

Health Focus



OPHTHALMOLOGY

Gregory Eippert, MD

Q: Lately, my eyes are red and sometimes bloodshot especially in the morning when I awaken. The redness usually lasts a day or so, goes away, and then recurs every so often. What causes this to happen and should I be concerned?

A: Red or bloodshot eyes occur when the blood vessels on the surface of the eye (conjunctiva) become irritated causing them to be enlarged or swollen. Symptoms associated with this condition may include burning sensation, watery eyes, itchiness, foreign body sensation, or light sensitivity. In many cases, red, bloodshot eyes are usually temporary and will clear up on their own.

One of the most common causes for this condition is allergens and environmental irritants such as pet dander, pollen, dust, wind, dry air, and sun. Additional causes can include eyestrain, having a cold, allergies, lack of sleep, excessive dry eyes, not removing make-up, swimming, or sleeping with contact lenses in your eyes.

To help relieve the symptoms of red or bloodshot eyes in general, there are several things you can try that will help in various settings. 1) Use artificial tears 3-4 times daily. 2) Avoid using 'gets the red out' eye products that, with repeated use, make the situation worse. 3) Avoid rubbing your eyes. 4) Use a humidifier to improve the moisture in the air. 5) Use oral antihistamines to stop allergic symptoms. 6) Make-up: Don't sleep with make-up on, make sure all make-up is removed before you go to sleep, and don't share make-up. 7) Clean your eyelashes regularly. 8) Use only eye skincare products around the eye. 9) Avoid smoky environments. 10) Protect your eyes from the sun. 11) For contact lens wearers, keep lenses cleaned and disinfected; wash hands before inserting or removing contacts; do not sleep in contacts. 12) Cool compresses. 13) Keep hydrated. 14) Blink to help prevent eyestrain especially when staring at a computer screen or any electronic device for long periods of time.

While red or bloodshot eyes may often be intermittent and short term, they can sometimes indicate a more serious problem. If your red, bloodshot eyes are chronic, severe, worsening, or accompanied by other symptoms, see your eye doctor for evaluation and treatment.

Gregory Eippert, MD

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DENTAL CARE

Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD

Q: What Should I Do with My Front Tooth?

A: The question asked to me is one that comes up quite often. Let me describe our situation, which prompted this question. Our patient is a 74-year-old female who has tried to preserve her smile teeth over the years. She came to me with broken back teeth, which showed a lot of wear and breakdown over the years. However, those teeth in the posterior were not what prompted her to pick up the phone and call us. The precipitating event was breaking her large front tooth in half.

Her smile is marred now by a large hole right in the center of her face. Whenever she talks or smiles, all that can be seen is the defect, which is front and center. After examining the tooth with appropriate X-rays, I determined that the tooth could not stay in her mouth. I added one more tooth that will require removal to avoid further breakdown and infection in her mouth.

Her mind told her that it was time to get back teeth, as eating a wide variety of foods needed to stay healthy is inconsistent with a limited variety of chewing teeth. I explored the idea of permanent teeth, but the shape of her jaw did not let me go that route. I recommended a removable bridge, also known as a partial denture, to help provide back teeth and increase her chewing efficiency.

Let me take a moment to describe a removable bridge, which I'm sure many are familiar with, but I want to get all my readers to get to the same educational point. The device that I'm describing does exactly what the name says. It is a group of replacement teeth that are inserted and removed at will by the patient. Whether this bridge replaces one tooth or ten teeth or even more does not affect the time and effort required to make this dental prosthetic. Some offices charge more for more teeth, but our fees do not vary.

With that in mind, let's return to our patient. Most of her bridge will be in the back of his mouth and will not deal with her front tooth. Since fees do not change, the easiest way to replace the broken front tooth would involve adding it to the removable bridge. That approach is fast and efficient with the least amount of wear and tear on the patient and her plan.

