



3 conditions that can
affect aging eyes



Youth know they're
online too much—how
can you help?



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3 tips for setting a
realistic wedding

August 2025

55+	3
Agriculture & Livestock.....	5
Community Affairs	8
Finance - Personal.....	12
Food & Nutrition.....	14
Health care.....	17
Recipes.....	18
Recreation & Leisure	24
Seasonal Content and Guides.....	27

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3 conditions that can affect aging eyes



(NC) Canada's population is aging, and with that comes a greater risk of health ailments—including vision problems. As we get older, our eyes become more susceptible to vision-threatening conditions.

Understanding how our eyes change over time can help inform us of proactive steps to protect and maintain our eye health. Here are three of the most common conditions that can affect your vision as you age:

Cataracts:

Cataracts are a part of aging and happen when the lens inside your eye becomes cloudy. After the age of 60, most everyone will develop cataracts. Symptoms include blurred vision, increased sensitivity to light, double vision and dulling of colours.

Cataracts are treatable, usually beginning with an update to your eyeglass or contact lens prescription. If the cataracts progress, your eye doctor may recommend removing them surgically, depending on their severity.

Glaucoma:

Glaucoma is the name for a group of eye diseases that lead to vision loss by damaging the optic nerve, which carries signals from your eyes to your brain. The risk of glaucoma increases after age 55, with symptoms that may include seeing halos around lights, blurred vision, eye pain and redness.

Although glaucoma is irreversible, regular eye exams can result in early detection and there are several treatments, including medications and surgery, that can be used to prevent optic nerve damage and vision loss.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD):

AMD is the leading cause of vision loss among older adults, affecting around 2.5 million Canadians. Dry AMD is the most common form of the disease, accounting for 85-90 per cent of cases.

The condition starts when the macula, a part of your retina, becomes damaged. At first, symptoms are often unnoticeable but can worsen quickly. Your central vision can become very blurry or completely dark, making simple tasks like reading and recognizing faces difficult.

The first Health Canada-approved device for dry AMD, MacuMira, is currently the only treatment available. It uses a device to deliver a low-level microcurrent through closed eyelids, which stimulates your eyes' retinal pigment epithelium cells. This has been shown to improve vision in recipients in some cases by two full lines on their eye exam charts.

Stay on top of regular check-ups, and ask your eye care professional about dry AMD, early detection and available treatments. You can also learn more at macumira.com.

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4 best practices to care for your eyes



(NC) Our eyes are constantly at work, whether it's the strain from looking at glowing screens, squinting from the sun, or drying out from indoor air vents. Unfortunately, eye health often gets overlooked in our daily routines. However, there are effective habits that can help protect your eyes at any stage of life.

Make sure you're eating well. A diet rich in vitamins A and C can help your eye health. Your body uses vitamin A to help build the rod cells in the retina that make it easier to see in low light. Vitamin C is an antioxidant that can help protect against cell damage. These nutrients can be found in carrots, leafy greens, citrus fruits and sweet potatoes.

Take it easy on your eyes. Staring at computers and phones for hours can lead to tired, blurry eyes and headaches. Your eyes have to work harder to read text on a screen, especially if you're viewing it from the wrong angle, or in poor lighting.

To give your eyes a break, try the 20-20-20 trick: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. Additionally, consider using blue light glasses or adjusting your screen settings to reduce harsh glare.

Keep your eyes protected. From a day at the beach to working on a new DIY project, protective eyewear is a simple but important way to keep your eyes and vision safe. Sunglasses with UV protection help prevent long-term sun damage, while safety goggles are crucial for shielding your eyes from potential injury when working with tools and chemicals, or during high-impact activities.

Get your eyes checked regularly. Regular, preventative eye exams should be part of everyone's health routine. Even if your vision seems fine, checkups help catch conditions like glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Early detection means better outcomes and fewer disruptions to your daily life. Canada's population is aging rapidly, and AMD is the leading cause of vision loss among older adults, affecting nearly 2.5 million Canadians. Dry AMD is the most common form of the disease, making up 85-90 per cent of cases.

There's a treatment option available for the condition: MacuMira is the first medical device approved by Health Canada to address it, and which has been shown to reverse some of its effects on eyesight. It's currently the only treatment available, and one way to support your long-term retinal health and maintain vision.

Supporting your eye health doesn't require major changes. Small, consistent steps can make all the difference. From smart screen habits and nutrition to regular checkups, taking care of your eyes today can help you maintain clear, healthy vision for years to come.

Learn more at macumira.com.

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Agriculture & Livestock

Fruits and vegetables you didn't know grow in Ontario



(NC) Ontario may be best known for its apples, strawberries and potatoes, but there are some fruits and vegetables thriving in the province that may surprise you. Thanks to the diverse climates and rich soil, Ontario is home to a variety of crops including:

Cranberries

Cranberries are native to the Maritimes but now thrive in different parts of Canada, including Ontario. These tart, healthy berries grow in unique wetlands called bogs, which make for great scenery and photos.

Try this recipe from Foodland Ontario, which incorporates frozen cranberries and sweet potatoes:

Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Cranberries

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Makes: 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 4 cups (1 L) peeled, cubed sweet potatoes, (about 4)
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) vegetable oil, divided
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 1 cup (250 ml) frozen cranberries
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) maple syrup
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) butter
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) chopped walnuts, toasted

Directions:

1. Place sweet potatoes on a parchment paper-lined, large rimmed baking sheet. Toss with 1 tbsp (15 mL) of the oil and thyme until coated.
2. Place cranberries in small bowl; toss with remaining oil and set aside.
3. Roast sweet potatoes at 400°F (200°C) for 20 to 25 minutes, or until tender; stir in cranberries during the last 8 minutes of cooking time.
4. In small saucepan, over medium-high heat, combine maple syrup and vinegar. Bring to boil; reduce heat, simmer 4 minutes, or until slightly thickened. Remove from heat; stir in butter.
5. In medium bowl, toss sweet potato mixture with maple syrup mixture and stir in walnuts.

