example, 32% of respondents say they haven't scheduled an appointment because their vision hasn't changed in the past year. In total, 47% think they can prevent their own eyesight from deteriorating, while 46% think vision loss is a normal part of aging or a process over which they have no control. Another problem? Twenty-five percent consider their eye health less important than their other health concerns.

The truth is, a single eye exam can help identify a wide span of life-altering conditions, and the information gained can help preserve and protect your vision. Many people don't realize a comprehensive eye exam can also help detect some 270 different medical conditions including high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, or even cancer.

## People underestimate the impact of clear eyesight

Our ability to see (or lack thereof) has a profound effect on our lives. However, 61% of survey respondents don't realize clear vision is key to learning and comprehension, and 75% don't realize it's critical for healthy development in children.

## People are deterred by the pandemic

While COVID-19 has drawn attention to the importance of overall health and well-being, not everyone feels comfortable going in for routine doctor visits right now. You may be among the 16% of respondents who have been reluctant or unable to attend eye exams due to factors related to COVID-19.

That's understandable; however, routine medical care is still necessary. About half of survey respondents look to their doctors or personal care providers to inform them of the importance of their eye health, but only 27% report that their providers have spoken to them about the link between their eyes and other illnesses.

Clearly, people across the world under-prioritize the importance of eye health. That's why Johnson & Johnson Vision launched Prioritize Your Eyes, a worldwide effort to raise awareness about the importance of eye health and encourage everyone to take the single most important step in eye health - get an eye exam. You can find an eye care professional for your next comprehensive eye exam at [JJVision.com](http://JJVision.com).



# STUDENT LOAN RELIEF BENEFIT



**44 million** Americans are saddled with an average of \$37,000 of student loan debt and 29.5 million are under the age of 39.

StuLo offers a wholistic approach that focuses on student loan debt relief for members of the Healthy Vision Association.



## Federal Student Loan Concierge

### Concierge Level Service

- Accredited Student Loan Specialists
- Expertise in federal loan types and repayment program qualification
- Consultative approach for determination of consolidation and repayment qualification
- Full service, end-to-end, and streamlined document preparation and processing on behalf of the member
- Cuts 90+ day processing time down to 6-8 weeks

### Benefits

- Free initial consultation for personal review of loans and finances to determine program eligibility on the first call
- Creditworthiness is not a factor in federal consolidation and repayment programs
- Average monthly payments reduced by over \$300 last year
- Member decides whether or not to make loan payments during 6-8 week consolidation application process
- One-time service fee paid in installments



## Private Student Loan Refinancing

### State of the Art Technology and Service

- Access to a platform of over 300 non-profit, local, and community banks
- Broad range of underwriting risk tolerance for income, credit, and debt ratios
- Quick and easy 3 minute online application to determine interest rate qualification
- High level of customer satisfaction

### Benefits

- Variety of loan types to meet employee objective of lower payments or accelerated payoff
- Monthly payment reductions of up to 40% with average savings of \$15,270
- Fixed, variable, and interest-only repayment options available for up to first four years of loan
- Largest unemployment protection in the industry with up to 18 months
- Access to private student loans for members or dependent still in college
- No cost to member. No loan origination fees or prepayment penalties

Visit [www.healthyvisionassociation.com](http://www.healthyvisionassociation.com) for complete benefit details.



## How it Works

1. Price Your Car - See the upfront price and compare it to what others paid. TrueCar prearranged pricing with their network of Certified Dealers ensures a hassle-free buying experience - at home and at the dealer.
2. Locate Your Dealer - Once you have decided on a vehicle, you can connect with local Certified Dealers to schedule a test drive and confirm availability.
3. Test Drive and Buy - Print your exclusive Price Protection Certificate and bring it to the dealer for a hassle-free purchase.



Visit [www.healthyvisionassociation.com](http://www.healthyvisionassociation.com) for full benefit details.

The HVA Health Chronicle is published by:  
**Healthy Vision Association**

For information regarding your membership and association services, call or write:

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**American Independent Business Coalition**  
**1630 Des Peres Road, Suite 140**  
**St. Louis, MO 63131**

**1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200**

Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Benefits may not be available in all membership levels. For more information, or to upgrade your membership, please call 1-800-387-9027.

The Healthy Vision Association is dedicated to helping its members see well and be healthy by providing access that might not be available through employers to products, services and information that promote vision and overall health.

As a Healthy Vision Association member, you'll enjoy discounts and savings on health, travel and other services that can save you hundreds of dollars each year. And, you'll have the opportunity to enroll in premium vision plans offered by VSP® Vision Care to Association members (plans offered may vary by state). A portion of your annual enrollment fees will be used to sponsor charitable organizations that support vision and overall health and wellness.

