

# Health Focus



## OPHTHALMOLOGY

**Gregory Eippert, MD**

**Q:** The eye drops I take to manage my glaucoma have caused the skin around my eyes to darken. Is there another drop to help me maintain good eye pressures that doesn't have this side effect?

**A:** Eye drops for glaucoma, often the first choice of treatment, are used to decrease and control intraocular pressure (IOP) thus protecting the optic nerve. They work by either helping the eye's fluid to drain better and/or by decreasing the amount of fluid made by the eye.

Glaucoma drops are classified by their active ingredient and, as with any drug, there are potential side effects. Classifications include prostaglandin analogs (Xalatan, Lumigan, Travatan), beta blockers (Timolol), alpha agonists (Alpha-gan P), carbonic anhydrase inhibitors (Trusopt, Azopt), and combination drops (Combigan, Cosopt). Adverse reactions may also occur due to additive agents in the drops such as preservatives or stabilizers.

Darkening of the eyelid skin is a known side effect from one of the primary classes of agents used to treat glaucoma, the prostaglandin analogues. Other side effects may include stinging, eye redness, itching, and burning.

Although this is a rare side effect, it can be noticeable to some patients. If this side effect is very bothersome, does not improve over time, and cannot be improved with various types of makeup to cover the darkening, the only remedy is to discontinue the medication. Make sure to discuss this medication side effect with your eye doctor and do not discontinue your medication until you have discussed alternative drops or treatments.

There are a variety of options to treat glaucoma including other groups of drops with different active ingredients, and generic or preservative-free formulations; laser procedures, and surgery. Keep in mind that each option has a set of risks and benefits that should be considered and discussed as related to your specific needs and ocular condition(s). Your eye doctor will work closely with you to prescribe the best eye drop(s) and/or treatment for your needs and evaluate the results on an ongoing basis.

**Gregory Eippert, MD**  
8140 Norton Parkway  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-1115  
www.opivision.com



## DENTAL CARE

**Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD**

**Q:** When I Smile, the Sides of My Mouth are Dark

**A:** We live in an age of stunning smiles emphasizing brightness and whiteness. This phenomenon may result from decades of toothpaste commercials emphasizing how gorgeous our teeth can look if we only use the advertised product. Whether or not any of us have a smile that looks that brilliant is irrelevant. The pictures and the commercial jingles are in our heads. We believe that the look portrayed in those ads is real and something to covet. As a dentist, some over-the-top smiles are ridiculous and look so fake. In the same way that too much botox or lip filler does not look natural, the Hollywood smile may not be age appropriate and scream out a phony.

In contrast, we can look at British TV, where many actors have the worst-looking teeth imaginable. Crooked and broken front teeth can be the norm, whereas, in our country, we would not tolerate that look. As with many things, the best-looking smile can be somewhere in between. Yes, many people look phenomenal with bright white teeth placed in perfect order, but it will look strained for others.

One universal concept in either the extreme smile or a natural look is that smile width that exudes confidence and wonderful esthetics. Broader smiles are an item that is sought after and apparent to many. When the smile is not wide or broad, the sides of the mouth between the teeth and the inner cheek appear dark. If we have nice front teeth and dark sides in the back of the mouth, then the appearance of no teeth takes over.

How do we get rid of those dark areas at the back sides of our mouths? Our goal is to fill out those areas with teeth. One way to do that is to move the teeth outwards toward the cheeks with either braces or invisible orthodontic care. This approach is best for younger individuals as age can reduce our ability to move the teeth outward in certain cases.

A second technique involves making the side teeth fatter to show more when you smile. Veneers or crowns can accomplish this for you. Spending time on a trial thickening of the teeth gives the patient and the doctor an idea of the final result. Excellent communication between the doctor and the lab via digital techniques can bring outstanding results to the case.

Lastly, if your teeth are in the right position and darkening has occurred over the years due to normal aging or old fillings breaking down, then some brightening is the answer. Whether this is accomplished with tooth whitening or covering the

teeth with a new surface is case-dependent. Either way, the result will be a broader and more brilliant smile.

