



# Health & Wellness Update **February 2025**



## **February National Health Observance: Heart Month and Eye & Vision Health Month**

February's health observances are National Heart Month and Eye & Vision Health Month. Looking for educational information related to these topics? If so, check out the following UnitedHealthcare educational resources:



[Heart disease](#)

[Heart healthy diet supplements](#)

[Macular degeneration](#)

[Computer vision syndrome](#)

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## United at Work Presentation of the Month:

### Eating Mediterranean



Following a Mediterranean Diet may be a great way to enjoy many foods while living a healthier lifestyle. During this presentation, members may learn the health benefits associated with the Mediterranean diet and how to adopt Mediterranean eating habits. We will also provide a sample meal plan for this diet.

[Click here for the presentation](#)

# Healthy tip flier of the month.

## Digital eye strain

UnitedHealthcare | Health Tip


### Health tip: Digital eye strain

Digital eye strain, also known as Computer Vision Syndrome, describes a group of eye-and vision-related problems that result from prolonged computer, tablet, e-reader, and cell phone use. In most cases, symptoms of DES occur because the visual demands of the task exceed the visual abilities of the individual.<sup>1</sup>

**Facts to know<sup>1</sup>**

- Up to 65% of adults have experienced digital eye strain symptoms
- The usage of digital devices continuously for two hours is adequate to bring about digital eye strain
- Dry eye is a major risk factor for visual fatigue and other symptoms of digital eye strain
- Continuous staring at the screen leads to a decrease in the blink rate, causing dry eye-related problems

Causes <sup>2</sup>	Symptoms <sup>2</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor lighting</li><li>• Glare on the computer screen</li><li>• Improper viewing distances</li><li>• Poor seating posture</li><li>• Uncorrected vision problems (farsightedness and astigmatism)</li><li>• A combination of these factors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache</li><li>• Blurred vision</li><li>• Double vision</li><li>• Burning, itchy, dry, or tired eyes</li><li>• Loss of focus</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Neck pain</li><li>• Shoulder pain</li></ul>



People who wear eyeglasses or contact lenses may have difficulty when using screens.<sup>2</sup> For instance, they may:

- Tilt their head at an odd angle because glasses not designed for computer use
- Bend towards the screen to see more clearly
- Use incorrect postures that may cause muscle spasms or pain in the neck or back

United Healthcare

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Click [here](#) for more tips on how to prevent digital eye strain.

En Español

Click here to learn more tips

#### Sources:

1. National Library of Medicine. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9434525/>, October 2022. Accessed February 2024.
2. American Optometric Association. <https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-and-vision-conditions/computer-vision-syndrome?ss=y>, 2024. Accessed February 2024.

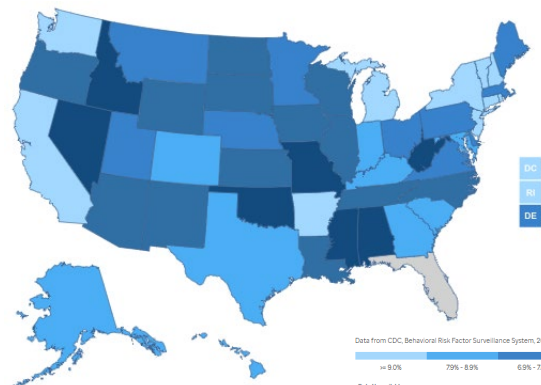
## Research corner:

### Fruit and Vegetable Consumption



#### Fruit and Vegetable Consumption by State

Percentage of adults who reported consuming two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily



#### Why does this matter?

Diets high in fruits and vegetables reduce the risk of many chronic diseases, such as Type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease and stroke. Consuming fruits and vegetables three or more times daily is associated with decreased cardiovascular deaths.

Roughly half of all adults in the United States suffer from preventable chronic diseases related to poor diet and physical inactivity. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 recommends that adults consume two cups of fruits and two and a half cups of vegetables per day. Consuming fruits and vegetables during pregnancy helps provide essential nutrients such as vitamin C and folic acid.

The potential economic benefit of improved healthy eating in the U.S. has been estimated at \$114.5 billion (2012 dollars) per year in medical savings, increased productivity and the value of prolonged life.

# Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

**U.S. Value:** 7.4%

**Top State #1:** Vermont: 12.9%

**Bottom State #50:** Oklahoma: 3.8%

**Definition:** Percentage of adults who reported consuming two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily.

## Who is affected?

Barriers to regular consumption of fruits and vegetables include cost, lack of access to fresh produce, perceived lack of preparation time and lack of cooking knowledge. Additionally, some Americans live in areas identified as food deserts, where access to healthful foods is limited.

According to America's Health Rankings data, the prevalence of fruit and vegetable consumption is higher among:

- Women compared with men.
- Adults ages 18-44 compared with those ages 65 and older.
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Asian adults, as well as adults who identify as other race, compared with Hispanic adults.
- College graduates compared with adults with lower educational attainment.
- Adults with an annual household income of \$75,000 or more compared with those with lower incomes.
- Adults living in metropolitan areas compared with those in non-metropolitan areas.

## What works?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers strategies for states and communities to improve access to fruits and vegetables, including:

- Adopting policies to ensure access to fruit and vegetable food service venues in worksites, hospital and universities.
- Encouraging farm-to-institution programs in schools, hospitals, workplaces and childcare centers.
- Improving access to stores and markets that sell fruits and vegetables. States with a higher density of healthy food retailers, farmers markets and acceptance of nutrition-assistance program benefits by farmers markets report higher consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Eliminating food deserts. Funding is available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish healthy retail outlets in underserved areas. USDA provides an [interactive tool](#) to identify food deserts at the census-tract level and [resources](#) to help individuals improve their diet.

