

Family and Community Health

“Connections” in Tom Green County



Selecting Sunglasses: 5 Tips for Eye Health

Squinting in the sun and shopping for shades? Then don't lose sight of this: Sunglasses are more than a fashion statement. They can protect your eyes from some serious harm.



That's because the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are not merely bad for your skin—they're also bad for your eyes. Too much exposure to those rays can raise your risk of cataracts, as well as macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness. UV light can also cause cancer around your eyes.

But not all sunglasses protect eyes equally. You've got to choose the right pair. So keep these tips from the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) in mind:

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- Don't settle for less than 100 percent.** Before you even look at the price tag, check the label. Does it guarantee that the sunglasses block 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays? If not, leave them on the rack. When it comes to selecting safe shades, this is the most important consideration, the AAO cautions. But most people buying sunglasses don't check to see if they block UV rays, an AAO survey showed.
- Go large.** Opt for oversized or wraparound styles, which provide the most coverage from UV light. Wraparound styles in particular can help cut down on UV rays reaching your eyes.
- Don't be fooled by color.** While they may make you feel fancy, don't assume very dark lenses block more UV rays. Neither do tinted amber, green or gray lenses. Look at the numbers, not the colors.
- Be clear about glare.** That's what polarized shades cut—glare coming off reflective surfaces like water or pavement. But polarized sunglasses—just like very dark or tinted ones—don't cut UV light.
- They don't have to be pricey.** Less costly shades can protect your peepers just as much as pricier ones. What matters is a clearly marked label specifying 100 percent UV protection.

A final tip: Once you settle on those shades, be sure to wear them anytime you're outdoors—even on cloudy days and all year-round. The sun's rays can still pass through clouds. And they can hurt your eyes in any season—not just summer.

Source: shannonhealth.net

Back to School Checklist for Mom

A new school year is all about fresh starts. Here's a back-to-school checklist to keep you organized and stress-free – and to help you make sure your kids kick off the school year right.

Three weeks ahead

Shop for school clothes. Stores have stocked up for fall, so look for the sales. Also make a stop for mouthwash, skin-care products and hair essentials so they can make a great first impression.

Set up for homework success. Whether it's in their bedroom or a corner of the kitchen, set up a spot that's dedicated to homework. Make sure it's well lit and away from distractions like the TV.

Two weeks ahead

Organize your entryway. It all collects right by the door – textbooks, art projects and cleats. Cubbies and wall hooks can simplify rushed mornings. Stock a basket with late-summer essentials like sunscreen and sunglasses; switch it over to gloves and hats when nippy weather arrives.

Pack up the backpack. Pencils? Check. Ruler? Check. What about extra shoelaces, bandages, hand sanitizer? Pack a life's-little-emergencies kit in a zippered plastic bag that can live alongside the textbooks and gym shorts.

Draft a daily schedule. You don't want mornings to feel like reruns of "Beat the Clock." Map it out – how much time for breakfast? For primping? For finding that lost textbook? And remember, that getting started the night before can help you get kids ready faster in the morning.

One week ahead

Populate your calendar. Most schools offer a list of important days to remember – conferences, concerts, professional development days. Plug it all into your calendar now so you'll be prepared to chaperone field trips or make bake-sale muffins.

Streamline school lunches. Pull together all the plastic containers and thermoses. Having your kids' favorite fruits and snacks on hand could get them more excited to pack their own lunchboxes.

Three days ahead

Wind down to earlier bedtimes. Help kids ease back into school-year sleep schedules with a consistent evening routine to wind them down at night (this handy checklist can help make it fun).

The night before

It's go time. Now you can focus on calming the first-day jitters as they get revved up for the best school year ever!

Source: healthyessentials.com

7 Tips for Summer Dog Care

Here are a few simple tips to help your dog stay cool and safe in the hot weather:

1. Walk your dog during the cooler parts of the day

Avoid peak temperatures and take them out in the early morning and late evening when it's cooler outside. There is likely to be more shade then too, which will protect your dog from direct sun exposure.

2. Add ice cubes to their dog bowl to keep the water cool

Ensuring your dog has access to fresh water is always essential, but when it's this hot, it's even more important, as is changing it more regularly than usual. Adding a few ice cubes to the water helps to keep it cool for longer, and ice cubes also make appetizing treats or pet-friendly ice-lollies, which will boost hydration too. Keep one bowl outside in the shade and one inside to ensure there's water available at all times.

3. Set up a paddling pool for your dog

If your dog likes water, fill up a paddling pool or (empty) sand pit and set it out in the shade for your dog to splash about in to cool off. This works well as an activity for dogs when it's too hot for a midday walk.

4. Use pet safe sun cream

Protect your dog's skin from sunburn by applying sun cream on parts that are exposed, such as the nose and tips of their ears. Be particularly cautious with hairless breeds as they are more susceptible to burning.

5. Put out damp towels for your dog

Wet some towels and set them out in the shade for your dog to lie on. Dampened towels are a simple way to keep your dog cool and encourage your dog to rest rather than pace around in the heat. Alternatively, a frozen water bottle wrapped in a towel for your dog to lie beside works too.

6. Take care of your dog's paws

Pavements can become so hot they can burn your pooch's paw pads. A general guide is, if it's too hot for you to touch for longer than five seconds, it's too hot for your dog. Opt for shaded routes and exercise your dog on grass where possible.

7. Avoid the car when it's hot – and never leave your dog alone in it

Even when parked in the shade with the car windows open, temperatures in cars can rise extremely quickly, which could cause your dog to dehydrate, develop heat stroke and could be fatal. If your dog must travel in the car, stop for regular water breaks to keep them hydrated.

Source: home.bt.com

What's in Season? Blueberries

Blueberries are known for their delicious taste and high nutrient content.

Blueberries are low in fat and sodium. They are a good source of dietary fiber and are high in vitamin C.

During the summer months,

blueberries are in season and can be found for lower prices in your grocery store.

Select firm, plump, dry blueberries with a dusty blue color and a uniform size when buying fresh blueberries. Fresh blueberries can be stored in the refrigerator for 10-14 days.



Source: blt.tamu.edu

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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Yogurt Berry Parfait

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 cups yogurt (low-fat or fat-free, plain or vanilla*)
- 1 cup banana (sliced)
- 1/2 cup blueberries (fresh)
- 1/2 cup optional fruits (if desired, such as strawberries, peaches, pineapple and/or mangos)
- 1 cup granola

Directions:

1. Line up 4 parfait or other tall glasses.
2. Spoon about 1/4 cup of yogurt into each glass.
3. Top with about 1/4 cup of fruit.
4. Next sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of granola.
5. Repeat the process.

This would be great for breakfast or after school snack and your child could help too!!

Source: blt.tamu.edu

Tom Green County News

August 13th—

EEA Yearbook Planning Meeting

@ Extension Office

At 10:00 a.m.

September 11th—12th

Texas Extension Education Association
State Conference

@ Abilene

Family and Community Health “Connections” is provided by the following Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family and Community Health Agents:

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