The holidays are almost here, and there is still time for a smile transformation. There is no gift as appreciated and long-lasting as a great smile. If this sounds like you, please call Nikki at 440.951.7856 if you feel this accurately describes you and your concerns or questions. In the meantime, I look forward to meeting you.

*Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD, is an Ohio licensed general dentist and is a staff member at Case School of Dental Medicine in the Department of Comprehensive Care.*

## The Healthy Smile

34586 Lakeshore Boulevard  
(¼ mile west of Route 91 on Lakeshore Blvd)  
Eastlake, Ohio 44095  
440-951-7856  
Severance Medical Arts, Suite 603  
5 Severance Center  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
216-371-2333  
www.jeffreygrossdds.com



## INSURANCE

**Laura Mutsko  
Agent and CSA**

**Q:** What are some little-known facts about Medicare?

**A:** When it comes to Medicare, there is a tremendous amount of information to digest. While most people have a good understanding of the basics, there are certain facts about Medicare that are not common knowledge. Here are a few:

1. Some Medicare items have multiple names. For example, Medicare Supplement Insurance is also known as Medigap Insurance. A Medicare Advantage plan is the same thing as Medicare Part C. Original Medicare is sometimes referred to as Medicare Part A & B.

2. Medicare costs more for those in higher income brackets. While most people will pay the standard premium amount, some individuals will pay a higher premium for Medicare Part B based on their income. In 2023, Part B monthly standard premiums apply for individuals who make \$97,000 or less a year and couples earning \$194,000 or less. Those who make more than \$97,000 up to \$123,000

and couples who make more than \$194,000 and up to \$246,000 will be charged an additional monthly premium of \$65.90 for Part B and \$12.20 for Part D. At the high end, individuals who make \$500,000 a year or more will be charged an extra \$395.60 a month for Part B and an additional \$76.40 for Part D.

3. Medicare covers alcoholism and substance use disorder treatment in both inpatient and outpatient settings if your provider determines the services are medically necessary, you receive the services from a Medicare-approved provider or facility, and your provider sets up a plan of care for you.

4. Medicare covers obesity and smoking counseling. Under Medicare, you can seek professional counseling for these conditions. But there are restrictions. Obesity counseling is only free for adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more. And while Medicare will pay for smoking cessation counseling, it doesn't cover the cost of nicotine patches, lozenges, or gum to help you stop smoking.

You can find details on these topics and more at Medicare.gov. If you are just beginning to delve into Medicare, consider attending one of my Getting Started with Medicare classes next year. During these classes, we cover all the basics, so you will be prepared once the time comes for you to enroll. You will find a list of classes on my website at [www.mutskoinsurance.com](http://www.mutskoinsurance.com) with new classes to be added soon.

For information on Medicare Advantage plans and Supplements, Health, Life and other insurance, contact Mutsko Insurance at 440-255-5700 or email me at [Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com](mailto:Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com).

**Laura Mutsko  
Mutsko Insurance  
Services, LLC**

6982 Spinach Drive  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-5700  
[www.mutskoinsurance.com](http://www.mutskoinsurance.com)

We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.

## Did You Know?

Age is one of the major risk factors for glaucoma. However, the National Glaucoma Research - BrightFocus Foundation indicates that there are congenital forms of glaucoma that affect children within the first six to 12 months of birth. Some children also develop juvenile glaucoma. Still, glaucoma is more prevalent among adults. Every adult should have a baseline comprehensive eye exam at age 40, recommends the American Academy of Ophthalmology. An eye doctor can assess risk and determine if comprehensive exams are needed



yearly or more frequently. The National Eye Institute recommends comprehensive eye exams that include testing for glaucoma for everyone over age 60. Learn more about glaucoma by visiting [www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org).

Have your problems addressed by medical professionals in "Health Focus"! Send your question to: [advertising@news-herald.com](mailto:advertising@news-herald.com)

# Health Focus



## DENTAL CARE

**Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD**

### Q: How Do I Avoid Tooth Problems During Holiday Season?

**A:** This subject seems to come up every year, and I address this issue in the office with my patients. Christmas and New Year's coincide with the influx of cold weather. These problems are enough to cause my phone to ring off the hook. However, today I want to focus on the overuse, abuse, and neglect our teeth get this time of the year. I want to offer a few tips to reduce the need for a call to me in the short run and help keep your mouth healthy in the long run.

