



BENEFITS INSIDER

A PUBLICATION OF THE TEAMSTERS OHIO CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION HEALTH & WELFARE FUND



Awareness is Your Best Defense Against Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer diagnosed among women, with over 300,000 new diagnoses each year. It occurs when cells in the breast grow out of control. Those cells can spread to other parts of the body, which is why it's important to find signs early so it can be treated right away.

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Safeguarding Children's Eye Health As They Return Back to the Classroom



Schools and classrooms serve as a hub for education, social interaction, and personal growth for students. However, they can also be a breeding ground for germs and infections if not managed properly. One of the more common health issues experienced by students is eye infections. Understanding the causes, means of spread, and prevention methods can go a long way in ensuring a healthy learning environment, and healthier students. Read about common eye infections in classrooms:

Bacterial conjunctivitis

Various bacterial groups, including staphylococcus and streptococcus, can lead to conjunctivitis. Those with bacterial conjunctivitis often exhibit a greenish or yellowish discharge from the affected eyes.

Viral conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis is also contagious when contracted in a viral form. Typically, the same virus responsible for ailments such as colds, ear infections, sinus infections, and sore throats can also cause conjunctivitis.

Recognizing Conjunctivitis

If you believe your child may be suffering from an eye infection like conjunctivitis, it is crucial to recognize and treat the infection right away. If not addressed in time, some eye infections can lead to irreversible vision damage and even vision loss. Symptoms to look out for include:

- Itchy and watery eyes
- Redness in the eye
- Swelling
- Scratchy feeling when blinking
- Blurred Vision
- Pain or discomfort

Recognizing and treating eye infections is essential for eye health. Just as important is learning how to prevent the spread of infections in classrooms. This begs the question: why do germs spread so quickly in classrooms?

In classroom settings, germs are spread through airborne transmission, indirect touch, direct touch, and improper cleaning.

When an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, they release droplets into the air. This is referred to as airborne transmission. These droplets can land on others or on surfaces. Students may then indirectly touch these infected surfaces, introducing germs to the body. Germs also spread through direct touch; physical contact with an infected person, such as shaking hands or hugging. If the classroom isn't cleaned and disinfected regularly, germs can accumulate faster and linger on surfaces for longer.

How to prevent germs from spreading in classrooms?

Promote Hand Hygiene: The best way to prevent the spread of germs is to ensure children wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Teach Respiratory Etiquette: Encourage children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their elbow when coughing or sneezing. This can reduce the release of infectious droplets into the air.

Regularly Clean and Disinfect: Classroom surfaces, especially high-touch areas like doorknobs, desks, and shared tools, should be cleaned and disinfected daily.

Limit Shared Items: Minimize the sharing of supplies. If sharing is unavoidable, ensure the items are cleaned before and after use.

Educate on Personal Space: While social interaction is crucial for children, teaching them about the importance of personal space can reduce direct contact transmission.

Stay Home When Sick: Cultivate an environment where it's okay for children to stay home when they're unwell. This will reduce the potential for spreading illnesses.



National Vision Administrators, L.L.C.

Group #1368 | For more information or questions about NVA's vision programs, please contact our toll-free customer service number: 800-672-7723, TTY: 711 service@e-nva.com | Hours: 24/7/365

Healthy Lunches: School Fuel for Kids

Eating a healthy lunch every day is important for good oral and overall health, and it can help a child concentrate better in school and stay alert in class.

More than 40 percent of elementary school children in the U.S. take their own food to school. Researchers studying lunchbox contents in a number of elementary schools found that none of the lunches prepared at home contained servings from all five food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy), and only 27 percent had at least three food groups.

Preparing healthy lunches with kid appeal can be tricky and take a little time, but it's worth the effort. The right foods give kids enough energy for school and other activities while helping to keep their teeth cavity-free. There are lots of convenient and healthy choices that taste great and promote good oral and overall health.

Parents and caregivers are role models and have a big impact on a child's health. Eating right is important for a healthy body and mouth, and it's never too early to help your children start good eating habits. The lessons they learn now will last a lifetime.

Did you know?

Children consume up to half of their daily calories in school.

Quick bites

Consider packing these healthy items to provide the school fuel your child needs each day:

- **Dairy products** — Low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese are excellent picks that have lots of calcium. Read the labels as some products aimed at kids are high in fat and sugar.
- **Protein** — Lean roast beef, turkey, chicken and cheese are good sandwich options. Use whole grain bread, and try adding some lettuce and tomato.
- **Fresh fruits and vegetables** — Grapes, apple chunks, orange sections, celery and baby carrots are great additions to a lunchbox.
- **Beverages** — Fluoridated water is a great choice for lunch, as is low-fat milk. Avoid soda pop and juice drinks, as they contain lots of sugar and can be high in calories.



Visit us online for more information on oral and overall health!

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Chronic Condition Management Program

Medical Mutual wants to partner with you to help you achieve your personal health goals and make sure you receive the care you need. Our Chronic Condition Management program is provided at no additional cost to you. This program supports the care you receive from your healthcare providers.

If you are managing one of the conditions listed below, our Chronic Condition Management program may be right for you:

- Asthma
- Heart Failure (HF)
- Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Musculoskeletal pain
- Pelvic health issues (individuals with vaginal anatomy, regardless of gender identity)

Our program provides digital/virtual, remote monitoring and telephonic options that are customized to meet your needs. You also have the flexibility to participate at times that best meet your needs.