With that knowledge in mind, I should end this column and wish everyone a good day. However, adding to the back approach has a serious problem. Every time she removes the bridge, she will not have a front tooth. If she breaks the bridge and lab work is needed or even worse if the dog decides to eat the bridge, she will have to walk around without a front tooth for many days or weeks.

With those thoughts in mind, I suggested a separate permanent

bridge for the front of her mouth. With this technique, she will never be without her front tooth again. Simple is always good, but it is not always the best. If your smile is at a crossroads for the future, please call us at 440.951.7856. Together, we can find what is best for you. I look forward to meeting you.

Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD, is an Ohio-licensed general dentist and is on the staff of Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine.

The Healthy Smile

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INSURANCE

**Laura Mutsko
Agent and CSA**

Q: Will Original Medicare cover the cost of a second opinion on my surgery?

A: Original Medicare will cover a second opinion if a doctor recommends that you have surgery or a major diagnostic or therapeutic procedure. Medicare will also cover a third opinion if the first and second opinions are different from each other.

Medicare Part B will pay 80% of the Medicare-approved amount for the second or third.

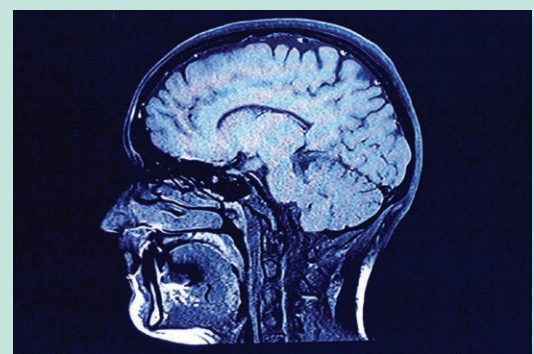
opinion. You will be responsible for the remaining 20% of the Medicare-approved amount after you pay your yearly Part B deductible.

In most cases doctors are comfortable when a patient requests a second opinion. They often will

What happens during a concussion?

Concussions happen with some regularity during car accidents and sporting events. People may think of concussions as minor injuries, but they are traumatic brain injuries that can have lasting effects.

The Mayo Clinic says a concussion can affect brain function and lead to symptoms like headache and problems with concentration, memory, balance, and coordination. Concussion can occur when a person receives a blow to the head or the head is violently shaken. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says this sudden movement causes the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells. Sometimes people lose consciousness during a concussion, but many times they do not. There is no specific medical test that will show a concussion, such as an MRI or X-ray. However, doctors use diagnostic tools and patient histories to determine if the brain was concussed. Sometimes one pupil of the eye may be dilated more than the other, which could be an indication of a structural brain injury.



The brain is complex, so many different symptoms may arise after a concussion. The Concussion Legacy Foundation

says physical symptoms include balance issues, blurry vision, ringing in ears, and headaches. Some people experience sensitivity to light. Cognitive symptoms may involve memory issues, attention deficits, difficulty multitasking, and more. Some people experience sleep-related symptoms that include sleeping more or less than usual. It also is common for those with concussions to experience emotional issues like panic and anxiety, or even irritability.

Anyone who suffers a head injury should be immediately seen by a doctor. If a concussion is suspected, treatment typically involves getting plenty of rest, both sleep at night and naps or rest breaks during the day, says Johns Hopkins Medicine. A doctor will likely advise avoiding particular physical activities and sports during recovery, and may prescribe certain medicines if a headache is persistent.

Concussions require immediate medical attention. Repeated concussions can cause lasting brain injury.



Health Focus



DENTAL CARE

Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD

Q: Is It True That Junk Food Will Affect My Heart?

A: Here we are in February, American Heart Month, a time designated to focus on our heart health. Studies in recent years have shown a relationship between heart and oral health. One such study focused on eating junk food coupled with poor mouth hygiene, resulting in a higher risk of premature heart disease.

Another study published in JAMA Internal Medicine studied whether higher intake of added sugar is associated with cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors. They concluded that most adults in our country consume more added sugar than is recommended for a healthy diet. They observed a significant relationship between added sugar consumption and increased risk for Cardiovascular Disease mortality.