Sugar abounds in December. The closer we get to Christmas, the more the sugary treats flood our lives. Don't worry; I will not preach avoidance of those treats. Cookies, candies, and certain baked goods are all part of the festive atmosphere that is so much fun. That being said, what can we do to limit the damage that these foods cause? Remember that sugar is the lifeline of the bacteria attached to our teeth and gums. These bacteria congregate where sugar collects on the teeth, producing acid and other damaging waste products. These chemicals eat away at our teeth and cause cavities.

One key to minimizing sugar's negative effects is controlling our exposure to it. The frequency of exposure will determine how bad our indulgences are for us. Sitting in the office all day long and munching on a can of cookies and treats is the worst thing you can do. It is far better to eat all you want in a shorter interval than to graze this food all day. The bugs in your mouth have a field day with this as they are partaking in a non-stop smorgasbord.

But you will tell me that part of the fun is eating all day long. Trust me, and I get it. I want to suggest that you break up the sugar-gorging with other foods. Nuts abound this time of year. Every store that I walk into has a display of "holiday nuts." It would be a great idea to bring these into work. You can bring them for your stash or contribute to the greater good. Walnuts are a great resource to keep cholesterol in check and act as an anti-inflammatory component for our entire body. They are also shown to help with moods. So many people have stress and family issues around the holidays that

any help we can find is a plus. Let's not forget chestnuts. Remember the song! Chestnuts are lower in calories when compared to other nuts, a great source of fiber for your diet, and rich in Vitamin C. Their hypoglycemic index is low, making them perfect for people who struggle to maintain a good blood sugar level.

Lastly, what can we do to help mitigate our overeating and indulgences? You all know where I am going with this. Let's be extra diligent in our home care. Spend more time brushing, flossing, or using a water-jet device. This time of year would be great to buy an electric toothbrush for you and the family. Often new gadgets can fix and erase some bad activities during the day and not give bacteria a foothold in our mouths. Don't let a tooth issue ruin your fun in the upcoming days. Practice good prevention techniques to control the problems. If you develop a problem, we are working and not taking any time off. Please call Nikki at 440.951.7856 so that I make sure that you enjoy every moment of the season.

*Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD, is an Ohio licensed general dentist and is a staff member at Case School of Dental Medicine in the Department of Comprehensive Care.*

### The Healthy Smile

34586 Lakeshore Boulevard  
(¼ mile west of Route 91 on Lakeshore Blvd)  
Eastlake, Ohio 44095  
440-951-7856  
Severance Medical Arts, Suite 603  
5 Severance Center  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
216-371-2333  
www.jeffreygrossdds.com



## INSURANCE

**Laura Mutsko  
Agent and CSA**

### Q: We are planning to get my father a recliner lift chair for Christmas. We recently learned Medicare may cover some of the cost. Is this true?

**A:** Lift chairs are seated, cushioned furniture pieces that look like ordinary recliners. The biggest difference is that a lift chair has a motorized device that makes it easier for a person with mobility issues to gently get up or down from the chair. Today's lift chairs come equipped with a wide variety of options including heat and massage features and full reclining position for sleeping.

Medicare considers lift chairs durable medical equipment and as such are covered under Part B. Reimbursement for a chair is

limited to the cost associated with the parts of the chair considered medically necessary, which is the motor and device that 'lifts' a person out of the seat. (Medicare will not reimburse for spring-type lift devices.) Once your father has met his Medicare deductible, you will pay 20 percent of the Medicare-approved amount for the lift mechanism. You will also pay 100 percent of the remaining cost of the chair.

For example, let's assume a chair costs \$750 and the lift mechanism is \$300 of its total cost. Once the deductible is met, Medicare would pay 80% or \$240 toward the lift mechanism. You would be responsible for 20% or \$60 toward the lift mechanism and \$450 toward the remaining cost of the chair.

Medicare will require a prescription from your father's physician to verify that the chair is necessary for medical reasons. Some examples of medical conditions include arthritis in the knees or hips, balance, or mobility issues, muscular dystrophy, and other neuromuscular diseases. Your physician may have recommendations for the type of chair and the features that will be most beneficial for him.

