



PRESS RELEASE

To: News Editors & Directors

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOLIDAY EATS THAT ARE GOOD FOR YOUR....EYES?

Veggies rich in carotene aid eye health, fried turkeys to be avoided as hazard

(Honolulu, Hawaii), December 6, 2006- With the December holidays approaching and family starting to fly into town, hosts and hostesses across the state will start planning special Christmas or Hanukah meals. For some, tradition and making Grandma's pumpkin pie recipe will be essential while for others cutting carbohydrates in an effort to maintain their healthy eating lifestyle is the top consideration. But not many holiday meal planners consider aiding their vision health by adding or avoiding certain dishes.

“Over the holidays there are some simple ways to incorporate ingredients and recipes that will offer the optimum boost for your eyes,” said Dr. Christopher Tortora, M.D. “One quick way to do that is to incorporate vegetables that are rich in carotene and lutein, like sweet potatoes, oranges, broccoli, winter squash and spinach or other dark green leafy vegetables.”

Carotene, when eaten, is converted by the body to Vitamin A. Within the retina, inside the eye, Vitamin A is used to turn light into nerve signals which send messages about what is seen to the brain. Without a sufficient amount of Vitamin A individuals can develop a condition called night blindness where they have a hard time adjusting to seeing in the dark. Vitamin A is also essential in maintaining the health of the eye's surface, or cornea.

While carotene directly affects a specific part of vision, lutein is important for maintaining overall eye health. Lutein is found concentrated in the macula, a central part of the retina responsible for central vision. Studies have shown that a lack of lutein is linked with the eye disease AMD, or Age-related Macular Degeneration, which is the leading cause of vision loss for Americans over the age of 60.

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Holidays always pose hazards, but many of them can be avoided. Lately a southern trend has been sweeping the nation, and families across the country are switching from traditional roasted turkeys to fried ones. However, this style of cooked poultry is one of the most dangerous to make and can cause serious eye injury if not set-up and monitored properly.

The biggest mistake people make when frying their turkey is to overfill the fryer with oil. Once the oil is heated through they then place the turkey into the hot oil, the excess oil overflows and if it hits the flame below, can cause an explosion which could lead to a serious eye injury. To be safe, never over fill the cooker with oil and be sure to have a fire extinguisher ready. Also be sure to keep the fryer a safe distance from your house and garage and place it on a level, non-wood, surface to prevent tipping. Wearing a pair of glasses or safety glasses when working may also be helpful.

With some thoughtful planning and an eye toward health, anyone can create a memorable holiday meal that is not only safe to prepare but good for your vision as well.

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of The Hawaiian Eye Show, a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventive eye care. To learn more about other eye health issues, please call Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8448 where *“life has never looked better.”*

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