Data Source & Year(s): CDC, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021

Suggested Citation: America's Health Rankings analysis of CDC, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, United Health Foundation, AmericasHealthRankings.org, accessed 2025.

[Click here to see how your state ranks](#)

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## Quick Video Tips.

# Benefits of owning a pet



### Let's make healthier happen

A health plan that's easier to understand and simpler to use — that's what we're all about it. Get the scoop on your benefits and feel confident knowing what your plan has to offer.

**[Watch: Dr. Taz share how pets may provide health benefits to their owners](#)**

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates.

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Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates, and UnitedHealthcare Service LLC in NY. Stop loss insurance is underwritten by UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or their affiliates, including UnitedHealthcare Life Insurance Company in NJ, and UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company of New York in NY.



## February is Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Low Vision Awareness Month

AMD is the leading cause of low vision and blindness in Americans age 50 years and older and affects 1.6 million Americans. As the Baby Boomer generation ages, the rates of AMD are expected to reach “epidemic proportions”. AMD is a progressive disease with no known cure. It slowly steals vision as it affects the retina, a paper-thin tissue lining the back of the eye, and causes the cells in the area to die. As a result, if you have AMD, you see blind spots, grayness and other distortions in the center frame of your vision.

### Reducing your risk for AMD

Even though there is no known cure for AMD, practicing healthy daily habits can reduce your risk for it. A healthy diet, not smoking and maintaining healthy blood pressure are important first steps. Other healthy habits that can lower the risk of AMD include:

- Eat a diet with plenty of green leafy vegetables such as kale, spinach, and collard greens, and fresh fruit.
- Fish that is high in omega-3 fatty acids is good for eye health. Try to include it in your diet at least once or twice a week. Types of fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids include salmon, sardines, mackerel, herring, and albacore tuna.
- It's important to keep your body healthy. Maintain a healthy weight, exercise regularly, maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels. The healthier your body, the more it can foster good eye health.
- Protect your eyes. Wear sunglasses and a hat with a visor in bright sunlight to protect your eyes from potentially harmful ultra-violet (UV) light and blue light.

For additional information on AMD, causes, stages, risk factors, treatment and support; click on the link below.

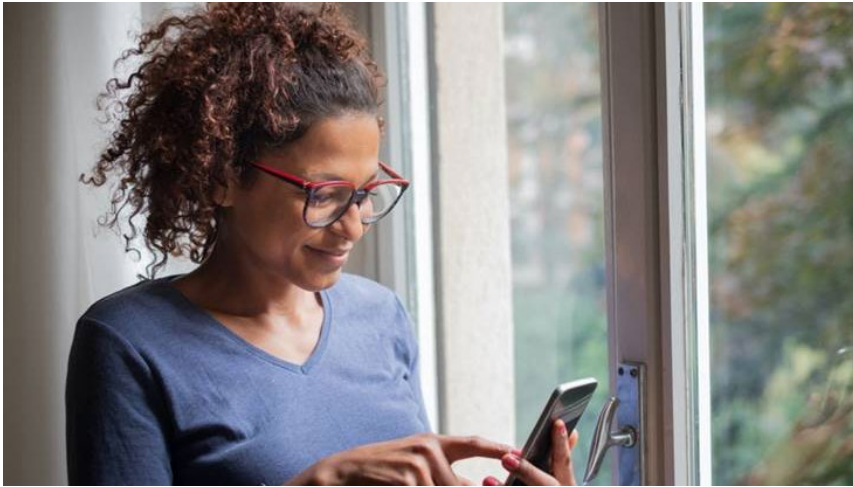
[Click here to learn more](#)

[En Español](#)

Source: [AMD \(Age-Related Macular Degeneration\) - Prevent Blindness](#)



# Member Resources – Frequently asked questions



Find answers to common questions about health plans and coverage

Whether you're new to your health plan or have been a member for years, from time to time, it's natural that questions may pop up. We've gathered common health plan and coverage questions to help you get started with finding the answers you may be looking for.

En Español

Get more member resources

## What's on the menu?



### Winter Crisp

What is that sweet cinnamon scent, wafting from your kitchen? It's this apple and cranberry winter crisp!

En Español

### MyPlate Food Groups



Fruits  
Grains

1 cups  
1 ounces

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons margarine
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour (all purpose)
- 1 teaspoon lemon peel (grated)
- 5 cups apple (unpeeled, sliced)

- 1 cup cranberries (fresh)
- 2/3 cup rolled oats
- 1/3 cup brown sugar (packed)
- ¼ cup whole wheat flour

## INSTRUCTIONS

### Filling:

1. Combine sugar, flour, and lemon peel in a medium bowl and mix well.
2. Stir in apples and cranberries.
3. Spoon into a 6-cup baking dish.

### Topping:

1. Combine oats, brown sugar, whole-wheat flour, and cinnamon in a small bowl.
2. Stir in melted margarine.
3. Sprinkle topping over filling.
4. Bake at 375 °F for 40 minutes or until filling is bubbly and top is brown.
5. Serve warm or at room temperature.

### Nutrition Information:

Yield: 6, Serving Size: 1/6 of recipe (171g)

Prep time: 20 minutes, Cook time: 40 minutes, Total time: 60 minutes

Calories – 288  
Carbohydrates – 58 g  
Protein – 3 g  
Fat – 7 g  
Saturated Fat – 1 g  
Sugars – 39 g  
Fiber – 6 g  
Sodium – 54 mg  
Cholesterol – 0 mg

[Click here for the recipe](#)

Source: [Winter Crisp | MyPlate](#)

#### March Preview

- Health Observance: National Nutrition Month and National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- Health Tip Flier of the Month: Mindful Eating
- United at Work Presentation: Everyday Nutrition
- Video of the month: Eating Strategies

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