Medicare has some requirements for the construction of the chair, too. It requires that the chair be constructed of durable materials and is suitable for in-home use. It must be able to withstand repeated use and expected to last at least 3 years. The lift chair must also be purchased through a supplier who accepts Medicare assignment.

I suggest you contact Medicare for a list of Medicare-approved suppliers. If your father has a Medicare Advantage plan or a Medicare Supplement, call them for specific information on their coverage for lift chairs. When you are in the market for health insurance including a Medicare Advantage plan, Medicare Supplement, Affordable Care coverage, Vision, Dental or more, contact me at 440-255-5700 or email me at [Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com](mailto:Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com). I look forward to helping you.

### Laura Mutsko Mutsko Insurance Services, LLC

6982 Spinach Drive  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-5700  
www.mutskoinsurance.com

We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.



## OPHTHALMOLOGY

**Gregory Eippert, MD**

### Q: I have glaucoma and heard that marijuana can help treat this condition. Is this really true?

**A:** While many people talk about medical marijuana being used as a treatment for glaucoma, it is NOT recommended by eye doctors. Glaucoma is an eye disease in which the optic nerve becomes damaged over time, reducing peripheral (side) vision. It can sometimes lead to blindness. One cause of optic nerve damage is higher-than-normal pressure within the eye. This is referred to as intraocular pressure (IOP).

The idea that marijuana can be helpful for glaucoma dates back to the 1970s. Studies conducted then showed that smoking marijuana lowered the IOP of people with glaucoma. Additional studies were conducted to determine whether marijuana or its active ingredient, the compound THS, could be used to keep IOP lowered. Research found that when marijuana was smoked or when a form of its active ingredient was taken as a pill or by injection, IOP was lower. However, it was only lowered for a short time period of 3-4 hours. Since glaucoma needs to be treated 24/7, one would need to smoke or use marijuana 6-8 times a day to consistently lower IOP. Due to marijuana's mood-altering effects, use of this much marijuana would significantly impair one's ability to function normally and have a negative impact on physical activity as well as mental and cognitive processes.

Marijuana, a mixture of the dried and flowering leaves and tops from the plant *cannabis sativa*, contains hundreds of compounds that can damage the lungs. Studies have shown that frequent use of marijuana, especially in high doses, can cause problems with short-term memory and concentration. Glaucoma research shows that IOP is not the only factor that damages the optic nerve. Reduced blood flow to the optic nerve may also cause damage in a patient with glaucoma. While marijuana may lower IOP for a short time, it also lowers blood pressure throughout the body and can cause an increase in heart rate. Lower blood pressure can, in turn, result in less blood flow to the optic nerve thus increasing the risk of glaucoma-related blindness.

The bottom line is that marijuana is not an effective long-term treatment to treat glaucoma and the possible side effects outweigh any benefit.

Today there are many effective and long-lasting medication drops to help manage your glaucoma. Consult with your eye doctor to determine the best glaucoma treatment option for your needs.

### Gregory Eippert, MD

8140 Norton Parkway  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-1115  
www.opivision.com

## Did You Know?

Hot tea is widely consumed across the globe, and that could be paying healthy dividends for the billions of people who look forward to their daily cup each day. A small study published in the *Journal of Hypertension* found that drinking black tea could improve cardiovascular function. A separate study also found that drinking black tea and green tea could decrease risk of stroke and coronary heart disease. Black tea drinkers should keep in mind that, unlike most teas, black tea is caffeinated, so moderation is best to ensure the benefits of black tea are not offset by the overconsumption of caffeine.



# Health Focus



## INSURANCE

**Laura Mutsko**  
Agent and CSA

**Q:** In today's world, does life insurance still make sense?

**A:** In my opinion, life insurance makes even more sense today than in the past. In the last few years, there has been so much uncertainty in all our lives. Jobs have been wiped out, inflation has eroded savings, financial markets are unpredictable, and some families have tragically lost the person or persons who were counted on to care for them.

Life insurance is one way to provide a measure of peace of mind for you and your family. Life insurance can help protect those you care for from the potentially devastating financial losses that could result if something happened to you.