This study is rather interesting. We have known for a long time that the consequences of excess sugar are detrimental. These extremes cause obesity, fat around the middle, and something called metabolic syndrome. These unfortunate results are the forerunners to diabetes and a host of other issues that lead to cardiac events. The JAMA study has shown a direct relationship between sugar and coronary artery disease.

From the dental perspective, periodontal disease will result if a person has poor oral health and consumes a lot of sugar. The supporting bone around the teeth may be destroyed as well. A chronic infection in the mouth will produce an inflammatory response that can cause atherosclerosis (the hardening of arteries), which can lead to heart disease.

Reducing sugar consumption and managing dental problems early on can help prevent heart problems later in life. You can manage your oral health easily by brushing daily after eating, flossing at least once a day, replacing your toothbrush every three months (if the bristles become frayed, then sooner), and seeing your dentist for regular checkups.

Another heart concern from poor oral hygiene is that it allows harmful bacteria to enter the bloodstream, especially during activities like brushing and flossing when the gums may bleed. This can potentially lead to infective endocarditis, an infection of the heart's inner lining or valves. While the risk of infective endocarditis is low, individuals with pre-existing heart conditions may be more susceptible.

Our patients, who are seen regularly, benefit from better health and better means to combat disease. Our hygiene team removes harmful plaque and hard build-up from your teeth that sits around your gums. The plaque is filled with bacteria directly causing disease and bad breath. Now we

know it also has an impact on your heart health.

The weather has been a little better the past couple of weeks, and thoughts of Spring and renewal are on my mind. What better time to call us and schedule a cleaning to brighten your smile and enhance your health? Please call us at 440.951.7856 and ask Nicole or Jamie to schedule you for this important visit. I look forward to meeting you.

Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD, is an Ohio-licensed general dentist and is on the staff of Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine.

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INSURANCE

**Laura Mutsko
Agent and CSA**

Q: Can you tell me about the Silver Sneakers Tuition Rewards Program?

A: If you are a SilverSneakers member and have children, grandchildren or other close family members who aspire to go to a private university or college, here is your opportunity to help them. SilverSneakers and Sage Scholars have teamed up to offer SilverSneakers members who work out regularly a unique opportunity to earn thousands of dollars in free tuition credits at participating private colleges and universities.

It's easy. And It's free.

You begin by going to <https://silversneakers.tuitionrewards.com/> to enroll in the program. When you enroll, you will be asked to register your children, grandchildren, or other students in your extended family who you wish to be beneficiaries of your Tuition Rewards Points. Students between birth and August 31st prior to their senior year of high school are eligible.

When you register, you will receive 1,000 Tuition Rewards Points just for signing up for a Tuition Rewards account. Each

point is worth \$1 in tuition rewards so you will receive a guaranteed minimum in tuition savings of at least \$1,000 through the program.

For every month you visit a SilverSneakers participating location seven times or more, Silver Sneakers will add 250 points to your account. That means you get an addition of \$250 in tuition savings just for working out.

The accumulated points represent the minimum scholarship (grant or another institutional discount) that the student will receive. Each Tuition Rewards scholarship can equal up to one full year's tuition.

More than 450 private colleges and universities across America participate in the program. You can find a list of participating colleges and universities at <https://www.tuitionrewards.com/schools>. For complete details on this program, information on eligible family members, regulations and how much you can earn for each student, visit their website at <https://silversneakers.tuitionrewards.com>

Original Medicare does not cover membership in SilverSneakers, but some Medicare Advantage plans and Medigap plans do. If you are not sure if you are eligible for a SilverSneakers membership, please contact your insurance provider or SilverSneakers at 877-871-7020 or www.silversneakers.com. Always check with your doctor before starting any workout program.

For all your questions concerning life and health insurance including Medicare Advantage Plans, Medicare Supplements and more, please contact me at 440-255-5700 or Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com. I look forward to assisting you.

