

SILVER THREADS

Keep an eye on your vision

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Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) affects the tissue in the eye that's responsible for central vision. Central vision is your field of vision when you're looking straight ahead. It's the most common part of human vision.

There are two forms of AMD: wet and dry. Dry AMD is the more common form and causes a gradual loss of central vision when light-sensitive cells in the macula slowly break down. It can progress to wet AMD. Wet AMD is caused by an abnormal growth of blood vessels under the macula which leads to a fast loss of central vision.

Risk factors for developing AMD include these:

age (macular degeneration is the leading cause of severe vision loss in people over 60); gender (women are more likely than men to develop it); cigarette smoking (the more you smoke, the higher the risk); family history; cardiovascular disease; high blood cholesterol; light eye color; long-term exposure to sunlight; low levels of antioxidants in the blood; and abdominal obesity.

***'Eat your greens
to lower your risk'***

Smoking can be a reason a person may have low levels of antioxidants in their blood. Not eating enough fruits and vegetables can also be a reason. Some studies have shown that people who eat dark, leafy green vegetables such as spinach, kale, broccoli and collard greens have a lower risk of AMD. There is lutein in these foods. Lutein is concentrated in the retina

and the macula of the eye. It's responsible for absorbing the blue part of the light spectrum which ultimately protects the retina from light damage.

The Age-Related Eye Disease Study found that a combination of antioxidant vitamins plus zinc helped slow the progression of intermediate macular degeneration. The vitamin and mineral mix contains vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene, zinc and copper. Be sure to consult a physician about this vitamin mix.

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Don't forget to say the last good-bye

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Life is full of good-byes.

As young parents, we say good-bye to our children when they get on the bus and head to kindergarten.

And those good-byes continue

when they leave home, get married or return to their home after a visit.

It's inevitable that we experience saying the "last good-bye" to loved ones. Before I turned 40, I said my last good-bye to my grandmother and was privileged to be with her when she passed from this world. Years later, I was able to do the same with my mother. I've often wondered if I said and did the right things during those very important moments.

A recent AARP website article by Dr. Ira Byock, a palliative care physician and author of *The Four Things That Matter Most*, noted that a person who is nearing the end of life wants to hear these specific messages from their

loved ones: "Please forgive me." "I forgive you." "Thank-you." "I love you." He also writes that we should ask ourselves this question: Is there anything vitally important that would be left unsaid in our relationship if either of us died tomorrow?

Here are some suggestions to follow:

- ◆ Don't wait until the last minute. Death doesn't have to be imminent to have meaningful conversations with a person.
- ◆ Acknowledge that you know the "time is near." People near the end of life usually know this and can actually get frustrated when friends and loved ones pretend otherwise.
- ◆ Follow the lead of the person who is dying. If they wish to talk about it, let them

talk; if they prefer to just hold your hand and not speak, that's okay too.

◆ Talk even if you're not sure the person can hear you. Hearing is the last of the senses to go, so always assume that your loved one can still hear you. Say what is on your heart.

◆ Trust your instincts, not the rules. The end of life does not have to be somber. Some people prefer normal chatting, news about family and fun stories and happy memories.

◆ Let the good-byes be on going. It's difficult to predict when the "last" good-bye will come. Make it a habit to express love, appreciation, forgiveness and reassurance in little ways each time you see or speak to your loved one. You'll be less likely to feel any regrets when the end does come.

'Express love each time you speak'

Collard Green or Spinach Green Pesto

3 cups packaged or fresh greens, washed, trimmed, and chopped

2 garlic cloves

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 cup pecans

1/4 cup olive oil

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Cook greens in boiling water to cover 3-4 minutes or until tender; drain. Plunge into ice water. Drain well.
2. Finely grind garlic and pecans in a food processor. Add other ingredients and 1/4 cup water. Pulse 2-3 seconds until smooth. Cover tightly and refrigerate.



Don't be the victim of a scam!

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Home repair and remodeling scams are some of the top categories of consumer complaints filed with the Missouri Attorney General's office every year. Usually these scams are related to home repairs needed because of damage from weather related events. Storms or floods

in your area provide many opportunities for potential home repair fraud. Unfortunately, the elderly can often be targets of home repair scammers.