Proceeds from life insurance are often used to replace lost income, provide money for college tuition for your children, or eliminating any household debt. Life insurance proceeds can also be used to support charitable causes that are important to you. Some types of policies such as whole, universal, and variable life insurance offer cash value in addition to death benefits, which can be used to supplement retirement savings. Plus, benefits are generally not subject to federal income taxes, so a \$500,000 policy provides \$500,000 in benefit proceeds directly to your beneficiary.

Two of the most common types of life insurance are Term Life insurance and Whole life insurance.

Term Life Insurance is a great way to provide basic protection for your loved ones. With affordable premiums, coverage is available that will work for most budgets. Term insurance also gives you the ability to determine how long your coverage will last.

With Term Insurance, there is usually no investment component or cash value. Term is a good option for those who want a maximum death benefit for the lowest possible cost. A good example of this is parents with younger children who want to make sure there will be enough money to provide for their kids in the event of their death.

Whole Life Insurance provides financial protection but also includes a savings/investment component in addition to the death benefit. Unlike Term Insurance a Whole Life policy remains in effect for the life of the insured, as long as the premiums are paid. Over time Whole Life Insurance builds cash value which can be accessed in the event of emergencies.

These are just two examples but there are other types of Life Insurance that may be a better fit for you. Give me a call or email me to set up an appointment to go over the various options in detail. I can be reached at 440-255-5700 or [Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com](mailto:Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com).

**Laura Mutsko**  
**Mutsko Insurance Services, LLC**  
6982 Spinach Drive  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-5700  
[www.mutskoinsurance.com](http://www.mutskoinsurance.com)



## OPHTHALMOLOGY

**Gregory Eippert, MD**

**Q:** I often wake up with puffy eyelids that usually get better within a few hours. What causes this to occur? Is there any treatment?

**A:** Puffy or swollen eyelids can occur for many reasons including eye fatigue, stress, allergies, age, eye injury or trauma, medical conditions, and individual or familial skin characteristics.

When puffiness occurs around the eyelids, it indicates an accumulation of fluids in the surrounding skin tissues. The skin around the eye is the thinnest in the body so swelling and puffiness can appear very prominent and noticeable.

One of the reasons that puffiness often occurs more in the morning is because we do not blink while sleeping which allows fluid to accumulate in the eyelids. When we awaken and our eyelids begin blinking and our circulation resumes its normal flow, the swelling and puffiness around the eyes will often dissipate.

Other factors that contribute to an accumulation of fluid around the eyes include excess intake of salt, allergies to the environment or medication, sinus issues, dehydration, fatigue and lack of sleep, stress, crying, and aging.

There are also certain medical conditions that can also cause swollen, puffy eyelids including thyroid disease, conjunctivitis (pink eye), eye infections, severe dry eye, styes, and some systemic conditions such as kidney failure that can cause general swelling throughout the body.

If the puffiness and swelling you experience subsides or is infrequent, things like artificial tears throughout the day or cool compresses over closed eyelids can help to soothe and comfort the eye. It is also helpful to avoid rubbing your eyes and you may want to discontinue contact lens use until swelling subsides for comfort. Other proactive measures that you can take to reduce eyelid puffiness include keeping hydrated, getting ample sleep and rest, and reducing salt intake.

If however there is increased or sustained inflammation of the eyelids that does not go away, other eye irritation, eye pain or symptoms, see your eye doctor to help identify the underlying cause and if medical treatment is needed. It is also important to follow-up with your eye doctor to monitor and care for your symptoms over time as needed.

**Gregory Eippert, MD**  
8140 Norton Parkway  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-1115  
[www.opivision.com](http://www.opivision.com)



## DENTAL CARE

**Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD**

**Q:** That Wind Makes My Tooth Hurt!

**A:** Late December is the time of year when I hear more of this type of complaint. As we approach the end of the year, winter conditions intensify, and so do tooth problems. Nothing can spoil the holiday time more than the pain from a toothache. Coincidentally, as I write this, we are also experiencing cold and even lingering snow. Aside from the weather update, I want to discuss how cold weather impacts our teeth. This time of year, we receive many phone calls with toothaches. Some of what I am about to say is based on science, and some are anecdotal observations over my years of practice.