Brussels sprouts

Brussels sprouts, once more common in colder parts of Europe, are now grown in Ontario fields every fall. These little cabbage-like vegetables are known for their unique flavour and nutritional benefits, making them a great addition to seasonal meals.

Asian greens

Asian greens are becoming increasingly popular in Ontario, both among consumers and growers. Varieties such as bok choy, Chinese broccoli and more are now widely grown thanks to Ontario's diverse agricultural landscape and multicultural population. These leafy vegetables thrive in the province's climate, especially up in the Holland Marsh where 90 per cent of these vegetables are grown.

There are over 125 fruit and vegetable crops including apples, blueberries and tomatoes grown in Ontario, the amount of manual labour this takes is substantial. Which is why farmers also rely on more than 20,000 temporary and seasonal international workers to help grow, manage and harvest the local fruits and vegetables we know and love.

Many of these workers have been coming to Ontario for years, and their experience makes them valued members of the farm workforce. Their jobs also help them build homes, educate their children and support their communities back home.

You can learn more about the temporary and seasonal workers and the produce they grow at morethananmigrantworker.ca.

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Reduce food waste with Ontario fruits and veggies



How local growers are making sustainability part of every bite

(NC) From reusable shopping bags to composting and recycling, many Ontarians are making everyday choices to reduce waste. But did you know your produce choices can make a difference too?

From farm to table, Ontario's fruit and vegetable sector is embracing sustainability. There are simple ways you can help reduce food and packaging waste, while supporting local growers who are already leading the way.

On the farm: Less waste, more efficiency

Ontario farmers use growing practices that help reduce waste before food even leaves the farm. Precision farming, drip irrigation, and improved storage techniques all help lower water and fertilizer use, reduce spoilage and keep food fresh longer.

Sustainable practices, like growing cover crops to reduce erosion, rotating crops to keep soil fertile and using new pest control methods can help lower the environmental footprint of produce production.

Many growers also donate surplus produce to food banks or participate in gleaning programs, ensuring that healthy, safe food doesn't go to waste.

In the packhouse: Smarter packaging

Ontario's produce industry is shifting toward more eco-friendly packaging. From recyclable clamshells to compostable trays, growers and packers are investing in better options to protect freshness without piling up plastic.

At home: Tips to reduce your produce waste

You can help make your kitchen part of the solution, too. Here are a few easy ways:

- **Buy local and in season** - Ontario-grown produce is tastiest and freshest in-season, and a short path from field to fridge means longer shelf-life at home.
- **Store it right** - Proper storage helps prevent waste. For example, keep apples in the fridge and potatoes in a cool, dark place.
- **Use it all** - Turn soft fruit into smoothies, or veggie scraps into soup stock or compost.
- **Shop smart** - Buy what you need, freeze, store or can the rest, and try "imperfect" produce—it's just as tasty and often reduces food loss.

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Sustainability starts here

Buying local fruits and vegetables helps support farmers in and around your community and build a stronger local food system.

Learn more about ways to reduce waste, protect the environment, and make the most of every harvest at ofvga.org.

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Community Affairs

From experimentation to regular use: Understanding the ways to combat the effects of substance use amongst Ontario youth is crucial



(NC) While overall drug use trends among youth have shown a gradual decline over the years, alcohol and substance use among middle and high school students remains a persistent concern. Approximately one in five students in Grades 7 to 12 report drinking alcohol within a given month, with usage rising significantly with age, from seven per cent in Grade 7 to a striking 61 per cent by Grade 12.

Where can youth turn to? Treatment programs that provide a safe space for youth to engage in clinical assessments, individual and group therapy, and wellness programming that promotes healthy coping mechanisms are crucial in supporting youth facing addiction.

The intersection between substance use and mental health is becoming increasingly clear. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) research reveals that about one in nine secondary school students reported using cannabis to cope with mental health challenges at least once in the past year.

Breaking the cycle. In response to the growing need for youth-specific treatment, CAMH, Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital, has launched the Youth Vaping, Substance Use and Technology Dependence Program (Youth-VAST) for youth aged 12 to 21 in Ontario. Combining creative arts, wellness activities, peer support, and psychoeducation—both virtually and in person—this treatment program offers a fresh, evidence-based approach to addressing addiction and mental health issues.

“While some level of experimentation is expected during adolescence, it’s crucial for both youth and their parents to recognize the line between occasional use and addiction,” says Amit Rotem, child and adolescent psychiatrist and addiction psychiatry fellow at the Child, Youth and Family Services, CAMH. “Youth-VAST is here to support young people wherever they are in Ontario. We help them explore the why and how to live healthier and full lives.”

The power of accepting help. To support youth facing addiction, it’s crucial that they, and their families, peers and loved ones understand and address the root causes of their dependency. Now more than ever, there’s a pressing need for treatment programs that offer stigma-free, supportive environments where youth feel empowered to take ownership of their dependency and take meaningful steps forward.

Are you noticing substance dependencies in yourself or those around you? Youth-VAST is here to support you.

To learn more, visit wehearyou.ca.

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Experts say youth aged 12 to 21 are facing challenges related to nicotine addiction now more than ever



(NC) Vaping continues to surge among youth in Ontario, with recent data showing that usage climbs significantly with age: While just five per cent of Grade 8 students report vaping, that figure jumps to 22 per cent by Grade 12. Social influences like peer behaviour and marketing tactics designed to appeal to younger audiences drive increased use and result in dependency in youth. With peers often cited as the primary source of access, social influence remains a driving force behind this growing dependency among teens.

Where do we go from here? As more youth turn to nicotine as a coping mechanism for stress, the need for early intervention programs has never been more critical. Support services that address vaping, substance use and technology-related dependency among Ontario's youth play a vital role in equipping them with healthy coping tools that can positively shape their long-term well-being.

Support where it matters when youth need it most. In response to this growing trend, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital and one of the world's foremost research centres in the field, has launched the Youth Vaping, Substance Use and Technology Dependence Program (Youth-VAST) to target this growing trend and offer treatment directly to and for youth in Ontario.

