

# *Enjoy* Life

A Newsletter for VIVA MEDICARE Members

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# Staying Hydrated in the *Summer Heat*

Keeping your body hydrated by drinking enough water throughout the day is especially important during hot summer months in Alabama. As you get older, your body changes. You store less water, your kidneys process fluids differently, and your sense of thirst lessens.

Watch this video with Dori from our Hoover café to learn what you can do to stay hydrated and keep your kidneys healthy. Go online to [vivahealth.com/medicare/events/videos](https://vivahealth.com/medicare/events/videos) and type *summer* in the search bar.



# Stay Safe Online

## by Creating Secure Passwords and Passphrases

In today's digital world, securing your online accounts starts with one key element: a strong password or passphrase. Hackers often use automated tools to guess passwords, so weak or common passwords can leave your information at risk. Here's how to create secure passwords or passphrases that keep you protected.

### What Makes a Password Secure?

- ✓ Make it Long – Aim for at least 12 characters.
- ✓ Make it Strong – Use a mix of uppercase, lowercase, numbers, and symbols.
- ✓ Make it Unpredictable – Don't use common words, names, or number patterns like "123456" or "password."

**Example of a strong password:**

**9rT!2x@Lm#Qw8z**

When your password is long, complex, and unpredictable, it's secure but can also be hard to remember; that's where passphrases come in.

### What Is a Passphrase?

A passphrase is a sequence of words that's easier to remember.

### How to create a strong passphrase:

- ✓ Choose 4–6 random words.
- ✓ Add symbols or numbers for extra strength.
- ✓ Avoid using famous quotes or phrases.

The passphrase is easier to remember than a random password and still very secure due to its length and unpredictability.

**Example of a strong passphrase:**

**Candle!River7Tiger\_AppleDance**

### Tips:

- ✓ Use different passwords for each account, especially for banking or email.
- ✓ Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) wherever possible for added protection.
- ✓ Consider using a password manager. A password manager creates strong, random passwords for each of your online accounts. These passwords are stored in a secure, encrypted manner. When you visit a website or app, the password manager can automatically fill in your login details.

Whether you choose a password or a passphrase, the goal is the same: make it long, strong, and unpredictable. With just a little effort, you can greatly reduce your risk of being hacked.





# Dry eyes:

## *Causes and Treatments*

As we age, our body slowly stops making tears like it did when we were younger. Add changing hormones, some medical conditions, and the quality of the air to the mix, and we find ourselves dealing with dry, itchy eyes that make us uncomfortable and may cause vision problems. Let's find out what causes dry eyes and how to treat the condition.

### Causes of Dry Eyes in Seniors

**Age-related Changes:** Tear production naturally decreases and the composition of the tear film changes, making your eyes less moist.

**Hormonal Changes:** Hormonal shifts, especially in women during menopause, can greatly impact tear production and make dry eye symptoms worse.

**Environmental Factors:** The dry air from heating or air conditioning, wind, and allergens can make dry eye symptoms in older adults unbearable.

**Medications:** Certain medications, such as antihistamines, decongestants, and some antidepressants, can have dry eye as a side effect.

**Underlying Health Conditions:** Conditions like Sjögren's syndrome (an autoimmune disease), rheumatoid arthritis, and diabetes can increase the risk of dry eye.

**Reduced Blink Rate:** Older adults may spend more time on their phones, tablets, or computers which can lead to a decrease in blink rate and worsen dry eye.







## Treatment and Management:

**Lubricating Eye Drops:** Using over-the-counter artificial tears can provide relief and keep the eyes moist. Eyedrops can be ordered through the NationsBenefits over-the-counter catalog at [Viva.NationsBenefits.com](https://Viva.NationsBenefits.com).

**Warm Compresses:** Applying warm compresses to the eyelids can help improve the function of meibomian glands, which produce oil for the tear film.