Many times we diagnose cavities, and the after informing my patient, I hear: 'but it doesn't bother me' That is absolutely correct. Until a cavity comes close to a nerve, there may not be any warning signs of a problem. I once heard a cardiologist say that for many people, the first experience with a heart condition is a heart attack followed by death. Lack of symptoms does not equal a lack of problems. We know that we have an issue when a problem develops to such an extent that the body's warning system kicks in. This phenomenon is why prevention through proper lifestyle and habits is so important. The right approach to our daily lives will prevent these problems from occurring or delay them for many years or decades.

When it comes to a tooth, feeling and discomfort only exist when enough damage is done. There is another factor that can bring about discomfort, and that is a severe change in the environment. The change can be drinking something very hot or cold, which makes us momentarily uncomfortable. When the temperature plummets, we expose those damaged or diseased teeth to a constant barrage of potentially painful stimuli. The result is why my office phone rings

## Habits that affect cognitive health

Various changes to appearance and health are associated with aging. Issues such as diminished vision, waning muscle strength and gray hairs are among the more common and noticeable side effects of aging. Cognitive decline is another symptom often associated with aging, even if that needn't be the case.

Certain lifestyle choices can protect against cognitive decline and dementias. While there is no surefire way to prevent dementias, here are some good habits for maintaining cognitive function well into your golden years.

### Exercise frequently

Harvard Health reports that exercise, in addition to the many other benefits it provides, may help improve cognitive function in people who have already experienced memory issues. Exercise may be particularly advantageous to people who carry the APOE4 gene variant, which makes people more susceptible to Alzheimer's. Speak with a doctor about how much exercise is needed and what is safe for your age.

### Enjoy video games

Playing a favorite video game may improve long-term cognitive function. Researchers at Cambridge Brain Sciences found study participants who played non-cognitive-training video games were associated with

a lot in December and January. The big temperature drops push many teeth past their breaking point. It's not just cold food that we can avoid and the problem "goes away." It is a constant irritation to the teeth, which forces the weakened tooth to raise its little hand and say, "I surrender, and I am hurting."

How do we fix these teeth when they get painful? Sometimes it is as easy as a filling. Other times we need to perform a root canal treatment to relieve the discomfort and allow the patient to return to normal activities. Of course, we could remove a tooth, but that is not what is usually done for painful teeth. Only if the tooth is so broken down that I can't put it back into proper function forces me to discuss removal. Most teeth that are painful can be treated easily in one visit and give instantaneous relief. A short 30-60 minute visit can stop the pain immediately.

Dentistry has advanced tremendously over the years. We are saving more teeth and making patients much more comfortable in simple ways. As I mentioned, prevention and lifestyle are the keys to minimizing problems. Daily home care prevents issues, and a periodic checkup catches problems early, so these holidays are truly enjoyable. Call today for your cleaning and checkup. We love seeing new patients and will be here throughout the holidays. And, of course, if something is bothering you, don't wait until it worsens. Call 440.951.7856, and talk to Nikki. She can get you into the schedule as quickly as she can. I am looking forward to hearing from you and in the meantime, stay warm.

*Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD, is an Ohio licensed general dentist and is a staff member at Case School of Dental Medicine in the Department of Comprehensive Care.*

### The Healthy Smile

34586 Lakeshore Boulevard  
(1/4 mile west of Route 91 on Lakeshore Blvd)  
Eastlake, Ohio 44095  
440-951-7856  
Severance Medical Arts, Suite 603  
5 Severance Center  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
216-371-2333  
[www.jeffreygrossdds.com](http://www.jeffreygrossdds.com)

better performance in several cognitive domains, but only for younger (age 18 to 64) participants. Cognitive training games, on the other hand, were not associated with any cognitive improvement.

### Stay socially engaged

According to a study published in the journal Experimental Aging Research, seniors who have high levels of social engagement also have better cognitive function. Getting together with friends, participating in a club, attending religious studies, and any other activity that gets you out with other people can help with cognitive function.

### Eat a healthy diet

Eating a diverse array of healthy foods is beneficial. Nutritious diets can help reduce the risk for illnesses that may affect cognitive ability. Eating well also helps keep the brain healthy. A Mediterranean diet appears to lower the risk or slow the progression of dementia in people who have the condition.