"In Ontario, we have observed the increasing impact of youth vaping, especially among high school students. Many of these students report that vaping helps to relieve stress, and they often emphasize the ease of initiating, particularly when peers are vaping. Furthermore, the impact of vaping on youth is exacerbated by the accessibility and addictive nature of nicotine found within these devices," says Trish Tulloch MD FRCP, assistant professor, University of Toronto, and pediatrician specializing in adolescent medicine.

This program takes a youth-centred approach, providing virtual or in-person behavioural and medical treatments. It also integrates creative arts programming, physical wellness activities, peer-led support and psychoeducation. By fostering a supportive environment, the treatment program aims to help young people develop healthier coping strategies, reduce dependency and build long-term resilience.

Are you noticing patterns of substance use in yourself or someone you care about? Youth-VAST is here to provide free, confidential support.

Learn more at wehearyou.ca.

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Youth know they're online too much—how can you help?



(NC) If it feels like young people are always glued to a screen, you're not far off. From TikTok to video games and everything in between, technology is baked into the daily lives of teens and young adults, shaping routines, behaviours and how they experience the world.

Recent data shows that 94 per cent of students use social media daily, with nearly one in four spending five or more hours a day scrolling through social platforms.

How can youth avoid technology when their whole day is digital? From the moment they

wake up to the time they fall asleep, youth are immersed in digital environments. Technology has become more than just a tool, it's an integral extension of daily life with just over 21 per cent of students reporting seven or more hours of screen time per day.

One bit of good news is that young people themselves are recognizing the issue. 18 per cent of students report symptoms that suggest these behaviours are leading to more serious problems with technology use.

Recognition is only the start—there's help available. More organizations are developing resources to give youth the tools, space and help they need. One new option available is the Youth Vaping, Substance Use and Technology Dependence Program (Youth-VAST), introduced by CAMH, Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital and a global leader in psychiatric research.

The treatment program supports Ontario youth aged 12 to 21 who are living with technology addiction, substance use and vaping. It uses individualized therapy, group sessions and virtual or in-person programming to help youth build healthier coping strategies and reduce harmful habits.

"The use of technology as a substitute for human interaction has become increasingly normalized, often at the cost of our mental health" Daniela Lobo, MD, PhD, FRCPC - addiction psychiatrist, CAMH. " Youth-VAST encourages youth to reflect on when that use begins to interfere with everyday life, and offers a personalized plan to help them navigate and manage these behaviours in a healthier way."

If you or someone you care about is feeling overwhelmed by the role technology is playing in daily life, you don't have to face it alone. There are groups and people available to help you find new ways to cope with those stresses.

You can learn more at wehearyou.ca.

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Ontario's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is on the path to change substance use patterns among youth



(NC) With substance use, it can be difficult for young people to recognize when casual experimentation begins to lean further into addiction. This is where youth-focused treatment programs become crucial—providing the tools, education, and guidance needed to help youth navigate these critical moments before the consequences become long-term.

Although youth substance use has declined in recent years, there are still a significant number who use substances. The demographics and dangers of use are worse due to a combination of access to more potent substances and the shift to more dangerous patterns by youth. This is often with multiple genetic, social and environmental risk factors. Whether used as a coping mechanism for personal challenges or influenced by peer behaviour, substance use among youth in Ontario is treatable.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has launched a new program to provide early intervention and province-wide access to treat youth aged 12 to 21 who are experiencing symptoms of addiction. By offering confidential, personalized and free treatment, the Youth Vaping, Substance Use and Technology Dependence Program (Youth-VAST) is designed to help youth develop healthy coping strategies, access specialized care and build resilience in the face of addiction-related triggers.

Changing the trajectory of substance dependency requires programs that are adaptable, accessible and free. These elements are critical in equipping youth with the tools to navigate addiction. Created with a youth-oriented approach, the program is designed to meet young people wherever they are on their journey toward seeking support.

“I am incredibly proud of the Youth-VAST program. It is a health system and community built to foster connection, understanding and recovery for youth navigating substance use challenges,” says Carole-Anne Chiasson, clinical director of Child Youth and Emerging Adult Program at CAMH. “Our goal is to provide lasting resources that young people across Ontario can rely on. The first step begins with their decision to seek treatment, and when they’re ready to talk, we’ll be here to listen, no matter where they are in their journey toward changing their drug use patterns”.

To ensure youth feel supported during their journey, this program is designed to meet youth where they are—offering both in-person and virtual support, and tailoring services to meet each individual’s needs. Staff work with youth to develop personalized care plans, provide ongoing support and coaching to help youth meet their goals. Personal care plans can include virtual or in-person group programming, arts-based activities and peer support, physical wellness and psychoeducation.

If you or someone you know is living with addiction and needs help, support is just one click away. To learn more, visit wehearyou.ca.

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Finance - Personal

More homeowners tightening budgets ahead of mortgage renewals



(NC) Affordable housing isn't just a problem for those trying to get into the housing market. It's a challenge for homeowners too.

A new survey from TD Bank Group revealed some of the challenges homeowners will face when renewing a mortgage this year. Nearly half of those renewing in the next year expect higher monthly payments, with 73 per cent of them saying they'll need to cut back on spending to keep up.

"From what I've seen, most of those preparing to renew their mortgage this year are leaning towards a fixed instead of a variable rate mortgage, but it's important to remember that there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to choosing what can work for you," said Patrick Smith, vice president, product management, Real Estate Secured Lending at TD.

"There's support available for Canadians who want quick and valuable mortgage advice. A mortgage specialist can provide context to help you understand your options, and advice to help you create your strategy."

Here are some things to consider when you're facing possible higher mortgage payments on renewal:

- **Know your numbers.** Get clear on your current budget and spending. Take an honest inventory of your expenses and triage between the must-haves and nice-to-haves. Look at where you can cut back and direct that money to your mortgage.
- **Seek advice early.** Speak to a mortgage specialist sooner rather than later. They can help you understand all your options to feel more confident heading into the mortgage renewal process. For example, knowing the difference between a fixed vs. variable interest rate can help you decide if you prefer your current rate type, or if you'd rather switch.
- **Focus on your principal.** Bringing down your mortgage principal can help lower your future payments from what they would otherwise be. This is especially helpful in a higher interest rate environment. If you have room in your budget, you might be able to start a more accelerated payment schedule, which could help pay off your mortgage faster.

