TEAM KENTUCKY
CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Senior Health & Wellness Newsletter







National Glaucoma Awareness

January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month. Glaucoma is considered the "sneak thief of sight" where individuals can go permanently blind from. At this time, there is no cure but there are treatments and medications that are available that may slow the progression of the disease down. There is no warning or signs of glaucoma. Often, 40% of vision is lost before an individual realizes it or it is diagnosed. Vision is lost due to damage to the eye's optic nerve. There are 2 main types of glaucoma: 1. Primary open-angle glaucoma and 2. Angle-closure glaucoma.

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National Glaucoma Awareness

To prevent or delay the onset of glaucoma, it is important to have regular eye exams done. Since there are no signs and symptoms of glaucoma, an eye exam catch the disease in an early state before significant vision is lost. Peripheral (or side vision) are the first vision to be effected by glaucoma.

Individuals who are African-American and Hispanics have a greater risk of glaucoma than Caucasians. Older individuals and those who have family members diagnosed with glaucoma are at a greater risk of developing the disease.

During the 2021 General Assembly, a new driver's license renewal policy was put into place and is in effect starting January 1, 2025. An eye exam must be completed prior to the renewal of their driver's license. This is to insure that drivers have the visual acuity required to operate a vehicle. Vision exams may be completed during a vision specialist appointment, physician, an advanced practical registered nurse. The provider will complete a form that will need to be provided at the time of driver's license renewal. You may also complete the vision screening at Kentucky's Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Driver Licensing Regional Office. This process takes about 1 minute to complete. If an individual does not pass the eye exam at the regional office, the individual must see a vision specialist prior to a renewal being processed. It is encouraged that you bring corrective lenses to your vision screening at the regional offices. A restriction will be placed on your license if you pass the vision exam while wearing glasses. The goal for this policy is to keep everyone on the road as safe as possible. Please reach out to the Department of Transportation Regional Offices for more questions.

References:

https://glaucoma.org/articles/january-is-glaucoma-awareness-month?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA9bq6BhAKEiwAH6bqoD2mkb620yOtG5mky_6RIHnYh8DulaKBTzpDfrHXAXjt6UwFN8_rxRoCyrIQAvD_BwE

https://transportation.ky.gov/NewsRoom/KYTC%20Vision%20Screening%20for%20License%20Required%20in%202025.pdf

Recipe



Broccoli Cheese Soup

Serves 6

- 1 large head broccoli or 12 oz bag of frozen broccoli
- 1/4 c butter
- 1 small onion
- 3 tbsp flour
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/4 c flour
- 2 c chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 2 c milk
- 2 c shredded cheese of choice



- Rinse and spoon-size chop one head of fresh broccoli, or use 12 oz of frozen broccoli. Trim any larger florets into spoon-size chunks.
- Mince a small or ½ of a medium onion. Melt 4 tablespoons of butter over medium-high heat. Add onion and saute until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add 1 clove of minced garlic and cook one more minute.
- Decrease the heat to medium. Add ¼ cup flour and continue to cook and stir continually until browning some—about 3 minutes. Slowly add two cups of chicken or vegetable broth and stir to mix in the flour mixture. Add ½ teaspoon of salt and ½ teaspoon of black pepper. Allow to thicken some, then slowly add 2 cups of milk. Bring to a low boil and allow to thicken.
- Add broccoli, cover, and turn down the heat to simmer. Simmer until broccoli is tender—about 20 to 25 minutes.
- Add 2 cups of sharp cheese of your choice. I like a mixture of sharp cheddar and Velveeta.
- Simmer another 5 minutes and serve.

Important dates in January

January 01 - New Year's Day
January 01 - New Driver's License Rule - Vision Test
January 20 - Martin Luther King Jr Day

Can you find it? Somewhere in the newsletter is a tiny Kentucky. Did you spot it?