### Get help for sleep disorders

Lack of sleep can affect memory and learning. By getting help for sleep disorders, you may reduce your risk for cognitive issues.

While it is not possible to prevent or cure cognitive conditions like dementias with lifestyle changes, certain behaviors can lower the risk of developing these illnesses or reduce their severity.

# Health Focus



## OPHTHALMOLOGY

**Gregory Eippert, MD**

**Q:** I heard there is a new surgical treatment for glaucoma, the iStent. What can you tell me about it?

**A:** The iStent Trabecular Micro-Bypass stent is a new surgical therapy for glaucoma that is designed to reduce eye pressure in adult patients with mild to moderate open-angle glaucoma who are currently being treated with glaucoma medicine and are having cataract surgery.

The iStent is the smallest medical device ever approved by the FDA and is carefully placed in the drainage tissue of the eye during cataract surgery. It is so small that you won't be able to see or feel it after surgery. This micro-bypass stent for the eye works much like stents used in the heart that help to create a passageway for blood flow in blocked vessels. Your eye uses an intricate fluid outflow system to keep it balanced and healthy. At the center of this system is the trabecular meshwork. In patients with open-angle glaucoma, a blockage in the trabecular meshwork keeps the fluid in your eye from draining properly. When this happens, fluid backs up and eye pressure, IOP or intraocular pressure, rises. The iStent creates a permanent opening in the trabecular meshwork that improves the eye's natural fluid outflow to help lower your IOP. Patients who have the iStent implanted may be able to reduce their glaucoma medications, but this will be at the discretion of your eye doctor.

If you are going to have cataract surgery and are currently taking one or more medications for glaucoma, you may be a candidate for the iStent. Talk with your eye doctor to find out if the iStent is right for you.

**Gregory Eippert, MD**  
8140 Norton Parkway  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-1115  
www.opivision.com



## INSURANCE

**Laura Mutsko  
Agent and CSA**

**Q:** How do I make the switch from a Health Insurance Marketplace plan to Medicare?

**A:** Let's assume you have a Marketplace plan and are turning sixty-five sometime in 2023. You can keep your Marketplace plan and enjoy any premium tax credits until your Medicare coverage begins.

When you become eligible for Medicare, you will sign up during your Initial Enrollment Period. For most people, the Initial Enrollment Period starts 3 months before their 65th birthday month and ends 3 months after their 65th birthday month.

In most cases it will be to your advantage to sign up for Medicare when you are first eligible because:

- Once your Medicare Part A coverage starts, you will not be eligible for any premium tax credit or other savings from a Marketplace plan. If you keep your Marketplace plan, you will have to pay full price.

- If you delay your enrollment in Medicare until after your Initial Enrollment Period ends, you may have to pay a Part B late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Medicare.

- If you miss enrolling during your Initial Enrollment Period, you will not be able to enroll in Medicare until the Medicare general enrollment period (from January 1 to March 31 each year). Coverage will not start until July of that year creating a gap in your coverage.

If you are enrolled in a plan through the federal Marketplace, you can get more information on disenrolling by contacting the Marketplace Call Center at 800-318-2596 or visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov). If you are enrolled in a plan through your state's Marketplace, contact the state marketplace to learn how and when to disenroll from your plan. Those who are enrolled in a family plan should ask a Marketplace representative for specific disenrollment steps for their situation.

**IMPORTANT to note:** Do not disenroll from your Marketplace Plan until you know for sure that you are enrolled in Medicare. You want to be sure your Marketplace plan ends the day that your Medicare begins so you do not have a gap in coverage. Once you end your Marketplace coverage, you cannot re-enroll until the next annual Open Enrollment Period unless you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period.

For other questions on life and health insurance, please contact me at 440-255-5700 or [Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com](mailto:Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com). I look forward to assisting you.

**Laura Mutsko  
Mutsko Insurance  
Services, LLC**  
6982 Spinach Drive  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-5700  
[www.mutskoinsurance.com](http://www.mutskoinsurance.com)

We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.



