

2011

12-Month Calendar



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of Illinois**

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Wellness for Life

Wellness can be defined as “Good physical, mental and emotional health, mostly when maintained by a proper diet, exercise, and other changes to make your health better.” The bottom line: wellness is a lifestyle. A lifestyle of wellness means making daily choices that can add up to a healthier you. Following are examples of small lifestyle choices that when combined as part of your daily routine, can contribute to improved wellness ... for life.



Add some color to your life

To get a good balance of healthy fruits and vegetables try a lot of colors and give your body a wide range of worthwhile nutrients, like fiber, folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C. For example, plan meals that include green spinach, orange sweet potatoes, black beans, yellow corn, purple plums, red watermelon and white onions. For more variety, try new fruits and vegetables regularly.



Walk your way to wellness

Walking is not only easy, it can help you lose weight, calm stress, tone your muscles, give you more energy and make you feel good. Walking doesn't call for costly supplies and best of all, you can walk with friends and family.



Keep your smile bright

By taking care of your teeth, you can make sure that your smile stays bright for a lifetime. Brush your teeth at least twice a day using fluoride toothpaste. Floss once a day. Eat a balanced diet and visit your dentist regularly.



Do something you love

Staying physically active and making healthy food choices are two of the best things you can do to maintain wellness as you age. And emerging research also points to the chance that engaging in social and useful hobbies you enjoy may also help you age well.



Take five for your health

Being healthy and safe doesn't have to be time-consuming. Here are five simple things you can do in five minutes or less to help protect your health:

- Wash hands often to lower the chance of spreading germs and getting sick.
- Clean surfaces to keep germs away.
- Fight the urge to smoke or use tobacco.
- Buckle up to avoid injury if you are in an accident.
- Set your water heater's thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower to help avoid burns.

Everyday life choices affect your health. For more wellness pointers, log in to BlueAccess® for Members and get tips to help you improve your health and well-being for a lifetime.

Get in gear for a healthy new year

The new year is a great time to set goals. Make sure your goals include a yearly visit to your doctor. An annual exam helps you know your numbers, including cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar levels. That means you add to your chances of improving, or even preventing, health problems.

Make the most of your visit:

- Give facts to your health care provider, such as health history, any symptoms, drugs and allergies.
- Ask questions, take notes and clarify what you don't understand.
- Follow up if you have questions or side effects, or if your symptoms get worse.
- Talk to your doctor to understand your health problems and treatment choices.
- Ask questions about the right test or treatment to reach the best results.



Shift into healthy mode from the start of the new year by scheduling your annual exam today.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Annual wellness exam may not be covered. Please refer to your benefit booklet or call the customer service number on the back of your ID card for specific benefit information under your health plan.



Knowledge is power. Add to your know-how by taking the Health Risk Assessment through the Personal Health Manager in Blue Access® for Members. Track your results using My Health Record.

January 2011

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Can we have a heart-to-heart?

February is the month to celebrate love, and what better time to take care of what's near and dear to you: your heart. There are a number of things that can add to your chances of getting heart disease. While some are inherited from your family, lifestyle choices can increase or decrease your chances of developing heart problems.

Know these heart risk factors and make lifestyle changes to beat the ones you can control:

- Tobacco use
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- High triglycerides
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Uncontrolled stress
- Too much alcohol

Sources: American Heart Association; Mayo Clinic

If you've been neglecting your heart, embrace change and adopt a healthier lifestyle.



Need to do a little heart searching when it comes to your health? Find the heart healthy nutrition advice you've been searching for in the Personal Health Manager's Ask A Dietitian feature in Blue Access® for Members.

February 2011

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Weigh the facts

One out of three children and teens in the U.S. are too heavy or obese. Those extra pounds put kids at risk for getting serious health problems, including diabetes, heart disease and asthma. Childhood obesity also takes an emotional toll that can lead to low self esteem, negative feelings about your body and even depression.

Think about these tips to help your child keep a healthy weight:

- Model healthy eating habits.
- Serve snacks and sweets wisely.
- Don't use food as a reward or punishment.
- Support staying active.
- Cut back on screen time.
- Plan yearly well-child visits.