Rates go up and down, and life circumstances can change—you can't always know what the future will hold. But by getting advice and having a strategy in place to manage rate increases, you can be better prepared to meet it.

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3 tips for setting a realistic wedding budget



(NC) When it comes to making a wedding budget, couples can easily google the cost of venues, tuxedos and late-night poutine trucks, or ask ChatGPT.

But wedding planner Valary Chrisman says that information can be misleading because it doesn't take into account where the wedding they searched took place, how many guests there were or what kind of food they served.

Generic budget advice might also not accurately convey how Canada's rapid rate of inflation has increased the costs of goods and services.

Here are some additional tips to help create a custom wedding budget that can work for you:

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Reach out to vendors.

Don't guess what a sit-down dinner for 150 people costs. Start sending emails or pick up the phone and ask vendors. Quotes can help you understand if a particular option is truly more budget-friendly.

For example, you may think a wedding held at home or on private property is the budget-friendly option. However, you also need to account for the costs of getting permits, renting items and hiring staff.

Defy wedding convention.

It's important to be realistic about your budget and the cost of vendors in your area. For example, if you plan to host 100 people for a wedding in a major city for \$10,000 you may be disappointed.

Staying on budget is an opportunity to be creative, whether you opt for a smaller wedding party or a 25-person guest list.

"If you're finding the cost of hosting a traditional wedding a little bit expensive, it's helpful to think of alternative options," Chrisman said.

Track wedding spending.

Once couples have settled on a budget and picked their vendors, it's time to start sending out deposits.

It's important to track the wedding money going out, while putting aside funds for the event, said Christina Mikhael from Everyday Advice Journey at TD.

"Using a tool like TD MySpend can help you categorize your spending with your deposit accounts or any credit cards, set specific savings goals and track your progress," Mikhael said.

You don't have to break the bank to throw a wedding party you and your guests will never forget—it just takes some creativity, good advice and the right planning to start happily ever after, on budget.

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Food & Nutrition

Healthy snack ideas kids will love



(NC) Packing healthy and satisfying snacks every day can become challenging - for kids and grown-ups alike. Luckily, Ontario's selection of delicious and nutritious local options means that family-pleasing snack options are readily available.

Did you know Ontario's fruit and vegetable farms grow more than 125 different crops? From crisp apples and juicy pears to crunchy carrots and tasty sweet potatoes, farms and markets are bursting with snack-worthy produce that is perfect for lunch boxes, after-school bites and mid-day energy boosts.

Here are a few easy ideas to keep snack time local and seasonal:

Apple slices with cheese or nut butter. Ontario apples are at their peak in early fall and pair perfectly with protein-packed sides. Try different apple varieties to keep things interesting.

Veggie sticks with dip. Freshly harvested veggies like carrots, cucumbers, sweet peppers, cauliflower, or cherry tomatoes make colourful, crunchy snacks that are both fun and filling.

Pear and granola parfaits. Layer sliced Ontario pears with yogurt and granola for a quick, no-mess treat at home or on the go that is packed with flavour and nutrition.

Grapes and whole grain crackers. Ontario-grown table grapes are sweet, portable and easy to pair with whole grain crackers or mild cheese for a balanced bite.

Pumpkin muffins or squash bites. Sneak some fibre and vitamin A into lunchboxes with baked goods made from local pumpkin or butternut squash.

These fresh, local ingredients aren't just tasty - they support Ontario fruit and vegetable growers and encourage healthy eating habits for the whole family.

Learn more about the fruits and vegetables grown by Ontario farmers at ofvga.org.

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3 best fruits and vegetables to freeze for the winter



(NC) Freezing fruits and vegetables is one of the best ways to enjoy the taste of Ontario's harvest all year round. Whether you're looking to stock up on winter meals or simply want a reminder of the hot summer days when it gets cold, freezing offers a simple and effective way to extend the harvest season.

Here are three great options to freeze:

Strawberries

A summer favourite, strawberries are perfect for freezing. If you're able to somehow resist the urge to eat them right away, freezing them while they're ripe ensures you'll have sweet, juicy strawberries to enjoy all winter long. Use them in smoothies, desserts or as a topping for oatmeal during the winter months.

Peas

Peas freeze incredibly well as they maintain their taste, texture and colour even after being frozen. They're the perfect addition to a fall soup, stew or even as a standalone side dish.

Peaches

Like strawberries, peaches are another summer favourite. It's best to slice peaches before freezing, because freezing them whole can make them tricky to use later. Sliced peaches freeze wonderfully and are perfect for smoothies, desserts or baking.

Tips for freezing produce:

- **Blanch your veggies:** For most vegetables, blanching (briefly boiling and then chilling in ice water) is essential to preserve texture, colour and nutrients during freezing.
- **Make sure you're storing properly:** Always ensure that your produce is completely cooled and drained before freezing. Remove as much air as possible from freezer bags or containers to prevent freezer burn.
- **Use your produce within the year:** While frozen fruits and vegetables last for several months, it's always best to use them within a year to get the best flavour and texture.

Learn more about Ontario's fruit and vegetable production at ofvga.org.

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Fuss-free snacks for camping, cottaging or road tripping



(NC) Whether you're packing the car for a camping trip, heading to the cottage, or hitting the open road for a getaway, the right snacks can make all the difference. And nothing beats simple, healthy and delicious bites made from Ontario's locally grown in-season fruits and vegetables.

For a delicious and portable snack, consider trying these double corn muffins from Foodland Ontario. Flecked with tomato, corn and basil, they're perfect for camping, cottaging or road trips.

