



Nourish

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Nourish Your Eyes

Do you look forward to the green grass, red and yellow tulips, and all the other beautiful blooming colors of spring? In honor of nature's rebirth and the beauty around us, let's consider how to maintain healthy vision. April has two national observances for eye health: Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month and Women's Eye Health and Safety Month.

Eat healthfully. Protecting your eyes starts with the food on your plate, especially brightly colored fruits and vegetables. Consider your eyes if you plant a garden; when you write your grocery list or visit a farmers market this summer.

- Green leafy vegetables (such as spinach and kale), corn, peas, collard greens, orange and yellow bell peppers, and egg yolks naturally contain the eye-healthy pigments zeaxanthin and lutein.

Get regular physical activity. Exercise improves blood circulation and increases oxygen levels to the eyes. Enjoy warmer weather by taking a walk in the morning, during a lunch break or in the evening. Gardening is a form of exercise and a way to grow your own food.

Wear sunglasses. Protect your eyes from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays when outdoors. Be sure your sunglasses have UV-A and UV-B protection to block both forms of ultraviolet rays.

- Wear sunscreen of SPF 30 or more to protect your skin, too.

Take breaks from your screen. Staring at your computer, TV or phone screen can cause eyestrain, blurry vision, trouble focusing at a distance, dry eyes, headaches, and neck, back and shoulder pain. Consider these tips:

- Every 20 minutes, rest your eyes by looking 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- At least every 2 hours, get up and take a 15-minute break to be away from a screen.



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**Visit your
eye doctor
regularly.**

For more information about nutrition, exercise and your eyes, see www.ag.ndsu.edu/nourish and click on the Nourish resources.

NDSU

EXTENSION

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Question

My eye doctor mentioned that leafy greens are good for my eyes. I have space for a small garden this spring. Do you have any tips? If I buy bagged salads, do I need to rinse them?

If you decide to plant an eye-healthy salad garden, sow the seeds for a variety of leafy greens in the spring, and consider planting a second crop later in the summer. Water the plants well because the crispness of the lettuce will vary depending on the amount of watering. Weed regularly, and keep the soil loose around the plants.

Begin harvesting your greens when the leaves are about 2 inches long. Consider harvesting the outer leaves so your plants will continue to produce. Rinse the leaves thoroughly under cool water, and try a salad spinner to remove excess water. You also can use a clean paper towel to blot dry the lettuce.

Bagged salads labeled ready-to-eat, washed or triple washed do not need to be rinsed prior to eating unless the package directions instruct you to do so. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping leafy greens separate from raw meat and poultry and their juices.



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Here's salad dressing you can customize and serve with your favorite leafy greens. Compared with commercial salad dressing, this recipe has very little sodium.

Try experimenting to create your own salad dressing. Try a ratio of four parts oil to one part vinegar, lemon juice or other acid, then add your favorite seasonings such as fresh or dried herbs.



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Fresh Herb Vinaigrette (Salad Dressing)

- 1/3 cup olive or canola or other salad oil
- 1/3 cup vinegar (red wine vinegar, rice vinegar or white vinegar)
- 1 to 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh oregano or basil (or 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano or basil)
- 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard or 1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

In a screw-top jar, combine oil, vinegar, sugar, herbs, mustard, garlic and pepper. Cover and shake well. Serve immediately or cover and store in refrigerator for up to three days if using fresh herbs. If using dried herbs, store covered in refrigerator for up to one week. Shake before serving.

Makes eight servings (about 1 1/2 tablespoons per serving). Each serving has 90 calories, 9 grams (g) fat, 0 g protein, 1 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 10 milligrams sodium.

Balsamic Vinaigrette: Prepare as above, except use regular or white balsamic vinegar instead of the listed vinegar options.

Orange Balsamic Vinaigrette: Prepare Balsamic Vinaigrette as above, except reduce balsamic vinegar to 3 tablespoons. Add 1/2 teaspoon finely shredded orange peel and 1/4 cup orange juice.

Vinaigrette recipes courtesy of Better Homes and Gardens New Cookbook, Bridal Edition (www.bhg.com/recipe/gluten-free-fresh-herb-vinaigrette/), and University of Kentucky Extension Service