In order to avoid problems, it's very important for you as a consumer to do your "homework" before entering into any agreement with a contractor.

○ If repair work is needed, use a local, well-established contractor and companies that are recommended. Check the company's background by calling the Missouri Attorney General's Consumer protection Hotline at 1-800-

392-8222 or your nearest Better Business Bureau.

○ Ask for references from the contractor so you can check with previous customers on their work. Make sure the company is licensed, bonded and insured.

○ Get all estimates, guarantees and work dates in writing. The information should include a description of the work to be completed,

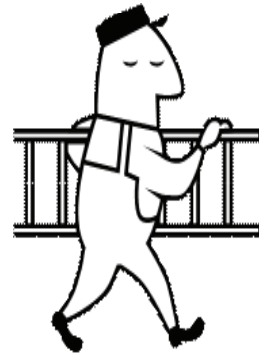
job completion dates and price. Obtain up to three bids

for the work. If the contractor offers a great deal that requires you taking it now or never, decline the offer. A legitimate deal will be available later.

○ As a consumer, be very concerned about any worker who solicits door to door. Many con artists operate through door-to-door solicitations.

○ Beware of workers who drive out-of-state or unmarked vehicles, particularly after damaging storms. Also beware of workers who have no identification or address and can only provide a phone number.

○ Steer clear of any worker who requires full or a large payment before beginning the work. Instead, full payment should be made to the contractor only when the terms of the contract are met.



Some of the most common scams, often targeting seniors, include asphalt, foundation and attic work, and home inspections.

With asphalt, scam artists offer to use leftover asphalt from a previous job and then report that the job will cost far more, maybe thousands of dollars to complete it. Sometimes the scammers simply put down black paint and demand money--no asphalt at all. Foundation and attic work is sometimes completely useless and very costly. Fraudulent but free home inspections may result in the worker simply wanting to look at your home to rob you.

As a homeowner or renter, use your best judgment. Remember that if the bid seems to be too good to be true, it probably is.

'If it's too good to be true--take care'

Look for nutrition keys on the panel

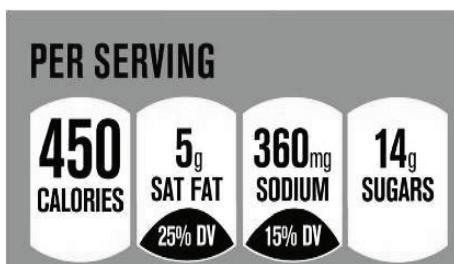
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First Lady Michelle Obama asked the food packaging industry to develop a front-of-pack labeling system that could be widely used on food packages that would help busy consumers make better informed decisions as they shop. The added benefit of this label is the size and prominence of the information makes it easier to see and read. This is a volunteer initiative, but none the less, it has had unprecedented acceptance by food and beverage manufacturers and retailers.

The "Nutrition Keys" format is fact-based and brings the **Nutrition Facts Panel** information to the front in easy to see and understand format. This new format conforms to the current U.S. Food and Drug Administration guidelines ensuring that consumers receive consistent and reliable information. The icon will inform consumers about how the key nutrients in each product fit into a balanced

and healthy diet in keeping with the federal government's daily dietary advice.

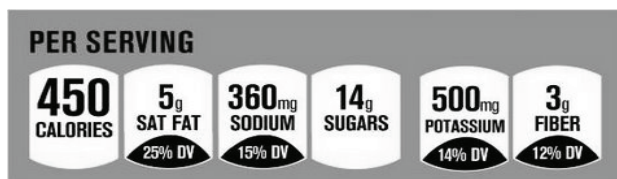
What is included on the label?



The Nutrition Keys icon contains four basic pieces of information: calories, saturated fat, sodium, and sugar amounts. These four basic icons are always presented together. If a product

is a small food package, one icon may be used, representing calories in a serving.

Another option, is for the label to include "nutrients to encourage." These are nutrients needed to build a "nutrient dense" diet. So, in addition to the basic four icons, packages may also include up to two "nutrients to encourage" --potassium, fiber, protein, Vitamins A, C, or D, calcium and iron.



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