Laura Mutsko Mutsko Insurance Services, LLC

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We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently, we represent 7 organizations which offer 84 products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get information on all of your options.



OPHTHALMOLOGY

Gregory Eippert, MD

Q: I am 71 years old and have cataracts and a lazy eye. Can I have laser cataract surgery with a lazy eye? What intraocular lens is best for this condition?

A: A lazy eye, or amblyopia, occurs when one or both eyes do not develop normal vision during childhood. Interestingly, we are not born with 20/20 vision. Our vision develops between birth and 6 to 10 years of age by regularly using each eye. A lazy eye develops when the nerve pathways between the brain and the eye aren't properly stimulated. This results in the brain favoring one eye, usually due to poor vision in the other eye. A lazy eye can usually be corrected with eye patches, eye drops, and glasses or contact lenses if discovered at a young age. Amblyopia can become permanent if not treated by around age 10.

People with a lazy eye can still have cataract surgery, with any technique, including conventional or laser cataract surgery. It is important to remember that cataract surgery can only improve your vision to the best that your eye has the potential to see. For example, if the best vision with your lazy eye prior to cataract surgery was 20/40, then 20/40 is the best vision that can be achieved after cataract surgery.

As for the intraocular lens choice, you will need to discuss this with your surgeon. The lens chosen will be dependent upon the degree of amblyopia and it will be important to know your eye history, including the refraction and vision of the lazy eye, before the start of the cataract. With the combined conditions of both a lazy eye and cataracts, you will need to work closely with your eye surgeon to assess your vision and to help reach the best possible visual outcome after cataract surgery.

Gregory Eippert, MD

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What does caffeine do to the body?

Around 80 percent of the United States population consumes caffeine regularly, according to data from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, energy drinks, and some headache medications.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information says caffeine is the most widely consumed nervous system stimulant. Caffeine is considered a psychoactive drug. That means it alters the mind. Caffeine can change the way people think and feel. Healthline says the stimulating effects of caffeine contribute to its popularity. Caffeine will cause immediate alertness and temporarily relieve fatigue. Caffeine also may help enhance mood, and Healthline reports that one study found caffeine was linked to a 45

percent reduced risk of suicide in participants.

Moderate amounts of caffeine may help increase focus and attention, according to the mental health and substance abuse resource Here to Help. It also may help boost endurance while playing sports or engaging in other physical activities.

Generally speaking, when caffeine is used in low to moderate amounts, it could prove beneficial. It's when too much caffeine is consumed that people can get in trouble. The following are some of the detrimental effects of caffeine.

- Confusion and overstimulation can occur.
- Headaches can happen from too much caffeine or from withdrawal.
- Irritability also may be a symptom of withdrawal when the

body becomes accustomed to caffeine.

- Caffeine may help keep a person regular, but too much can do the opposite and lead to diarrhea.
 - Excessive caffeine can prevent calcium absorption in the bones, which may increase risk for osteoporosis and bone fractures.
 - Some women who consume too much caffeine may have trouble conceiving a baby, and if caffeine is consumed in high amounts during pregnancy, there's a risk of developmental issues in newborns or possibly miscarriage.
 - Increased blood pressure also may result from consuming caffeine in high amounts.
- Caffeine can have many effects on the body. It's important to understand both the positive and negative impact of caffeine on the body and brain.

Health Focus



INSURANCE

Laura Mutsko
Agent and CSA

Q: I will turn age 65 later this year. Where can I get reliable information on Medicare?

A: I am glad you are asking questions about Medicare before the time comes for you to enroll. As you probably know by now, you will hear a lot of differing opinions on Medicare from friends, family, internet sites, and all the various 'official' looking mailers you may be receiving. You will have some important decisions to make when you enroll.