Double Corn Muffins

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 25 minutes

Makes: 12

Ingredients:

- 2 cobs sweet corn, husked
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup (250 ml) cornmeal
- 3/4 cup (180 ml) milk
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) honey
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) vegetable oil
- 1-1/2 cups (375 ml) all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) baking powder
- 1-1/2 tsp (7 ml) salt
- 1 tsp (5 ml) dried basil leaves, crumbled
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) baking soda
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) garlic powder
- 1 cup (250 ml) tomato, diced, peeled and seeded

Directions:

1. Grease a 12-cup nonstick muffin pan.
2. With a sharp knife, cut corn kernels from cobs to make 1 cup (250 mL).
3. In medium pot of boiling water, cook corn 3 to 4 minutes, or until almost tender; drain and set aside.
4. In medium bowl, combine eggs, cornmeal, milk, honey and oil.
5. In large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt, basil, baking soda and garlic powder.
6. Add cornmeal mixture, corn and tomatoes to dry ingredients, stir until just moistened.
7. Spoon into prepared muffin pan. Bake in 375° F (190°C) oven for 20 to 25 minutes, or until tops are firm to the touch. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes. Transfer to rack.

These muffins can be made ahead of time and stored in an airtight container, making them an ideal snack for your outdoor adventures.

Bonus: Easy grab-and-go snacks

Fresh Ontario produce is perfect for on-the-go munching—no need for complicated prep or fancy packaging. Just wash, chop (if needed), and pack in reusable containers or snack bags.

- **Carrots** - Sweet, crunchy and travel well
- **Cucumbers** - Refreshing and hydrating; slice or snack whole (especially mini varieties)
- **Apples and pears** - Crisp, sweet or tart, naturally portable and ideal for no-prep snacking
- **Cranberries** - Great for dried snacks or trail mix
- **Cooked corn on the cob** - Wrap in foil for a satisfying snack

These fresh and local fruits and veggies travel well, especially if kept cool in a cooler or insulated bag. Plus, they're a healthy alternative to processed snacks—and support local farmers with every bite.

You can learn more about fruits and vegetables grown in Ontario at ofvga.org.

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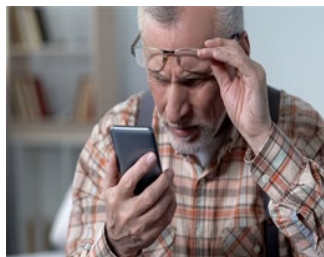
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Health care

Do you know about age-related macular degeneration?



(NC) It's the leading cause of vision loss among older adults, affecting nearly 2.5 million Canadians, but awareness around age-related macular degeneration (AMD) remains low. It can significantly impact daily life and long-term eye health, so education and early detection are crucial. Here's what you should know:

What is AMD?

The condition begins when the macula, a part of your retina, becomes damaged. There are two forms of the disease, dry and wet. The dry form is the most common, accounting for 85-90 per cent of cases. The disease advances through three stages: early, intermediate and late. In some cases, the dry form can progress to wet AMD, a less common but more aggressive form that can lead to significant vision loss.

What are the symptoms?

At the early stage, symptoms are often unnoticeable but can rapidly progress, impacting vision and quality of life. In later stages, central vision can become very blurry or completely dark, making simple tasks like reading and recognizing faces difficult or even impossible.

Who's at risk?

Risk for developing AMD increases as we age, and research suggests that a family history of the disease can increase the risk further. Other factors like cardiovascular disease, prolonged UV exposure, smoking and diets rich in saturated fats also make the disease more likely to develop.

What treatments are available?

A healthy lifestyle and balanced diet can help slow the progression of dry AMD, but can't reverse it. The first treatment approved by Health Canada is a device called MacuMira, and it's currently the only available option for dry AMD. Research has shown that it improves vision significantly in most recipients.

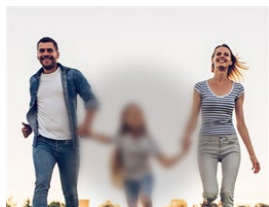
The more Canadians know about AMD, its symptoms and risks, the better chance they have of protecting their vision well into the future. Ask your eye care professional about lifestyle choices that can support eye health, as well as available treatment options.

Learn more at macumira.com.

www.newscanada.com

Word Count: 318 + 2 images

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Recipes

Everyday pasta with a seasonal spin



(NC) Perfect for sun-soaked afternoons and laid-back summer evenings, this pasta brings an easy elegance to any table. The delicate, ruffled folds of campanelle pasta cradle the natural sweetness of the peas, allowing each bite to deliver wonderful texture and flavour. This dish pairs well with cured prosciutto like Prosciutto di Parma PDO, prized for its authenticity and melt-in-your-mouth texture and sprinkled with Grana Padano PDO cheese to complete the dish. Made with simple, high-quality ingredients, this pasta celebrates the best of summer: fresh, bright and effortlessly delicious.

Campanelle Pasta with Prosciutto and Peas

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 15 minutes

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 12 oz (340 g) campanelle or trofie pasta
- 1 tsp (5 ml) salt
- 6 tbsp (90 ml) unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) finely chopped shallots
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (180 ml) frozen green peas
- 3 ounces thick-cut Prosciutto di Parma, diced into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cubes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) chicken broth
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 ml) good-quality truffle oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (180 ml) grated Grana Padano
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 thin slices prosciutto

Directions:

- In a 1-quart pot, bring water and salt to a boil. Cook pasta until almost al dente, about 9 minutes.
- Drain pasta well, reserving 1 cup (250 ml) of pasta water; transfer pasta to a large bowl.
- In a large skillet over medium-low heat, melt 2 tbsp (30 ml) of the butter. Add shallots, sautéing and stirring frequently until translucent, about 3 minutes.
- Add peas and diced prosciutto, stirring often, until it begins to brown, about 5 minutes.
- Add cooked pasta, chicken broth, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) of reserved cooking liquid to the skillet. Cook until the pasta is al dente and the liquid has reduced to coat the pasta.
- Add the truffle oil and remaining 4 tbsp (60 ml) of butter; cook and stir until the butter has melted.
- Add more pasta water if the mixture seems dry.
- Remove pasta from heat; stir in cheese and parsley; add salt and pepper to taste.
- Divide the mixture among four pasta bowls; top each with a slice of prosciutto. Serve warm.