## DENTAL CARE

**Jeffrey Gross,  
DDS, FAGD**

**Q:** How Many Times Can You Do A Root Canal?

**A:** Oddly enough, this question was posed when I went to an eyeglass store to purchase new frames for my glasses. The sales associate discovered I was a dentist, and we started to chit-chat while looking at frames. She told me that she had an appointment with a new dentist as her former dentist stopped seeing patients. The crown on her root canal was loose, and she thought she would need a new root canal to strengthen the tooth and crown.

Those thoughts led to her question about the possibility of repeating root canal therapy on her tooth to help strengthen and stabilize her tooth. Let's discuss the what and why of her situation. As I sat across from her at the optometry store, my eyes went to her smile. She only had front teeth as a good portion of the back upper teeth were gone. The anchor tooth on the upper right side, her "eye tooth" or cuspid, was noticeably missing.

The lack of back teeth resulted in all of her chewing occurring on her front teeth, which we have discussed in previous columns. Front teeth are not meant to bear the heavy load of chewing, and bad things can happen when a person eats in that fashion. In her case, all of her front teeth were untouched by any dental work except for this crown over a root canal-treated tooth. The excess stress of front tooth chewing caused a loosening of the crown or possibly a root fracture.

Remember, I was not in my office, so I did not have any x-rays to confirm or disprove my suspicions, but her description of the problem is one that I see often. Retreating, the technical term

for doing a second root canal on a tooth, will not solve her problem. That last statement implies that I can do more than one root canal treatment on a tooth which is true. Dentists do that when the problem is a failing root canal treatment, as in the return of an infection at the tip of the root. A loose crown is not fixed by redoing root canal therapy.

The frequency of retreatment is done was more common years ago as it was the last resort before we removed a tooth. Retreats on front teeth were very popular. Today, the advent and predictability of implant dentistry to correct the area of the mouth that has a missing tooth make repeating a root canal less common.

If the chance of success is good with repeating a root canal, then it is an easier and faster choice than removing a tooth and placing an implant. Retreating a root canal is usually done in one visit, and its ease makes the procedure less costly than other alternative approaches. If you find that you have a tooth that you saved years ago with root canal therapy and start to feel that something is not right, please give us a call at 440.951.7856. I encourage you to talk to Nikki, who will help you get into the schedule as efficiently as possible.

I look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime, I wish my readers a special and beautiful holiday season as the days move from Christmas to New Year's Day.

*Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD, is an Ohio licensed general dentist and is a staff member at Case School of Dental Medicine in the Department of Comprehensive Care.*

### The Healthy Smile

34586 Lakeshore Boulevard  
(¼ mile west of Route 91 on Lakeshore Blvd)  
Eastlake, Ohio 44095  
440-951-7856  
Severance Medical Arts, Suite 603  
5 Severance Center  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
216-371-2333  
[www.jeffreygrossdds.com](http://www.jeffreygrossdds.com)

## Did You Know?

Cherries are a popular fruit and for good reason. Not only do cherries' blend of sweet-sour flavor entice the taste buds, but cherries also are loaded with essential vitamins and nutrients. Cherries are good sources of fiber and vitamin C. According to [Livestrong.com](http://Livestrong.com), Acerola cherries have the most vitamin C of all cherry varieties. A one-cup serving gives you more than 10 times the amount you need in a day. Caution is needed if you eat Acerola cherries and take vitamin C supplements, as kidney stones can arise in such instances. Generally, cherries also are high in potassium, which is needed for nerve function, blood pressure regulation and muscle contraction. According to Healthline, cherries are full of antioxidant plant compounds,

particularly those that offer anti-inflammatory properties. Cherries can help combat oxidative stress, which is a condition that is linked to premature aging and other chronic diseases. Another benefit to cherries is their effect on sleep. The Cleveland Clinic says that cherries are good sources of melatonin and also contain tryptophan, the hormones involved in sleep regulation. Studies have shown that eating the fruit or drinking tart cherry juice before bed can increase sleep time and overall sleep efficiency. Cherries can reduce inflammation, strengthen the immune system, aid in weight management, protect the cardiovascular system, and help people get the rest they need, which means it may be time to include more cherries in your diet.

Have your problems addressed by medical professionals in "Health Focus"! Send your question to: [advertising@news-herald.com](mailto:advertising@news-herald.com)