

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for February 6, 2023
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about low vision awareness, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

I remember walking in a line with my third-grade classmates upstairs to a hallway in Warsaw Elementary School we rarely went to. I entered a dimly lit room, covered one eye at a time, and read letters out loud across the room to the school nurse. I had no idea I needed glasses until the first time I wore them. On the drive home from the eye doctor, I noticed that trees had individual leaves. I'm sure I noticed a lot of other things too, but I will never forget how much more beautiful those trees looked.

According to the National Eye Institute, millions of Americans live with eye diseases, and many don't have any symptoms or warning signs. There are steps we can all take to keep our eyes healthy and prevent vision loss. The best habits include regular comprehensive dilated eye exams; making healthy choices like getting active and eating healthy foods; and wearing sunglasses whenever you are outside.

February is Low Vision Awareness Month. The youngest of the baby boomers will turn 65 by 2029. As a result, the number of people with visual impairment or blindness in the United States is expected to double to more than 8 million by 2050. Low vision is more common in older adults, but it is not the natural result of aging. Some of the most common eye conditions are age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma.

Low vision is the name given to a visual impairment that cannot be fixed with corrected lenses like glasses or contacts, other even standard treatments like medicine or surgery. Depending on the condition, sometimes these practices can improve vision to help with everyday activities more easily or prevent vision from worsening.

Though there is no cure for low vision, there are vision rehabilitation services that can help. A specialist can help people learn how to live with vision loss. They will often focus on greater independence with reading, computer use, writing, driving, household activities, job performance, or dealing with glare. This might involve training to use a magnifying device for

reading. They could also provide consultation on arranging the layout of a home to move around more easily.

It is virtually impossible to know when you have some of these conditions. Your eyes will not feel any different. That is why it is so important to have regular exams with an eye doctor. Do you know your family history when it comes to eye health? Some eye diseases like glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration can run in families.

Two things we can influence the most are to take care of our health and to protect our eyes. The foods we eat make a difference for eye health. Choose dark, leafy greens like spinach, kale, and collard greens and eat fish that is high in omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, tuna, and halibut. If you smoke, quit smoking.

Protect your eyes by wearing safety glasses or goggles when doing construction work or home repairs. Rest your eyes when working on a computer by taking a break every 20 minutes to look at something about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

It is all too easy to take our vision for granted. Take a moment today not only to smell the roses but marvel in their beauty. As I contribute this 500th column to the Coshocton Tribune, I am grateful for your readership and friendship and your desire to make your own life and the lives of others a little brighter each day.

And now let's look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. Whether you have been living with diabetes for years or are just beginning your journey, come and learn about healthy choices that taste good. I will be teaching a "Healthy Eating with Diabetes" program on Thursday, February 23 at 11:00 AM at the Coshocton Senior Center. I will share diabetes management strategies and a healthy snack.

Also, several other programming dates for 2023 have been set. If you are interested in food safety training, eating with diabetes, or personal and family finances, be sure to check out our website, coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!