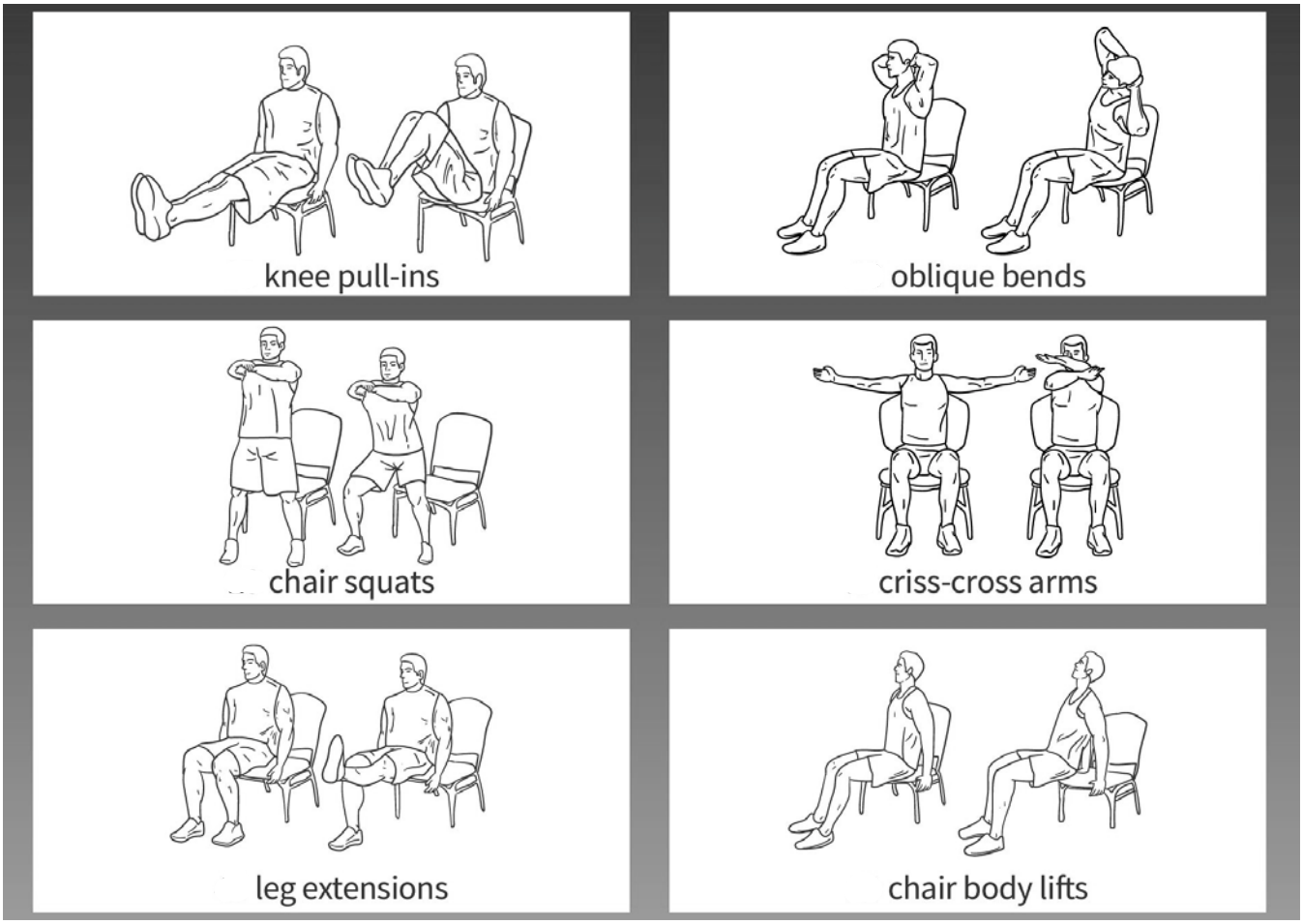
Last month's was located on Page 6 in the KSPAN logo.

Exercise Series!

Always consult your physician before starting a new exercise program. never perform any exercise that causes pain. never hold your breath while exercising.

Strengthening and Balance Exercises

Do each exercise 10-20 times. Rest as needed.



Dementia Corner

The Importance of Early Detection and Diagnosis of Dementia: 3 Steps to Talk to Your Doctor

Early detection of dementia is crucial for improving the quality of life for individuals and families facing this condition. Dementia, which includes Alzheimer's and other cognitive disorders, affects millions globally. By identifying it early, people can access treatments and support to slow symptom progression and improve daily function. Early diagnosis also allows families to make informed decisions about care, finances, and legal matters, reducing stress and fostering empowerment.

Here are three steps for discussing memory concerns with your doctor:

1. **Prepare with Specific Observations**

Document specific memory issues, like forgetting events or struggling to find words. Concrete examples help your doctor assess memory concerns thoroughly. The Alzheimer's Association suggests this clear communication to facilitate early discussions and screenings (Alzheimer's Association, 2023).

2. **Express Concerns Openly**

Start the conversation by sharing your worries directly. Say, "I've noticed changes in my memory, and I'm concerned." The National Institute on Aging (NIA) encourages this transparency and recommends providing specific examples to help doctors gauge the impact on daily life (National Institute on Aging, 2023).

3. **Ask About Tests and Referrals**

Inquire about memory testing, asking, "Are there memory tests you recommend?" or "Would you suggest seeing a specialist?" If needed, your doctor may refer you for further assessment. The CDC highlights the importance of seeking testing if you notice memory changes (CDC, 2022).

Addressing memory issues early promotes better management before the onset of more severe symptoms and can extend periods of independence, benefiting both persons living with dementia and family caregivers.



Winter Gardening

Are you currently dreaming about all the plants and beautiful flowers that will fill our yards in just a few short months? Do you love getting your hands in dirt and playing all while making a mess? At the end, do you enjoy watering and admiring beautiful plants and flowers? Did you know you can start a Winter Sow to start seedling around your house with just a few items?

The Winter Sow is when you begin the germination process with seed with an enclosed container that are kept outside during the winter months. When the temperatures are below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, it is time start the Winter Sow. Containers should be placed where they can get rain, snow and sunlight. All of these are needed through the germination process.

What is needed: Plastic Translucent Container (milk jug, nut jar, 2-liter, etc..), all-purpose soil (potting soil or garden mix), seeds, scissors, duct tape, drill or device to poke holes into plastic container, plastic tags, paint pen (to label containers).

How to do it: Drill holes in the bottom and about 1 inch up on the side of the container for drainage. Cut the jug partially in half to open the container. Place about 3-4 inches of soil inside the container. Leave about 2 inches from the top of the container so the seed will grow. Add your seeds! With the smaller the seed, the less depth you need for the seed to germinate. Scatter tiny seeds on the surface, lightly cover for medium seeds and make a tiny hole and cover for larger seeds. Seal your jug using the duct tape. You will be opening and closing the container throughout the process. Put your container outside where there is sunlight and will get rain/snow. This process is an easy process; however, your plants will still need some attention especially if there is not any rain/snow. Once the warmer temperatures arrive and stay, you will need to open your container to allow for more ventilation until it is time to plant. Seedlings should be planted when they are about 2 inches tall. Seedlings should be planted and not kept in the containers. Plant them in the ground or a container where they will grow into mature plants!

Reach out to your local extension office for additional questions or if they have any seeds available.