

Keep an eye out for diabetes-related vision problems

Seeing an eye doctor every year for a comprehensive dilated eye exam is essential to your health. Because diabetes can increase your risk of several diseases, a regular visit with your ophthalmologist or optometrist increases your chances of early detection, treatment, and prevention.

FOUR TO KNOW

It's important to understand the eye diseases commonly associated with diabetes, which include these four:

Diabetic retinopathy. High blood sugar can lead to damage in the tiny blood vessels around the retina, the inner lining at the back of each eye. This damage can cause the blood vessels to form pouches that affect vision. In later stages of the disease, fluid leakage can trigger abnormal new blood vessels, causing serious vision problems.

Diabetic macular edema. Diabetes can cause swelling in the macula, a part of the retina, which can progress to partial or complete vision loss.

Glaucoma. A group of diseases wherein fluid buildup in the eye leads to damage of the optic nerve due to the lack of proper drainage. This damage can cause total or partial vision loss.

Cataracts. A cataract is a clouding of the lenses in the eye, which diminishes vision. While cataracts can occur in individuals without diabetes as they age, those with diabetes are at an increased risk earlier in life.



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AVOIDING EYE DISEASE

Anyone with diabetes can get one of these eye diseases. However, individuals who smoke or who have uncontrolled blood glucose levels, cholesterol, or blood pressure are at an increased risk.

To learn more about your benefits, contact Member Services at **800-538-5038**. ■

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Institutes of Health

Eye exams

Most plans have an enhanced routine eye exam benefit for members who have been diagnosed with diabetes by an in-network provider. This enhanced benefit does not apply to exams for known medical conditions and ongoing medical care.

There is no coinsurance, copayment, or deductible for one routine eye exam per year.

This is also available for members on our Community Care, and some commercial plans.

If you have questions, check your benefits or contact SelectHealth.



COVID-19: Are you at high risk for serious complications?

If you are age 65 and older, have a chronic health condition such as diabetes or heart or lung disease, or have a weakened immune system, you may be at an increased risk for serious illness resulting from COVID-19.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR YOU?

Being at increased risk doesn't mean you're more likely to get the virus; however, it does mean that you may need to take a few extra precautions to reduce your risk.

Start with the basics:

- > Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- > Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- > Avoid touching public surfaces.
- > Try not to touch your face (germs can be transmitted from your hands to your eyes, nose, and mouth).

These precautions can be used to avoid catching any infectious disease, but because COVID-19 is proving to be more contagious than the flu, for example, there are some extra steps you can take to further decrease your risk of infection. For instance:

- > Keep a distance of at least 6 feet from other people.
- > Wear a cloth face mask in public.
- > Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, such as doorknobs, tables, light switches, and faucets.
- > Stay home as much as possible.
- > Avoid sharing personal items with others in your household.



In addition to those steps, people at higher risk should try to:

Cancel travel plans. Especially avoid all cruise and nonessential air travel.

Separate yourself. If possible, set aside a protected space in your house just for you, away from other family members.

Plan ahead. While you're still well, gather the phone numbers of your doctor, pharmacy, and insurance provider in one place.

Have enough medical supplies, household items, and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for several weeks, if needed. Since you have diabetes, it would be a good idea to keep simple carbs like regular soda, honey, gelatin-based desserts (like Jell-O), hard candies, or popsicles at the ready to raise your blood sugar if it gets too low.

Be smart about meds. If you can't get to the pharmacy, find out if you can get your prescriptions delivered, or get extra refills so you don't have to leave the house.

Create a safety net. If you live alone, get contact information for your neighbors, friends, and colleagues in case you need help.

Give telemedicine a try. Keep up with routine medical visits via Skype, FaceTime, or a telemedicine service. ■

Sources: American Diabetes Association; American Heart Association; American Lung Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Do you need antibiotics?

Cold, Flu, Ear and Sinus Infections
Will Likely Heal with Time



Time to get tested for kidney disease?

When it comes to the damage diabetes can do to the body, consider your kidneys too. Your kidneys act as filters that clean your blood. Over time, high blood sugar levels can cause damage that reduces their effectiveness and leads to excessive fluid and waste product buildup in the blood, also known as kidney disease. This condition is serious because it can lead to kidney failure, which can only be treated by dialysis or transplant, so early detection and treatment are key.

GET SCREENED

Doctors recommend yearly testing since you may not have symptoms early on.