**Hydration:** Drinking plenty of water can help keep the eyes moist.

**Humidifiers:** Using a humidifier can increase humidity and reduce the drying effects of indoor areas.

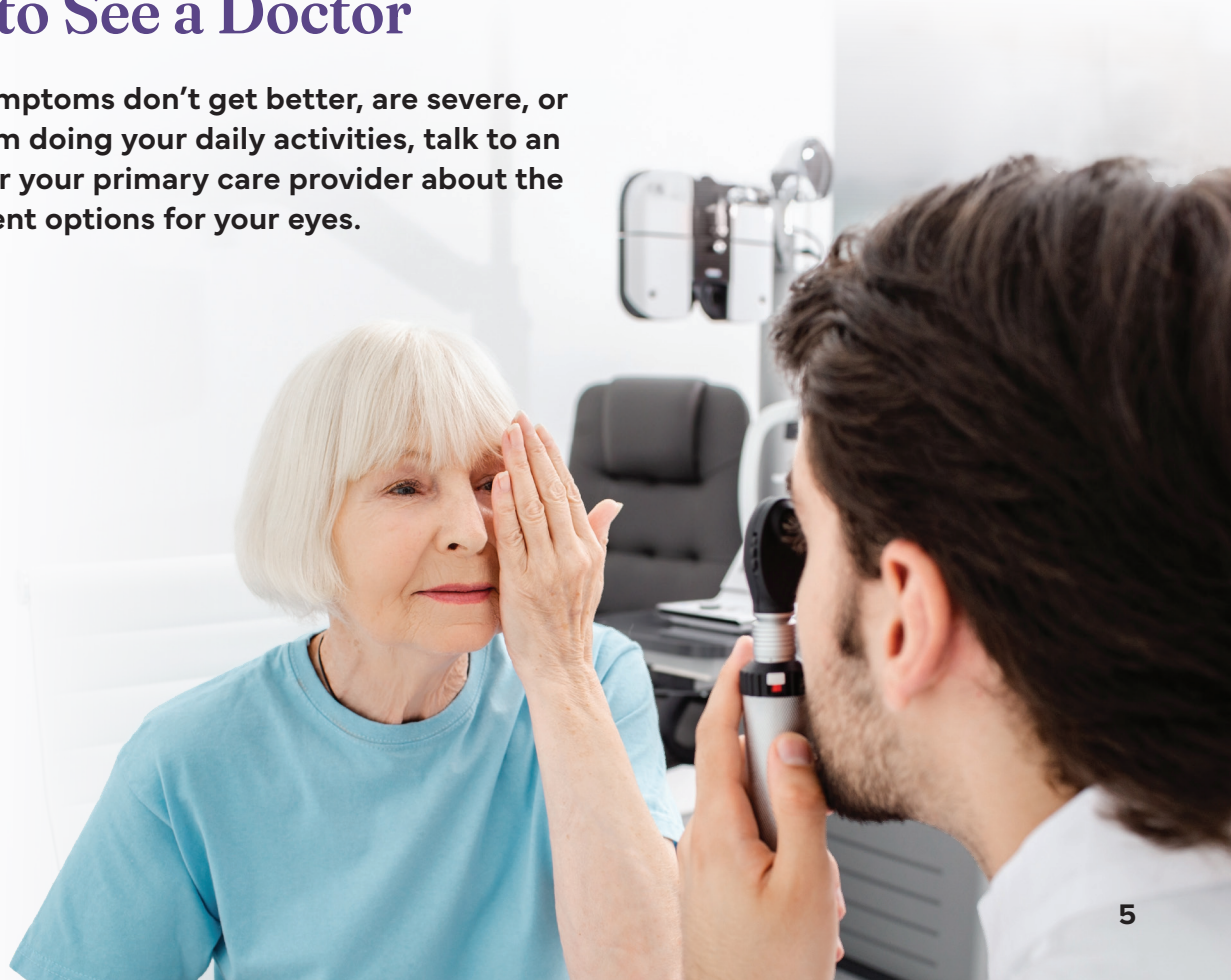
**Lifestyle Changes:** Limiting screen time, taking frequent breaks when reading or working on a computer, and avoiding environmental triggers can help manage dry eye symptoms.