This is why we at Mutsko Insurance Services offer a fact-filled comprehensive class called Getting Started with Medicare at libraries and community centers that will help you start off on the right foot. During the class, we go over how to enroll and when to enroll to avoid any penalties. We cover what to do if you plan to continue to work and have employer provided insurance. By the end of the class, you will understand the differences between Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage Plans, Medicare Supplements, and Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Coverage. You will learn what is covered by Medicare and more importantly, what is not covered.

Registration is going on now for the following dates and locations. Pre-registration is required.

Wednesday, April 3
Willoughby Hills Library
6:00 – 7:30 pm
4440-942-3362

Wednesday, May 15
Mentor Library, Garfield Room
6:00 – 7:30 pm
440-255-8811

Wednesday May 29
Concord Twp.
Community Center
6:00 – 7:00 pm
440-639-4650

These events are for educational purposes only and no plan specific benefits will be included. Some venues may charge a nominal fee. For additional class dates and times visit www.mutskoinsurance.com/seminars.

Do not make the mistake of settling for the same coverage a friend or neighbor suggests. Take some time to attend one of these classes so you understand all your options and what will work best for you. If you cannot attend a class and have questions, please contact me at 440-255-5700 or Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com. I look forward to helping you.

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We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently, we represent seven organizations which offer eighty-four products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get information on all of your options.



OPHTHALMOLOGY

Gregory Eippert, MD

Q: I have heard that macular degeneration is a common cause of age-related vision loss. How does macular degeneration affect my vision?

A: In addition to normal changes in vision, older adults may experience other eye disorders that can adversely affect eyesight such as age-related macular degeneration or ARMD which is a major cause of blindness and visual impairment in adults 50+. ARMD occurs when the macula, the central part of the retina which is responsible for detail, color, and daylight vision, is damaged. ARMD makes it difficult or impossible read or recognize faces although enough peripheral vision remains to allow other activities of daily living.

ARMD occurs in two forms, 'dry' and 'wet.' The dry form, affecting approximately 90% of those with ARMD, tends to progress slowly and vision changes may be more subtle such as parts of letters appear to be missing or straight lines are crooked or wavy. About 10% of the people with ARMD develop wet ARMD which happens when abnormal blood vessels leak fluid or blood into the macula. The wet type causes severe vision loss and develops more rapidly than the dry type. Common to wet ARMD is a large, dark spot appearing in the center of one's vision. If this occurs, see your eye doctor immediately.

Although there is no cure for macular degeneration, early detection and/or treatment may help to slow the vision loss associated with this condition. In particular, eye vitamins may help with dry ARMD and laser treatments may help with wet ARMD. See your eye doctor at least yearly for a complete, dilated exam to maintain your eye health and discuss any concerns you may have about ARMD.

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DENTAL CARE

Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD

Q: Why Are My Teeth Staining Faster?

A: I saw a new patient this week with whom I discussed the health of her gums. She had not been seen in over a year, and the soft tissue in her mouth showed signs of gum disease. After explaining what I saw visually as well as on an x-ray, she asked me to repeat what I told her to her husband, sitting in our reception room. Although this was her first visit, her husband was a patient of record in our practice.

After discussing his wife's dental care, as she had requested, he asked me a question. It concerned the fact that he noticed that his teeth were staining much quicker than they had in the past. This phenomenon can be attributed to many things, especially the food types or beverages we drink. New wine or coffee drinkers find this a problem. We hear that the latest study tells us that coffee or green tea helps add years to our lives, and we ingest gallons of those dark liquids in hopes of finding the fountain of youth. Dark berries are great for overall health but not kind to keep our teeth looking like they did when we were teenagers.

He asked about age affecting how our teeth look, and again, years of life contribute to the darkness of our teeth. Having our teeth inundated with dark foods will influence how they appear. Our enamel is one of the hardest substances in the body, yet years of life and brushing will cause it to thin out and stain more easily. Whitening toothpaste and bleaching of teeth by a professional will help remove some dark stains and bring back more life to our teeth.