Attention editors: Optional sidebar

Shopping Tip: If you're looking for authentic European products, such as Prosciutto di Parma and Grana Padano cheese, look for the PDO label. PDO stands for "protected designation of origin," meaning that it's authentic and produced in the region of origin. Learn more about the PDO system and the products it covers at distinctlydeliciouslyeuropean.eu.

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Elevate your picnic: Tips for the perfect outdoor spread



(NC) There's no better way to savour the sun-drenched days of summer than with a laid-back picnic that's equal parts effortless and indulgent. It all comes down to packing a few simple things that deliver big on flavour. Think of fresh bread, fruits, prosciutto and a few wedges of cheese. Prosciutto di Parma PDO and Grana Padano PDO cheese make an especially delicious pairing, bringing together the right mix of sweet and savoury!

Honey, olives, and fizzy mineral water can elevate your snacking game in seconds. The key is to blend comfort with a little flair, creating a picnic that's not just a meal, but a moment.

When the sun's out and the vibes are right, even the simplest bites feel like luxury.

Assemble the ingredients listed below, and feel free to freestyle—there's no wrong way to build your picnic board. Pack everything in containers or clear bags and add to a cooler or insulated bag. Throw in a cozy blanket, a small board for serving, napkins and chilled beverages. That's all you need for an easygoing and relaxing outdoor picnic.

European-style Picnic Basket

Ingredients:

- Grana Padano and other cheeses
- Deli meats, such as sliced prosciutto
- Baguettes
- Seasonal fruits, such as peaches, pears, nectarines and/or raspberries
- Fresh basil leaves
- Honey
- Olives (green or black)
- Nuts, such as almonds, walnuts, etc.

Attention editors: Optional sidebar

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Quick and easy recipes for summer hosting



(NC) Summer entertaining should be all about easy, breezy dishes that taste as good as they look, without keeping you stuck in the kitchen. Here are two refreshing salads which are just perfect for the season—these vibrant recipes bring big flavour and easy elegance to any gathering.

This kale salad is elevated using tasty, nutty Grana Padano PDO cheese and paired with a crisp almond crumble for a fresh and satisfying dish that comes together in minutes:

Kale Vinaigrette Salad with Almond Crumble

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients:

For the vinaigrette:

- ¼ cup (60 ml) tightly packed, finely grated Grana Padano
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) lemon juice
- ½ tbsp (7.5 ml) dijon mustard
- ¼ tsp (1.25 ml) salt
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- ¼ cup (60 ml) grapeseed oil

For the almond crumble:

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
- ¼ cup (60 ml) breads crumbs
- ¼ cup (60 ml) roasted almonds, chopped
- ¼ cup (60 ml) finely grated Grana Padano
- Salt, to taste

For the salad:

- 1 bunch kale, stripped and chopped (about 4 cups, or 1 L)
- 2 cups (500 ml) chopped radicchio
- Cheese shavings
- Pepper, to taste

Directions:

For the vinaigrette, combine cheese, lemon juice, mustard, salt and garlic in a food processor. While blending, slowly pour in grapeseed oil until smooth. Refrigerate.

For the crumble, heat olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add breadcrumbs; cook and stir until golden brown, about 5-7 minutes. Remove from heat. Add almonds and cheese; stir until cheese has melted and breadcrumbs begin to cluster. Season with salt. Set aside to cool.

For the salad, combine kale, radicchio and vinaigrette in a large bowl. Massage dressing into greens until well coated. Mix in half of almond crumble. Transfer greens to platter. Garnish with remaining crumble, cheese shavings and freshly cracked pepper.

Top with chicken or your favorite protein, if desired.

This grilled garden vegetable salad is just as effortless and full of summer colour, with the delicious taste of sliced prosciutto. For best results, consider using Prosciutto di Parma PDO, which is thinly sliced and perfectly complements the peak-season veggies:

Grilled Garden Vegetable Salad

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

Makes: 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 ears corn
- 1 medium zucchini, cut lengthwise in quarters
- 1 head romaine, cut lengthwise in quarters leaving core intact
- 1 medium red onion, quartered, leaving core intact
- 4 slices Prosciutto di Parma, cut into strips
- 6 tbsp (90 ml) olive oil, divided
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) lime juice
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) chopped mint leaves
- 1 tsp (5 ml) lime zest
- ½ tsp (2.5 ml) kosher salt
- ½ tsp (2.5 ml) sugar

Directions:

- Preheat grill for direct-heat grilling.
- Brush corn, zucchini, romaine and red onion with 3 tbsp (45 ml) olive oil.
- Grill vegetables until tender, turning several times. Let cool.
- Cut corn kernels off cob (yields 1 cup, or 250 ml). Chop zucchini into bite-sized pieces (1 cup, or 250 ml). Chop romaine into bite-sized pieces, discarding core (2 cups, or 500 ml). Chop red onion, discarding core (about 1 cup, or 250 ml).
- In a serving dish or bowl, combine grilled vegetables and prosciutto.
- In small bowl, whisk remaining olive oil, lime juice, mint, lime zest, kosher salt and sugar until blended.
- Toss vinaigrette with vegetable mixture until evenly coated. Serve immediately.

Attention editors: Optional sidebar

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Savour the simplicity: A no-fuss gourmet sandwich



(NC) As summer days heat up, it's the perfect time to upgrade your lunch game with easy, gourmet sandwiches that come together in minutes. You can't go wrong with the classic duo of prosciutto and cheese. This combination makes for a simple, satisfying bite that's big on flavour without a lot of fuss. Layer the ingredients below onto multigrain, a fresh baguette, ciabatta or your favourite bread. Whether you're packing for a picnic or whipping up something quick between summer plans, this sandwich brings a touch of effortless European flair to any meal.