Source: Mayo Clinic and the American Academy of Pediatrics



Help your child keep a healthy weight by setting a good example that can keep you trim, too!



Use it and lose it. Losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight is easier when you use meal planning resources from the Eat Right feature on the Personal Health Manager. Find it at Blue Access® for Members.

March 2011

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Plan for a healthy loss

“Lose weight without any diet or exercise!” Such claims by fad diets make it challenging to choose a weight loss plan that is safe, or to know what questions to ask.

Use these guidelines to talk to your doctor about a healthy plan that works for you:

- Write questions in advance.
- Share concerns about medical conditions you may have or medicines you are taking.
- Bring a pad of paper and pen to take notes.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions if there is something you don't understand.
- Ask for other sources of information, such as websites or brochures.
- If you want more help, ask for a referral to a registered dietitian support group or commercial weight-loss program.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases



Your chances of losing weight won't be slim-to-none when you debunk myths and follow a smart weight-loss plan.



Ready to downsize? Trim down with the For Your Health weight-loss tool available through the Personal Health Manager in Blue Access® for Members.

April 2011

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Family fitness: it's all relative

May is a great time to put family fitness at the top of the list. Venture outdoors, enjoy the spring weather and try these simple ways to get everyone moving:

- Go for a walk and breathe in the air as you swing your arms and hold your head high.
- Work on moving in new ways. Go outside and enjoy walking, running, skipping and jumping with your children.
- Set up an obstacle course for your children using things to jump over or go under. See how quickly you can do it too!
- Even families without children at home can enjoy the outdoors with a walk, gardening, swimming, golf, tennis or other fun activities.

Source: National Center for Physical Development and Outdoor Play



Make family time fun by finding creative ways to keep everyone active.



Learn to move right. Log in to the Personal Health Manager in Blue Access[®] for Members and use the For Your Health Get Fit feature to plan and track your fitness program.

May 2011

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Warm up to summer safety

June brings summer sunshine, warmer temperatures and outdoor recreation. Remember these cool ideas to stay safe all summer long:

- Before using your grill, place it at least 10 feet away from other objects; always stay by the grill when cooking.
- If you have a pool or spa, install at least a five-foot-tall fence; always keep gates closed and latched and never swim alone.
- Wear goggles and hearing protection when using a power lawn mower. Never reach under the mower unless it is turned off and the blade has completely stopped turning.
- If you plan to use fireworks to celebrate the Fourth of July, never light them indoors or near dry grass; always read the directions and warning labels.

Sources: Home Safety Council; Centers for Disease Control



Start summer with a splash by putting safety first – whether you're vacationing at home or away, or just enjoying the daily routine.



Get ready for summer fun with healthy tips and ideas. Before heading to the pool, log in to Blue Access for Members and check out the articles on summer sports and recreation in the Personal Health Manager.

June 2011

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Play in the summer rays

Sunny weather beckons us to head outside for a relaxing bike ride or a jog in the park, but outdoor hobbies can be challenging when it's hot. To stay safe during hot weather, be sure to:

- Take it easy at first and raise your level of movement as your body adapts to the heat.
- Drink plenty of fluids, such as water and sports drinks.
- Avoid midday sun and stay in the shade when you can.
- Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- Wear a hat and ultraviolet (UV)-blocking sunglasses.
- Dress appropriately in lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.

Sources: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research; American Cancer Society®



Look on the bright side. By taking safety measures, you can have fun in the sun and stay active, too.



Track your personal health. Log your summertime fitness goals using the Personal Health Manager Get Fit feature in Blue Access® for Members. It's a great way to keep track of your success.

July 2011

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Give it your best shot

Shots aren't just for babies. As children grow, protection given by some immunizations can begin to wear off. Preteens, teens and young adults all need to get certain shots. In fact, everyone should follow recommended shot schedules, including getting seasonal flu vaccines. Think about these facts:

- Thanks to vaccines, the U.S. has eliminated, or come close to eliminating, life-threatening diseases such as smallpox and polio that were once common.
- Vaccines help protect against illness rather than trying to get well after the fact.
- Children can develop risks for more diseases as they enter their preteen years. Help your children stay healthy during their teen years by keeping up-to-date on vaccines.
- Don't assume that your children received all recommended shots in the past. Talk to their doctor now about any needed vaccines.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institute of Health



Better health starts with a smart plan. Follow a set timetable for shots to keep you and your family safe from illnesses that can be avoided.