All these answers were and are correct, but I wondered what prompted him to bring this question up to me today. As we talked in the hall, I noticed one of his lower teeth had a much darker stain and color than its neighbors. Whenever he spoke, my eye gravitated towards that

lower front tooth. As we age and our teeth wear down, we often don't see our upper teeth well. The upper lip hides them. With gravity helping to pull everything down, our lower lip drops, and the front teeth on the bottom jaw become quite noticeable. Stand in front of a mirror and try this for yourself. Most patients will see their lower teeth more than they have in their lives as the decades move on.

This fact of lower teeth showing prominently still begs the question. Why is his lower tooth so stained that it is in the spotlight so to speak. My friend had lower, crowded teeth, and this one tooth was set back. Whenever he brushed his teeth, the bristles cleaned the teeth on either side of the setback tooth and skipped over the out-of-line teeth. When this happens regularly, stains and discoloration appear on this crooked tooth. Stains lead to plaque accumulation, followed by cavities and gum disease. Many patients lose their lower front teeth because of crowding.

The discolored and stained tooth brought to light a serious problem that was brewing. These areas are ripe for problems, and every effort should be made to get ahead of the moving train. Bonding, crowns, or aligning teeth will help keep your teeth for a lifetime. If you look and see that this column describes you and your mouth, please call us at 440.951.7856 and ask Nicole or Jamie to schedule us to talk about it. I look forward to meeting you.

Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD, is an Ohio-licensed general dentist and is on the staff of Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine.

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Potential warning signs of kidney problems

Kidneys play an important role in the body. Kidneys filter waste and excess fluids from the blood, which are then removed through urine. Without fully functioning kidneys, dangerous levels of electrolytes and other substances in the blood can build up in the body.

More than 37 million American adults are living with kidney disease, say the National Kidney Foundation. The NHS, a health service based in the United Kingdom, says many people with chronic kidney disease will not exhibit symptoms until the illness reaches an advanced stage. It is vital to recognize symptoms of kidney issues early to avoid severe complications. Here are some possible signs of kidney disease.

• **Feeling more tired and having trouble concentrating:** When impurities build up in the blood, this can cause people to feel



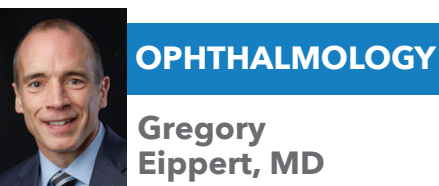
tired and weak and adversely affect the ability to concentrate. The NKF also says anemia, which causes weakness and fatigue, is an additional complication of kidney disease.

- **Vomiting, nausea and lack of appetite.** All may occur from chronic kidney disease.
- **Swollen feet and ankles.** A buildup of excess fluid may lead to swelling in the extremities.
- **Hypertension.** High blood pressure may develop and prove

difficult to control.

- **Chest pains.** Chest pains can arise if fluid retention builds up around the lining of the heart.
 - **Presence of blood in the urine.** There may be a need to urinate more frequently, and when one does so, he or she may notice blood in the urine. This occurs when blood cells start to leak into the urine due to damaged kidney filters.
 - **Muscle cramping.** Electrolyte imbalances caused by kidney dysfunction can lead to muscle cramping.
- It is important to recognize any signs of kidney issues and visit the doctor at the first indication of a problem. However, kidney disease in its earliest stages may produce few to no symptoms, which underscores the significance of annual health checkups and healthy lifestyles.

Health Focus



OPHTHALMOLOGY

Gregory Eippert, MD

Q: What are some foods and nutrients that contribute to healthy eyes?

A: To keep your eyes healthy, eating foods that are rich in certain vitamins and minerals, called antioxidants, is recommended. Antioxidants that benefit the eye in particular include Lutein & Zeaxanthin, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Vitamin A & Beta Carotene, Essential Fatty Acids (Omega-3s), and Zinc. These antioxidants keep our cells, tissues, and arteries healthy and may help prevent or slow certain eye diseases.