Prosciutto Sandwiches with Arugula and Grana Padano

Prep time: 5-10 minutes

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
- 8 slices of sandwich bread
- Sliced Prosciutto di Parma PDO, as required
- Grana Padano PDO cheese as required
- Arugula, as needed
- Honey, to taste
- Mustard, to taste

Directions:

- Set your prosciutto and other ingredients aside; cut the cheese into thin flakes.
- For the dressing, mix mustard and honey in a bowl. While stirring, slowly pour in olive oil until mixture is smooth. Refrigerate.
- Remove the bread crust and roll it lightly with a rolling pin to flatten gently. You can also use bread without crusts. Toast it lightly in a frying pan or on a grill.
- Place the prosciutto slices on the bread, followed by arugula and the Grana Padano petals. Finally, add a dollop of dressing, and a second slice of bread.
- Cut the sandwiches into two triangles and serve. If you want to store them to serve later, wrap them in a layer of plastic wrap and leave in the fridge for up to 1-2 days.

Attention editors: Optional sidebar

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Recreation & Leisure

This summer's hot trend? Stay local, spend local



(NC) Summer is here, and many of us are taking advantage of the warm weather and sunshine by staying right where we are. More than half of Canadians plan to travel within the country this season, according to a recent TD Bank Group survey.

89 per cent of respondents reported that they felt it's important to support small businesses this summer. They're being deliberate about it too, with more now researching shops, restaurants and attractions ahead of their trips. That research is helping Canadians—especially Gen Z and Millennials—plan: almost three-quarters are considering basing their travel destination on a specific business or attraction they researched.

The uptick in local travel and spending is a boon for small businesses across the country, many of whom have been uncertain how trade disputes and a potential economic downturn may shape their fortunes.

"It's encouraging to hear that Canadians are planning to support local small businesses as part of their vacation plans this summer, as it helps both entrepreneurs and our local economies," says Julia Kelly, Vice President, Small Business Banking at TD. "It's particularly welcome news, as small businesses in many communities have been concerned about consumer spending slowing down."

Your summer adventures can be a great chance to check out some of the local attractions and businesses you might not have had a chance to. Here are some tips to help make the most of it:

- Going on a road trip? Try taking a different route than you're used to, and leave yourself open to saying "yes" to the local business signs you see on the roadside.
- The backroads have a lot to offer. Look for local food stands serving up great grub, as well as farms along your way. You can find good prices on fresh, high-quality produce, or even artisanal crafts.
- Headed to cottage country? Your local marinas stock lots of little supplies you might have forgotten to pack, as well as some surprising gems like books, local art or DVDs for a no-internet movie night.

The important thing is to keep an open mind, and an appetite for something new. If you approach the season with the right mindset, you might surprise yourself to learn that the dream destination you've been looking for was right in your backyard all along.

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Road trip ideas to celebrate local food



(NC) Fall is the perfect season for a road trip, with the leaves changing and the beautiful scenery. It also marks one of the busiest times of the year for many farmers. As fall harvest kicks into high gear, it's a great time to explore Ontario's harvest through local food, cider and seasonal activities. Whether you're traveling solo or with family, here are some ideas to help you enjoy the best of autumn on the road.

Cideries

Fall is apple season, and what better way to celebrate than with a visit to one of Ontario's many cideries? These local spots offer a chance to sample some of the best ciders made from Ontario-grown apples. From sweet to dry, there's a flavor for everyone. Take a tour to learn about the cider-making process and try an apple while you're there.

Farmers markets

Don't limit your local farmers' market visits to just the summer. Many markets across Ontario stay open year-round, offering a selection of locally grown fruits and vegetables throughout the winter months.

Use this opportunity to ask the vendors any questions you may have. They're the experts on their produce and likely will be thrilled to share with you where and how it was grown.

Agriculture museums

For those interested in learning more about Ontario's agricultural traditions, consider a visit to the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum in Ottawa. This museum offers an immersive experience into the history of farming in Canada, showcasing how agriculture has evolved and how it continues to be such an important part of our lives.

All these locations offer a great opportunity to learn about the important work being done by local fruit and vegetable growers. While you're there, ask questions and explore - understanding where your food comes from has never been more important. You'll also discover some of the remarkable innovations in technology and sustainability that are helping farms become more efficient and environmentally friendly.

You can learn more at ofvga.org.

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Celebrate Ontario apples this fall, from orchards to fairgrounds



(NC) Whether you're after a fresh bushel from a farm market, wanting to pick your own favourites straight from the tree or looking to enjoy some fresh apple cider, there are endless ways to enjoy one of Ontario's most beloved fruits.

Here's a suggestion for an unexpected way to savour tasty apples this season: apple Jamaican patties, a recipe inspired by the thousands of seasonal international farm workers from Jamaica and other countries who come every year to help grow and harvest fruit and vegetable crops like apples in our province:

Apple Jamaican Patties

Prep time: 20 minutes + 1 hour rest time

Cook time: 40 minutes

Makes: 6

Ingredients:

Dough:

- 2 cups (500 ml) all purpose flour
- ¼ tsp (1 ml) salt
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) yellow curry powder
- 1 tsp (5 ml) turmeric
- ½ cup (125 ml) cold salted butter, cubed
- 6 tbsp (90 ml) ice-cold water
- 2 tsp (10 ml) distilled white vinegar

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- large egg, lightly whisked
- 2 tsp (10 ml) oil

Filling:

- ½ lb (250 g) lean ground beef
- 1 cup (250ml) diced Ontario apples (variety tip - use Gala, Ambrosia, Fuji, or McIntosh)
- small onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) jerk seasoning
- 1 tsp (5 ml) each, curry powder, cumin, garlic powder
- ¼ tsp (1 ml) cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp (2 ml) each, salt, pepper
- 1 large egg
- ¼ cup (60 mL) water

Directions:

1. First make the dough. In the bowl of a food processor add flour, salt, curry powder, turmeric and butter. Pulse until mixture resembles a coarse crumble.
2. In a small bowl whisk together water, vinegar and 1 egg. Add wet ingredients to flour mixture and pulse until a ball of dough forms. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.
3. Next make the filling. Brown the ground beef in a large skillet over medium-high heat, breaking meat up as you cook it for 8 minutes.
4. Stir in apples, onions, jerk seasoning, curry powder, garlic, cumin, cayenne pepper, salt and pepper. Cook for another 5 minutes.
5. To assemble, on a lightly floured working surface, roll out dough to 1/8 inch thickness. Use cookie cutter to cut out 12 4-inch x 2.5-inch rectangles. Rework the dough as needed.
6. In a small bowl whisk together egg and water to make an egg wash. Lay out six of the rectangles on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet.
7. Place 1/4 cup (60 ml) of the filling in the centre of each rectangle. Brush edges with egg wash. Place a second rectangle on top of each patty to enclose the filling. Press edge with a fork to seal.
8. Brush the outsides with egg wash and cut small steam holes. Bake at 375°F (190°C) for 30 minutes, or until dough is golden brown.