Want a good track record? In most of the U.S., it is the parents' job to give their children's vaccination records to the health department and to schools. The Personal Health Manager, online at Blue Access® for Members, is an easy way to keep track of these records.

August 2011

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Give the nod to better sleep

If you're like most people in the U.S., the hectic pace of everyday life is sabotaging your efforts to get the recommended 40 winks. Unfortunately, sleep loss can also change your health, leading to a greater chance of getting diabetes, heart disease or being overweight.

For a good night's sleep, give the nod to these tips:

- Keep a set timetable for going to bed and waking up.
- Avoid nicotine, caffeine and alcohol.
- Create a relaxing bedtime practice to unwind before going to bed.
- Keep a comfortable room temperature.
- About five to six hours before bedtime, take part in a daily workout.
- Get up and do something else if you can't fall asleep.

Sources: National Sleep Foundation; National Institutes of Health



When you put these ideas into practice, you'll be less likely to lose sleep over your busy life.



Sleep well. Engaging in regular physical activity not only helps people fall asleep faster but also sleep more deeply. To learn more tips for a good night's sleep log in to Blue Access for Members and check out the articles on sleep in the Personal Health Manager.

September 2011

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Winning at women's wellness

Women aren't always good at focusing on their own health needs. And even though men and women share some of the same health problems, they are affected in different ways. Here's how you can take care of yourself first:

- Know the symptoms of heart disease in women and have your cholesterol, blood pressure and triglycerides checked regularly.
- Plan for pregnancies and visit your doctor regularly if you are pregnant.
- Follow the proper timetable for getting mammograms.
- Get normal screenings for cervical, uterine and ovarian cancer.

Sources: U.S. National Library of Medicine; National Institutes of Health



Winning isn't everything – except when it comes to your health.



Answers for the asking: Have questions about women's health issues? Find answers by logging in to Blue Access® for Members and clicking the Ask A Nurse feature in the Personal Health Manager.