Lutein & Zeaxanthin are found in leafy green vegetables, especially kale, and eggs. Studies show that these antioxidants reduce the risk of chronic eye disease including age-related macular degeneration and cataracts.

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is found in fruits and vegetables such as oranges, grapefruits, kiwi, red berries, red and green bell peppers, tomatoes, and spinach. Scientific research suggests that vitamin C lowers the risk of developing cataracts and, when taken together with other essential nutrients, may help slow the progression of age-related macular degeneration.

Vitamin E is found in nuts, especially almonds, avocados, sweet potatoes, and whole grains. Research indicates that Vitamin E protects healthy cells in the eyes from breaking down.

Vitamin A & Beta Carotene are found in carrots, squash, sweet potatoes, eggs, and green leafy vegetables. This antioxidant helps the retina and other parts of the eye to function smoothly.

Essential Fatty Acids (Omega 3s) are found in cold water, fatty fish including salmon, sardines, tuna, and halibut. Fats are an essential part of the human diet and they help maintain the nervous system. Research shows that Omega-3 fatty acids are important for proper visual development and retinal function. Alternatives for fish include fish oil, flaxseed oil, and black currant seed oil.

Zinc is an essential trace mineral found in red meat, poultry, oysters and other seafood, dried beans, and soy foods. Zinc, highly concentrated in the eye, helps bring vitamin A from the liver to the retina to produce melanin, a protective pigment in the eyes.

Maintaining good eye health should be a priority no matter your age. Being proactive about your eye health now can improve your chances of avoiding conditions that may affect your vision later in life. Combining good nutrition with a yearly eye exam (or more often as recommended by your eye doctor) are two positive ways to have and keep healthy eyes.

Gregory Eippert, MD

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DENTAL CARE

Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD

Q: My Tooth Started to Act Up Over the Weekend

A: The acting up was followed by pain in his lower front tooth, which prompted the call to our office. When I took an x-ray to help shed some light on the situation, I made two observations based on that film. Firstly, the tooth in question had a dark circle around the tip of the root. When looking at an X-ray, dark means there is nothing there. His darkness, which indicated a void or hole in the bone around his tooth, means that destruction of bone is present. Infection, in its later stages, causes the bone to disintegrate; thus, we see a dark void on a radiograph.

The second observation I made was the generalized loss of bone surrounding his lower front teeth. This finding on a dental X-ray is often seen when gum or periodontal disease is present in the mouth. His lower front teeth showed only about 15-20 percent of the original bone present. We often see inflamed and bleeding gums when we lose bony tissue around our teeth. Plaque or tartar in excess adheres to the teeth, and sometimes, a severe odor is present.

Interestingly enough, these tell-tale signs of advanced gum disease were not there. Gum disease results in severe bone loss. We saw bone loss but no causative gum disease. As I looked at the other teeth in his mouth, I also noticed an absence of severe gum issues that I expected to see. At this point in my assessment of my patient, we have an issue. Why is there so much bone loss around the four front lower teeth?

The other teeth I examined were all on one side of his mouth. He had no back teeth on the right side of his mouth in the lower jaw. There were no molars or chewing

teeth from his lower right eye-tooth or canine as is its proper name, as you go backward in his mouth. Granted, he could chew on his left side, but when it came to moving the food to another spot, the food found the front teeth to have the proper feel for chewing.

His front teeth, which are made to cut and pull, were being used to grind his food. With this discovery, I found the culprit for his infection, excessive bone loss and loose front teeth. His chewing beat up his mouth to the extent that he was close to knocking them right out of his mouth. Imagine taking an umbrella out of the sand. The technique does not require you to pull it straight out, as this will fail, and maybe some pulled muscles. Rocking the umbrella back and forth will eventually release the sunshade. The same process of constant pounding and rocking the front teeth with grinding created havoc in his mouth.

I spent the rest of the visit discussing the salvage of some teeth while adding teeth to the back right side of his mouth. Adding these teeth will allow him to chew efficiently and healthily to relieve the stress on the front teeth. We discussed implants, permanent bridges, and a host of other procedures to recreate his smile and restore his oral health.