Ontario apple growers produce more than a dozen varieties of apples, from the classic McIntosh to popular modern favourites like Honeycrisp, Gala, and Ambrosia. Local events, farmers' markets and on-farm markets are a great way to discover new varieties, meet local growers, and learn more about how apples are grown and harvested.

Here are just a few ways you can enjoy Ontario apples this fall:

- Visit a local orchard for pick-your-own adventures - find one near you using an online tool like the Ontario Apple Growers' Find an Apple Farm map or your map application
- Support farm markets and roadside stands selling fresh, local apples and cider
- Attend fall fairs that feature apple pies, cider tastings, and baking contests

You can learn more at ofvga.org.

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Seasonal Content and Guides

Use local fruits and vegetables for your holiday meals



Foodland Ontario:

(NC) The holiday season - whether it's Thanksgiving, Christmas or another special occasion - is all about gathering with family and friends over delicious food. While the main dish might be the main event in the kitchen, it's often the sides and appetizers that end up stealing the show at the table and having everyone asking for the recipe.

Brussels sprouts are especially popular during the holidays. You can spice them up with a glaze of your choice to provide a flavour that pairs wonderfully with all main dishes. Try this delicious recipe featuring Ontario-grown Brussels sprouts with a honey-garlic glaze from

Brussels Sprouts with Honey-Garlic Glaze

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 10-12 minutes

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 lb (500 g) Brussels sprouts, ends trimmed
- 3 slices bacon, cut into 1/2-inch (1 cm) pieces
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) minced onion or shallots
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) honey
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) red wine vinegar or cider vinegar
- 2 tsp (10 ml) Dijon mustard

Directions:

1. Cook Brussels sprouts in boiling water for 5 to 6 minutes or until tender-crisp; drain and let cool slightly. Cut in half through stems; drain well on paper towel.
2. In large skillet over medium heat, cook bacon and onion for about 3 minutes, or until onion is softened. Add garlic; cook for 1 minute.
3. Stir in honey, vinegar and mustard; cook, stirring, until syrupy. Stir in Brussels sprouts to coat well; cook for 1 to 2 minutes, or until heated through.

Ontario's fall harvest offers a variety of locally grown produce that can elevate your meal. Potatoes, carrots, turnips, parsnips, sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts and greens all provide a variety of options, ensuring there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Aside from the fresh delicious taste of home-grown fruits and vegetables, supporting local farmers has several benefits as well. From an environment standpoint, buying local produce means a shorter journey from farm to table, which reduces emissions and minimizes food waste.

The more we can grow ourselves, the less vulnerable we are to potential disruptions in the food supply, both domestically and globally, which has never been more important.

Learn more about Ontario fruits and vegetables at ofvga.org.

Attention editors: Here is an alternative headline and intro

Use local fruits and veggies for your family gatherings

(NC) There's no place for the family to come together like around a shared meal. While the main dish might be the main event in the kitchen, it's often the sides and appetizers that end up stealing the show at the table and having everyone asking for the recipe.

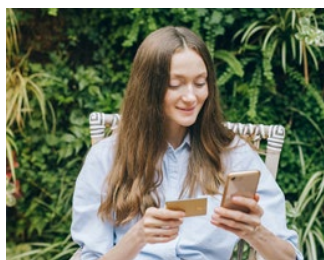
Brussels sprouts offer flavour that pairs wonderfully with all main dishes, and you can mix it up with a glaze of your choice. Try this delicious recipe featuring Ontario-grown Brussels sprouts with a honey-garlic glaze from Foodland Ontario:

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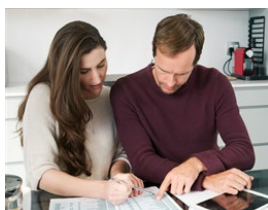
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Ways to give your finances a summer tune-up



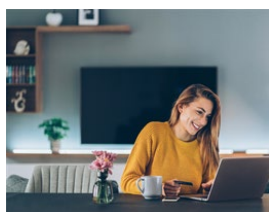
(NC) Summer is finally here, and for some of us the first step to getting out into the great weather is tightening up the spokes on the bike or getting the car detailed. But what condition are your finances in? Give your financial vehicles a seasonal tune-up with our summer finance guide:



Take an honest inventory of your situation

The first step to getting in better financial shape is to see what kind of shape you're currently in. If you're struggling with the day-to-day, reach out to your bank; you may have options you didn't know about. For instance, your lender can provide mortgage relief by delaying your payments or extending your amortization period. Always check to see what fees and interest may be involved in changing your mortgage contract.

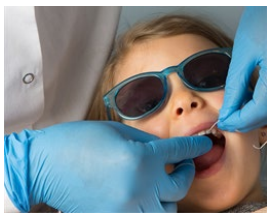
canada.ca/money



Make the most of your ability to save

Being able to put away some money consistently, even small amounts, really adds up over time. It's a financial health habit that helps you stay on track toward your goals, but there are dangers to watch out for. Not every bank account is set up to support your saving habits, between fees and low interest rates. Set yourself up for success by looking around for savings options that help you grow instead of hindering you.

pcfinancial.ca



Leave budget room for your pearly whites

Sometimes, the best investments are the most long-term ones. The health of your mouth has a surprising impact on the rest of your body—falling behind on oral care can lead to complications in your lungs and even your heart. Keep up by making a dental checkup part of your summer budget. Getting your teeth cleaned regularly and catching issues early could save you a lot of money and trouble down the road.

dentalhygienecanada.ca

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