

August 2010

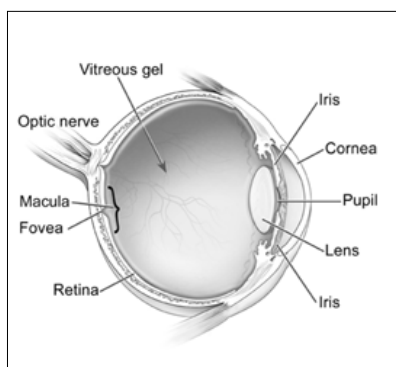
Empowering Caregivers

This newsletter is to help caregivers who are caring for loved ones participating in the Family Caregiver Support Program. This newsletter will be sent monthly, to cover a variety of health and care giving topics. If you have any suggestions for topics, comments or questions about the newsletter, please email us at caremanagement@ursulineseniors.org.

August is Cataract Awareness Month

What is a cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye that affects vision. It can occur in either eye or both eyes. Cataracts are related to aging and are very common in older adults.



What is the lens?

The lens is a clear part of the eye that helps to focus light, or an image, on the retina. The retina is the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye.

In a normal eye, light passes through the transparent lens to the retina. Once it reaches the retina, light is changed into nerve signals that are sent to the brain.

The lens must be clear for the retina to receive a sharp image. If the lens is cloudy from a cataract, the image you see will be blurred.

What causes cataracts?

The lens is made up of mostly water and protein. The protein is arranged in a certain way that keeps the lens clear and allows light to pass through the lens. As people age, some of the protein may clump together. This results in clouding in a small area of the lens. That "cloud" is a cataract. As more proteins clump together over time, the cataract may grow larger. This will make it more difficult for the person to see.

What will my vision be like if I have a cataract?

There are two ways that age-related cataracts may impact your vision:

- 1) Your vision may become cloudy in certain areas of your eye.
- 2) Your vision may slowly acquire a brownish shade as your lens changes to a brownish/yellowish color. If you have advanced lens discoloration, you may not be able to see blues and purples.

Common Symptoms of Cataracts

- ◆ Cloudy or blurry vision
- ◆ Colors seem faded
- ◆ Lights appearing too bright
- ◆ "Halos" appearing around lights
- ◆ Poor night vision
- ◆ Frequent eyeglass or contact prescription changes
- ◆ Double vision or multiple images in one eye



These can also be signs of other eye problems, so be sure to visit your eye doctor if you are experiencing any of these symptoms!

Ways to Protect Your Eyes



- ◆ Wear sunglasses and a hat with a brim to protect your eyes from UV rays
- ◆ Quit smoking
- ◆ Eat a healthy diet, including plenty of fruit, leafy green vegetables, and antioxidants
- ◆ Have yearly eye exams

(Source: National Eye Institute)

Living Well With Vision Loss

There are many devices that are specifically designed to benefit individuals who are suffering from vision loss. Here are just a few:

- ◆ Spectacle-mounted magnifiers
- ◆ Hand-held or spectacle-mounted telescopes
- ◆ Hand-held and stand magnifiers
- ◆ Large-type books, magazines, and newspapers
- ◆ Books-on-tape
- ◆ Talking wristwatches
- ◆ Self-threading needles

Talk to your eye doctor about the options that may be available to you or your loved one!

(Source: American Optometric Association)



Caregiving is a rewarding yet stressful experience for many individuals who are caring for older adults.

Learning Circles are designed to help caregivers become informed and reduce their stress by providing classes free of charge. Each two-hour session is held in a casual setting and is led by a topic expert, called a Caregiver Champion. Participants have the opportunity to network with other caregivers and learn from each other's experiences.

Respite reimbursement is available to participants.

Session 1: Introduction to Caregiver Champions

Learn how to take back control of your life by reducing stress, discovering new resources, and learning from the experiences of others.

Session 2: Caregiver Burnout and Stress Management

Identify symptoms of caregiver burnout and unlock new and easy tools to help you better manage the stress associated with caring for a loved one.

Session 3: Communication

Uncover new communication techniques that will help you better communicate with the person you are caring for as well as the healthcare professionals helping with that care.

Session 4: Staying Organized/Home Safety

Learn new ways to stay organized and better prepare for emergency situations. Understand how a safe home environment can simplify your life.

Session 5: Local Resources, Common Tools, and Acronyms

Gain new insight into what local, state and federal resources are available to help you better care for your loved ones.

Session 6: Advance Planning

Discover how advance planning can help reduce future stress and family chaos. Learn how to approach conversations about sensitive issues.

Healthy Summer Recipe: Spinach Salad Supreme

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar or cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped green pepper
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon ketchup
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 2 cups torn fresh spinach
- 1 hard-cooked egg, sliced
- 3 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled

Directions

In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the first 10 ingredients; shake well. Divide spinach between two serving bowls or plates; top with egg and bacon. Drizzle with dressing. Serves two.



**4749 Baum Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15213**

Phone: 412-683-0400
Toll Free: 888-881-4749
TDD: 412-683-1023