If you are missing all or even some of your back teeth, please call us at 440.951.7856 and ask Nicole or Jamie to schedule a meeting so we can explore options that are tailored to you. As always, I look forward to meeting you.

Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD, is an Ohio-licensed general dentist and is on the staff of Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine.

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5 common health conditions that affect women

Men and women share various health concerns. However, certain health issues affect women differently and more frequently than men. In addition, certain health conditions, such as cervical cancer, are exclusive to women.

Women who want to take charge of their health can recognize that various conditions and diseases are more common than others. The following are five common and notable health issues affecting women today.

- **Heart disease:** Heart disease affects more than 60 million women in the United States and is the leading cause of death for women. Heart disease can affect women of all ages. Despite this, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says only 56 percent of women recognize the prevalence of heart disease. In addition, it's important to note that most women between the ages of 40 and 60 have at least one or more risk factors for heart disease and likely do not even realize it.

- **Breast cancer:** Routine mammograms and other breast cancer screenings can help women detect breast cancer at its earliest stage when it is most treatable.

- **Cervical and ovarian cancer:** Cervical cancer originates in the cervix, which

is part of the lower uterus, while ovarian cancer begins in the fallopian tubes and ovaries. Pap smears can detect cervical cancer, but currently there is no screening test for ovarian cancer. A pelvic exam and ultrasound or other imaging may be recommended if doctors suspect the presence of ovarian cancer.

- **Reproductive health issues:** The Orlando Clinical Research Center says that reproductive issues can have a major affect on women's quality of life and overall health. Some common issues include uterine fibroids, gynecological cancers, interstitial cystitis, endometriosis, and polycystic ovary syndrome. Pain, heavy or irregular periods and other discharge may be symptoms of these types of conditions.

- **Mental health concerns:** Rates of anxiety and depression are higher among women than men. The Anxiety Disorders Association of America reports that, from the time a girl reaches puberty until about the age of 50, she is twice as likely to have an anxiety disorder as a man.

Recognition of the most common health issues to affect women can help them get the care they need to live long, healthy lives.



INSURANCE

Laura Mutsko Agent and CSA

Q: I have a Medicare Supplement Plan G. Should I track what I pay for my annual Medicare Part B deductible?

A: Medicare Supplements cover gaps in Medicare coverage. However, Medicare Supplement Plan G or Plan N do not cover the annual deductible which is \$240 in 2024. Those with Plan G or Plan N will need to cover this cost out of pocket.

Knowing this, I recommend that you track all payments to your providers in order to avoid overpaying your deductible. Should you overpay the deductible, it will be up to you to get your money back. The most common types of expenses that are covered by Part B include doctor visits, lab work, specialist visits, preventive services, and durable medical equipment.

Do not depend on your providers to tell you when you have reached your deductible. I suggest my clients make a calendar note of the date and amount paid whenever they pay any medical providers. Another method is to keep all your medical billing records in a folder to make it convenient to track expenses.

If you do not like the idea of keeping track on paper, then use an electronic device to create a Medicare spreadsheet on your computer. Include the provider's name, date of service, procedure, amount paid, and check number.

Whatever method you choose, be consistent with recording any payments you make out-of-pocket. This makes it easier for you to calculate your total contributions to your deductible and cross reference this information against your MyMedicare.gov account.

It is an unfortunate fact that billing statements are often delayed weeks or months after a visit or procedure which can be very confusing. The MyMedicare.gov account is a great resource for viewing up to date claims. However, it is best used for cross referencing, and not as your sole resource for tracking the Part B deductible.

If you have questions concerning Health Insurance including Individual, Group, Medicare Advantage Plans or Medicare Supplements, please call me at 440-255-5700 or email me at Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com. I look forward to helping you.

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We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently, we represent 7 organizations which offer 84 products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get information on all of your options.