**Prescription Medications:** In more severe cases, a doctor may prescribe medications to increase tear production or reduce inflammation.

**Eyelid Hygiene:** Gently washing the eyelids with baby shampoo or an eyelid cleanser can help keep the glands producing oil for the tear film.

## When to See a Doctor

If dry eye symptoms don't get better, are severe, or stop you from doing your daily activities, talk to an eye doctor or your primary care provider about the best treatment options for your eyes.



# *The Connection between Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes*

Obesity and type 2 diabetes are two health problems that often go together. When a person is obese, they have too much body fat. This extra fat, especially around the belly, makes it harder for the body to use insulin the right way. Insulin is a hormone that helps sugar (glucose) from food get into our cells to be used for energy.

When the body can't use insulin properly, this is called insulin resistance. Fat tissue also releases certain chemicals that cause inflammation in the body. These chemicals can make insulin resistance worse. To make up for this, the body makes more insulin. Over time, the cells in the pancreas that make insulin can get tired and stop working well. When this happens, sugar builds up in the blood, and type 2 diabetes can develop.

While genes can play a part in being obese, the way we live has a big effect. Eating lots of sugary or high-fat foods and not getting enough exercise are major causes of both obesity and type 2 diabetes. People who sit a lot and don't move around much are at greater risk.

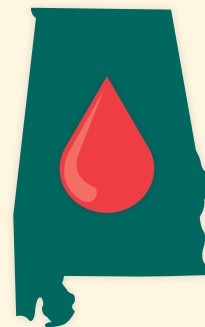
The good news is that losing weight can help a lot. Even a small amount of weight loss—like 5 to 10% of your body weight—can make your body use insulin better and lower your blood sugar levels. Eating healthy foods, exercising regularly, and making good choices every day can lower the risk of getting diabetes or help manage it if you already have it.

## According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services...



### **ALABAMA OBESITY EPIDEMIC:**

Nearly 1,528,100 adults in Alabama have obesity— that's 38.3% of the adult population in Alabama. Obesity is linked to up to 53% of new cases of type 2 diabetes each year.



### **ALABAMA DIABETES EPIDEMIC:**

Nearly 600,000 adults in Alabama have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes— that's 15% of the adult population in Alabama. Every year, another 23,500 adults in Alabama are diagnosed.



If you're ready to start eating more healthy foods to lose weight and lower your blood sugar, look for foods that are low in added sugar and high in fiber.

## Use this grocery list to help you get started:

### Low-Sugar Fruits (limit to 1–2 servings/day)

These help satisfy sweet cravings without spiking blood sugar:

- Blueberries
- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Blackberries
- Green apples
- Pears
- Avocados (great for healthy fats and very low in sugar)

### Non-Starchy Vegetables (eat plenty of these)

These are low in calories and carbs but high in fiber and nutrients:

- Spinach
- Kale
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Zucchini
- Bell peppers
- Brussel sprouts
- Cabbage
- Mushrooms
- Cucumbers
- Asparagus
- Celery

### Lean Proteins

Protein helps you feel full and supports muscle while losing weight:

- Skinless chicken breast
- Turkey
- Salmon, tuna, sardines (rich in omega-3)
- Eggs or egg whites
- Tofu or tempeh
- Low-fat Greek yogurt (unsweetened)
- Lentils and beans (in smaller portions)

### High-Fiber Whole Grains (in smaller portions)

These support steady energy and digestion:

- Quinoa
- Steel-cut oats
- Brown rice
- Barley
- 100% whole grain bread or tortillas (low sugar)
- Whole wheat pasta (small servings)

### Flavor Boosters (no added sugar)

- Lemon and lime
- Vinegar (especially apple cider vinegar)
- Garlic
- Onion
- Mustard (check for low sugar)
- **Spices:** turmeric, cinnamon, paprika, cumin, black pepper
- **Fresh herbs:** parsley, cilantro, basil, dill

### Healthy Fats (for fullness and stable blood sugar)

- Olive oil or avocado oil
- Almonds, walnuts, pistachios (unsalted)
- Natural nut butters (no sugar added)
- Chia seeds
- Flaxseeds
- Sunflower or pumpkin seeds

