January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month, an important time to spread the word about this sight-stealing disease.

Glaucoma is a leading cause of vision loss and blindness in the United States. People are often unaware that glaucoma has no symptoms in its early stages.

If detected early, before noticeable vision loss occurs, glaucoma can usually be controlled and severe vision loss can often be prevented. Vision that is lost from glaucoma cannot be restored.

Anyone can get glaucoma, but those at higher risk include:

- African Americans over age 40
- Everyone over age 60, especially Hispanics/Latinos
- People with a family history of the disease

To learn more visit the Glaucoma Research Foundation.

What is Influenza?
(Also called Flu)
The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

Signs and Symptoms of Flu—People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults

*It’s important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

How the Flu Spreads—Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

Period of Contagiousness —You may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

Onset of Symptoms—The time from when a person is exposed to the flu virus to when symptoms begin is about 1 to 4 days, with an average of about 2 days.

Preventing Flu—The first and most important step in preventing flu is to get a flu vaccination each year. The CDC also recommends everyday preventive actions (like staying away from people who are sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and frequent handwashing) to help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory (nose, throat and lungs) illnesses, like flu.

For more information on protecting yourself and your family, visit the DHSS Influenza webpage.

Calories
(noun)

Tiny creatures that live in your closet and sew your clothes a little bit tighter every night.
What is Holding you Back From Happiness?

Being happy is something we all strive for. Some days it is harder than others, some days it seems impossible. Happiness is hard to define but it’s easy to identify when you don’t have it. Most people assume that more money will make them happy. Studies have shown that it is not that simple. Your life’s circumstances have less to do with happiness than the products of your habits and your outlook on life. Here are some bad habits that may be keeping you back:

1) **Holding your feelings in.**
2) **Numbing yourself with technology.** Has the TV or books become your escape from the real world?
3) **Waiting for the future.** Telling yourself, “I’ll be happy when …” is one of the easiest unhappy habits to fall into. Instead find things to be thankful for now.
4) **Spending too much time and effort acquiring “things.”** There are many studies that show that material things don’t make you happy.
5) **Fighting change.** Change is an inevitable part of life, and those who fight it do so because they are struggling to remain in control.
6) **Pessimism.** If you expect bad things, you’re more likely to get bad things.
7) **Trying to keep up with the Joneses.** Jealousy and envy are incompatible with happiness.

Source: LinkedIn

Heart-Healthy Valentine’s Day Tips

Your sweetheart may have the key to your heart, but eating healthy and being physically active can be the key to a healthier heart. This Valentine’s Day, indulge your sweetheart with a heart-healthy gift or date.

1. **Rather than tempting your beloved with sweets,** consider a gift that has more permanence. Search for a poem that describes your feelings and write it on beautiful paper for a handmade Valentine.

2. **Quality time is one of the most meaningful gifts.** Bundle up and plan an active outing such as sledding, ice skating, gathering wood for a fire or if you’re feeling adventurous, visit an indoor rock wall.

For more heart-healthy Valentine’s Day ideas visit the [American Heart Association](https://www.americanheart.org).