After a while, someone with kidney disease may begin to experience:

- > Weight gain
- > Ankle swelling
- > More frequent urination during the night

While diabetes is a leading cause of kidney failure, frequent testing with consistent management of blood sugar and blood pressure can prevent, delay, or even be used to treat kidney disease. ■

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Kidney Foundation



Medications: Safety first

While your medications are prescribed to help you, people are harmed every year because they take the wrong medication, or even the right medication the wrong way. To prevent this, you should know:

- > The name of your medication
- > Prescribed dosage
- > Why you're taking it
- > Possible side effects

As soon as you pick up a prescription, look at the label and the medicine itself. If you've taken the drug before, ask your pharmacist about any changes in medication size, color, markings, or dose.

The American Pharmacists Association and the National Council on Patient Information and Education also recommend:

- > Keeping a list in your wallet of all the medications you take, including prescriptions, herbs, vitamins, and supplements. Share this list with your healthcare providers.
- > Keeping medicine in its original bottle. The color of the bottle protects the medicine from light. Also, the label lists important information, including the name of the medicine and the pharmacy's phone number.
- > Throwing away any cotton in the bottle. It can absorb moisture and affect the medicine. ■

Be kind to yourself

Social distancing and worrying about your health can be stressful. To take good care of your mental health, remember these coping techniques:

- > Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to the news and social media.
- > Take deep breaths and stretch.
- > Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- > Exercise regularly.
- > Stay connected to important people in your life through the phone, your computer, or social media.
- > Talk with friends and family about how you're feeling.
- > Call your healthcare provider if the stress feels overwhelming.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Budget-Friendly BBQ Chicken Salad

NUTRITION FACTS

5 servings

Serving Size 2 cups

Amount per serving

Calories: 210

Fat: 4.5g

Saturated Fat: 1g

Cholesterol: 55mg

Sodium: 360mg

Total Carbohydrate: 22g

Dietary fiber: 4g

Total Sugars : 13g

Protein: 21g

Potassium: 720mg

INGREDIENTS

nonstick cooking spray

1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast

¼ cup BBQ sauce

4 strips turkey bacon (cooked and chopped)

2 shredded carrots

16 oz bag romaine lettuce (chopped)

½ medium red onion (or 1 small onion)

1 large cucumber diced

1 large tomato diced

½ tsp salt (optional)

½ tsp black pepper

½ cup poppy seed dressing (fat-free)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray. Line the sheet with the chicken breasts and brush each generously with barbeque sauce. Bake for 30 minutes or until the internal temperature of the chicken is 165 degrees F. Set aside to cool.
3. In a large salad bowl, toss together bacon, carrots, lettuce, onion, cucumber, tomatoes, salt (optional), and pepper.
4. Once chicken is cool, chop into small pieces and toss with the salad ingredients.
5. Pour dressing over salad and toss gently to coat. ■

Source: diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/budget-friendly-bbq-chicken-salad.html



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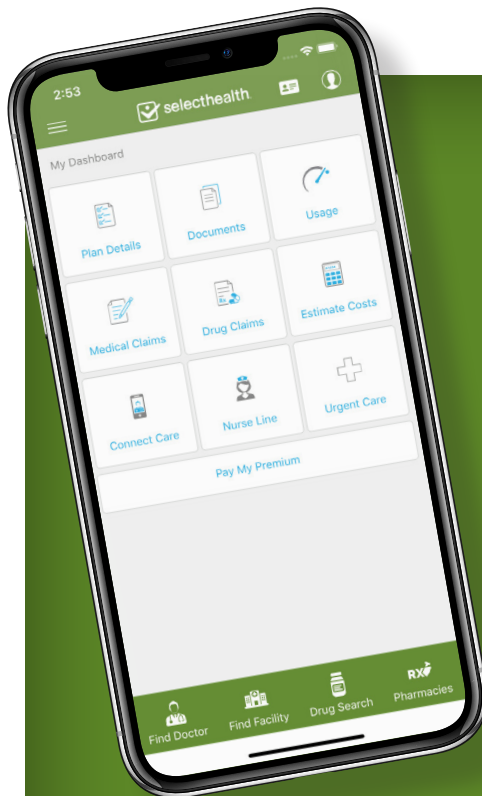


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If you have a Medicare Advantage® plan, call us toll-free at **855-442-9900**, weekdays 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., closed Sunday. Outside of these hours of operation, please leave a message and your call will be returned within one business day. TTY users, please call 711. SelectHealth is an HMO, HMO-SNP plan sponsor with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in SelectHealth Advantage depends on contract renewal.

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