### Low-Carb Dairy & Alternatives

- Unsweetened almond milk or soy milk
- Low-fat or plain Greek yogurt
- Cottage cheese (low-fat)
- Part-skim mozzarella or feta (in moderation)



### Tips for Smart Shopping

**Read labels:** Choose items with low added sugars and high fiber.

**Buy fresh or frozen:** Frozen fruits and vegetables are great if they're unsweetened and unseasoned.

**Plan meals ahead:** This helps you avoid impulse buys and stick to your goals.





# *American Heart Association's*

# Peach & Tomato Salad

Alabamians know that there is nothing quite as delicious as a locally grown peach or tomato in the summer. This peach and tomato salad highlights the best flavors of the season, and it's heart healthy and diabetes friendly. Serve it as a side at a barbecue, or enjoy it on its own as an afternoon snack!



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## INGREDIENTS

**4 medium** peaches, halved, pitted and sliced

**3 medium** tomatoes, sliced into wedges

**1 small** red onion, sliced

**3 tablespoons** extra-virgin olive oil, corn, or canola oil

**1 tablespoon** red wine vinegar

**1/8 teaspoon** salt

**1/8 teaspoon** pepper

**1 cup** of sliced or torn basil



## DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine the peaches, tomatoes, and onion.
2. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper until well blended.
3. Drizzle the dressing over the peach mixture, tossing gently to coat all the ingredients.
4. Stir in the fresh basil, mixing carefully to distribute the flavor.

## QUICK TIPS

- **Cooking Tip:** To easily cut basil into thin strips, stack up to 8 leaves at a time, roll them tightly lengthwise into a tube shape, and slice crosswise to create delicate ribbons.
- **Keep it Healthy:** The natural juices from the peaches and tomatoes help hydrate the salad, making it perfect when served over fresh lettuce—no dressing needed for the greens!
- **Seasonal Tip:** Fresh peaches are a great buy during the summer months, often cheaper when in season. For a more affordable option in the winter, try using canned peaches.



# Summer

# CROSSWORD &

## ACROSS

- 2.** Transportation used to travel long distances
- 4.** Something we use to travel on the lake or ocean
- 5.** Animal we see in summer but may fly away in the winter
- 8.** Red vegetable we can grow in our garden
- 11.** Summer vacation is made for this
- 18.** People we spend our vacation with
- 19.** Refreshing drink made with a yellow fruit
- 21.** In winter it's cold. In summer it's...
- 22.** Pants to wear when it's hot outside

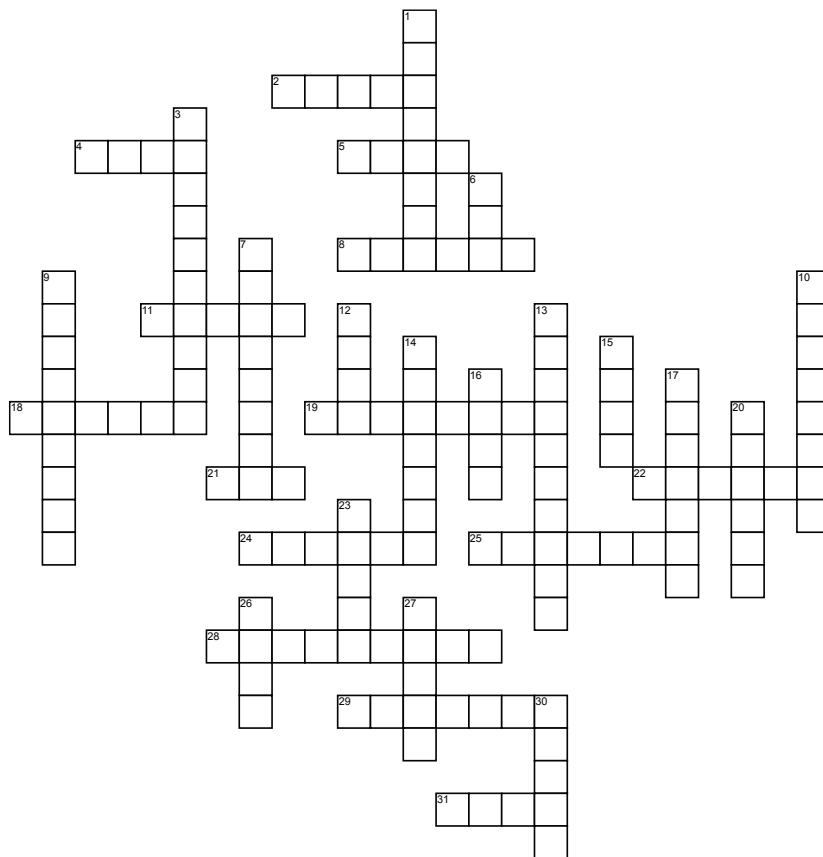
- 24.** They hide the sun
- 25.** Often seen jumping and swimming in the Gulf
- 28.** Used on your body so you don't get burned
- 29.** Tropical fruit with brown shell
- 31.** A palm that grows on the Gulf coast