October 2011

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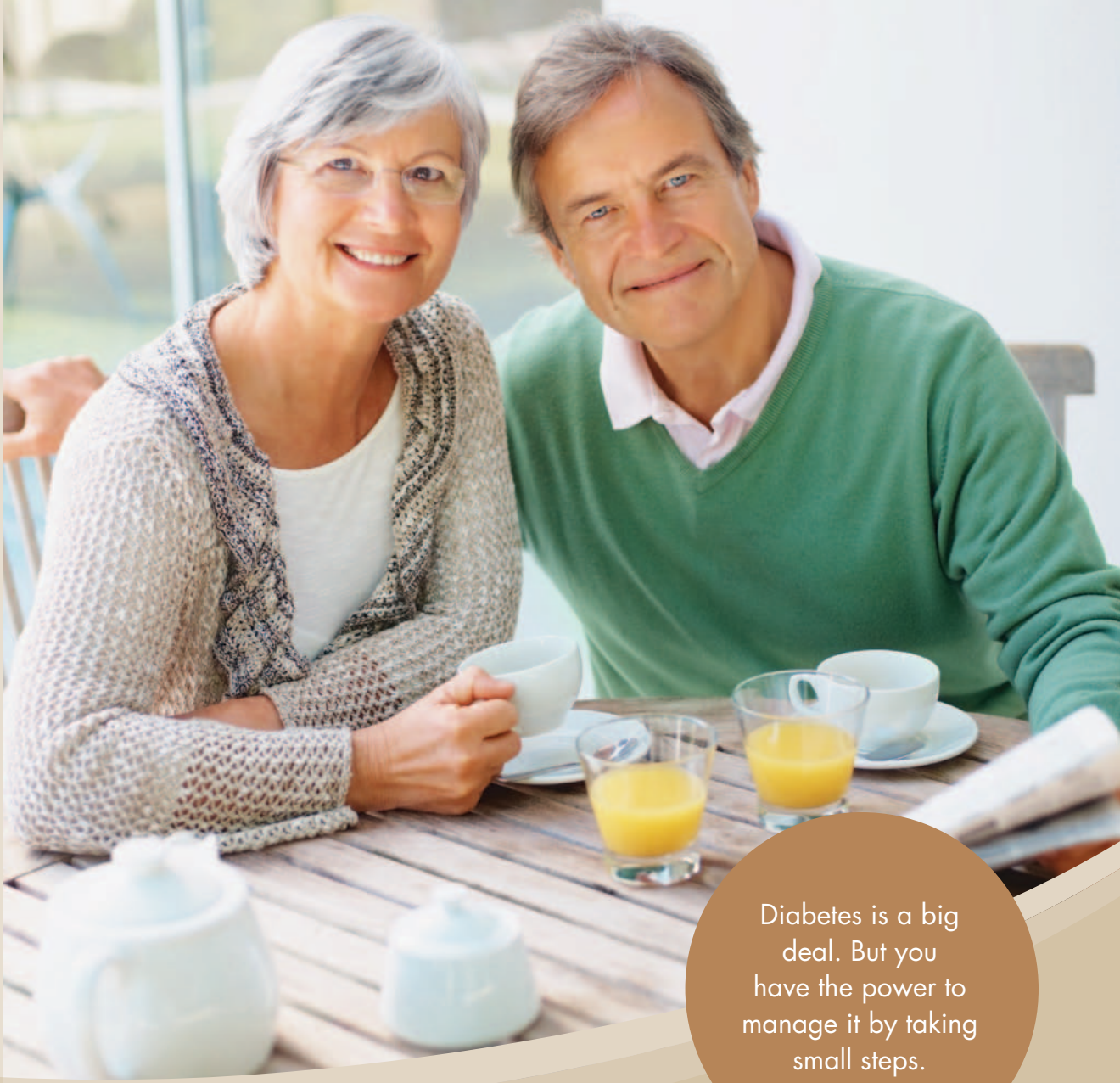
Deal with Diabetes

Almost 24 million people in the U.S. have diabetes, an illness in which blood sugar levels are above normal. In type 1 diabetes, the body does not make insulin, a hormone needed to turn sugar, starches and other foods into energy. In type 2, the most common form, either the body does not make the right amount of insulin or the cells ignore the insulin. If not controlled, both types can lead to serious health problems. Most people with type 2 are adults, but children who are too heavy may also be affected. Type 1 usually strikes children and young adults.

Take these small steps to help lower your chances of getting type 2:

- Find out from your doctor if you have prediabetes, a health problem that raises your chances of getting type 2.
- If you are too heavy, lose at least 5 to 10 percent of your weight.
- Make healthy food choices and follow a low-fat, reduced calorie plan.
- Stay active and get a 30-minute workout five days a week.

Sources: National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Diabetes is a big deal. But you have the power to manage it by taking small steps.



Get fit. Regular physical activity is the most overlooked and crucial treatment for controlling diabetes. Help yourself and your family get in shape by setting up a Get Fit plan on through the Personal Health Manager feature online in Blue Access for Members.

November 2011

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Lift your holiday mood

The holidays are a time when we all want to feel happy and full of joy. But the whirlwind of demands – parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining – can turn these good emotions into stress and sadness that lasts.

If you're in over your head, try these ideas to lift the weight of holiday stress:

- Keep expectations for the holiday season in check.
- Leave the past behind and focus on today.
- Do something for someone else.
- Keep in mind that too much drinking can make you more unhappy.
- Spend time with supportive and caring people.
- Take time for yourself.



Focus on taking care of yourself to ease stress so that you – and your mood – are up for the holidays.

Sources: Mayo Foundation for Medical Information and Research; Mental Health America



Give yourself the gift of healthy living. Log in to Blue Access® for Members and keep track of your health measurements using My Tools in the Personal Health Manager.

December 2011

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