## DOWN

- 1.** Summer dessert
- 3.** Small red fruit used on shortcake
- 6.** Something we put on our head to not get burned by the sun
- 7.** Pink bird living in the tropical islands
- 9.** Yellow tropical summer fruit
- 10.** Sea animal shaped like something in the sky

- 12.** It is not a car, but we use to go somewhere not too far
- 13.** Refreshing fruit mostly made of water
- 14.** Colorful plants that make summer even better
- 15.** Animal living in the water
- 16.** Without it, the beach wouldn't have any sound

- 17.** Activity with a boat or on the pier
- 20.** Slow green animal
- 23.** Something we like to hear in summer
- 26.** Activity some people like to do in the ocean that uses big waves
- 27.** Place to build a sand castle
- 30.** When you get out of a pool, you dry yourself with a...



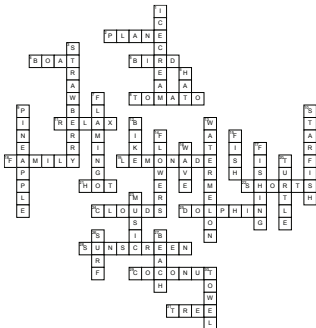


# WORD SEARCH

Keep Your Brain Sharp



## Crossword Answer Key:



## Word Search Answer Key:



All Summer Long  
Boys of Summer  
California Girls  
Cruel Summer  
Cruise  
Dancing In the Street  
Good Day Sunshine  
Here Comes the Sun  
Margaritaville  
Saturday In the Park  
School's Out for Summer  
Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay  
Suddenly Last Summer  
Summer Breeze  
Summer In the City  
Summer Nights  
Summer of Sixty-Nine  
Summertime  
Sunrise Sunburn Sunset  
Sunshine of Your Love  
Under the Boardwalk  
Vacation  
Walking on Sunshine



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Please note the following change to the 2025 VIVA MEDICARE Evidence of Coverage (EOC) for all plans except VIVA MEDICARE Select (HMO): In Chapter 6, "What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs," Section 1.3 and 3.1, these sections show that payments for your covered Part D drugs made by TRICARE are included in your prescription drug out-of-pocket costs; however, payments for your covered Part D drugs made by TRICARE are not included in your prescription drug out-of-pocket costs.



**Your Member Services team is just a  
phone call away, right here in Alabama.**

**We are happy to answer any questions about your benefits,  
help you register for the member portal, and more.**

**Give us a call at 1-800-633-1542 (TTY: 711).**

We are open Monday - Friday, 8am - 8pm. From October 1 to March 31,  
we can take your call 7 days a week, 8am - 8pm.

VIVA HEALTH complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex (including sex characteristics, including interstitial intersex traits; pregnancy or related conditions; sexual orientation; gender identity; and sex stereotypes).  
ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-800-633-1542 (TTY: 711). 注意:如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-800-633-1542 (TTY: 711). H0154\_mcdoc4436A\_C\_07/03/2025