Remote Home Monitoring

This program leverages specialized equipment, daily digital check-ins, and as-needed telephonic coaching from a nurse to help you avoid further complications and progress toward improving your health.

No Member Cost Sharing for Diabetes Testing Supplies

Many of our healthcare plans offer diabetes testing supplies with no member cost sharing if you participate in our Chronic Condition Management program.

Digital/Virtual Health Coaching

We offer multiple digital/virtual coaching options to help our members better understand their condition, prevent disease progression, give us quick updates on their progress, and improve their health.

Digital/virtual health coaching may include:

- Short-term health coaching delivered over a few weeks to address a specific health concern
- More frequent health coaching that provides personalized interactions over several months to help members lose weight, reduce blood pressure or improve bloodwork results
- Quarterly check-ins for members who are self-managing their care successfully
- Integration with connected devices, such as a wireless glucometer, blood pressure cuff or a digital scale to monitor your progress

Telephonic Health Coaching

Telephonic health coaching is designed to provide extra support to help you manage your chronic condition and make progress toward your personal health goals. Members enrolled in this program typically work with a nurse over a 90-day period to make health improvements. Members also have access to a team of professionals, including certified health educators, dietitians, pharmacists and social workers. At the end of 90 days, members may extend their telephonic health coaching or transition into one of our digital options, depending on their needs.

If you participate in one of our digital/virtual options, you can always contact the Medical Mutual Chronic Condition Management team if you need additional support. Our team may also reach out to you to follow up on any health concerns you report through your digital health coach or quarterly self-monitoring surveys.

For More Information or to Enroll

Call 1-800-590-2583 to learn more or to enroll in our Chronic Condition Management program. Our care management specialists are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (confidential voicemail available 24/7).

Medical Mutual may also reach out to you if we think you could benefit from this program to provide information on how to get started.



Five Ways to Stay Active During the Winter

While it may be tempting to spend the winter on your couch under a ton of blankets, it's still important that you stay physically active. Regular exercise has proven to improve your mood, health and will keep your mind sharp. Whether it be inside or outside, there are plenty of ways to get moving during these winter months.

1. Go for a nature walk

Weather permitting, bundle up and go for a walk or run in a nature park near you. Exploring the outdoors helps reduce stress levels and is a great way to get out of the house.

2. Try a winter sport

There are many outdoor activities/sports that you can do during the winter. You can hit the slopes and go skiing, go ice skating or even try snowshoeing. Ask a friend and see if they would be interested in doing any of these activities with you.

3. Take up yoga

Yoga is a great way of improving your balance, muscle strength and mental well-being. It can also help to ease joint pain that comes along with the colder weather. Yoga can be done in the comfort of your own home or you can sign up for a local class near you.

4. Do some chores

Even the smallest chore can get you moving. Things like vacuuming, sweeping and cleaning are all activities that get you up and active. You will also be able to cross some items off your to-do list.

5. Create a home gym

Purchase some practical and easy-to-use exercise equipment like resistance bands and weights. Having a home gym allows you to exercise anytime you want and from the comfort of your own home. It can also save you money if you do not want to purchase a gym membership.



Awareness is Your Best Defense Against Breast Cancer

Know the symptoms

Many women with breast cancer show no symptoms, but there can be warning signs. A new lump in the breast or underarm, thickening or swelling, irritation or dimpling of the skin, or pain or change in the size or shape of the breast are all reasons to schedule an appointment with your primary care provider (PCP).

Get your screening

Once you turn 40, it's important to discuss mammography screening with your PCP. If you have a family history of breast cancer, you are considered high risk and should be screened earlier. Talk with your PCP to determine your risk and the right age to begin your screening. Some mammogram facilities offer evening and/or weekend hours and some offer walk-in appointments. **Preventive screenings are covered under your Medical Mutual plan at no additional cost to you.**

Racial disparity in breast cancer deaths

While white women are more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer, more African-American women are likely to die from breast cancer. In fact, it is the leading cause of cancer death among African-American women. Self-examinations, mammograms and early treatment are important to catch the disease early.

Breast cancer in men

Men also have breast tissue that can develop breast cancer. Almost 3,000 men are diagnosed each year. The symptoms can be very similar to those found in women, which is why you should talk to your PCP if you notice any changes in your breast tissue.

Lower your risk

Take these steps to help reduce your risk of breast cancer.

- Maintain a healthy weight – Increased body weight and weight gain are linked to a higher risk of breast cancer.
- Get regular exercise – Studies show that moderate to vigorous physical activity can lower your risk. Just a couple hours a week might make a difference.
- Avoid or limit alcohol consumption – Even drinking small amounts of alcohol can increase your risk. If you choose to drink, limit yourself to one drink per day.

Visit your PCP

Schedule an appointment with your PCP to discuss your risk of breast cancer. If you don't have a PCP, use the Medical Mutual Find a Provider tool on My Health Plan. Many providers also offer telehealth visits as an alternative to a face-to-face visit. Ask your provider about your options.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Getting preventive care is one of the most important steps you can take to manage your health. Routine preventive care can identify and address risk factors before they lead to illness. It's important to work with your primary care provider (PCP), who can help you follow these guidelines and coordinate plans of care to manage your health.

All Marketplace health plans and many other plans must cover the following list of preventive services without charging you a copayment or coinsurance. This is true even if you haven't met your yearly deductible.

IMPORTANT: These services are free only when delivered by a doctor or other provider in your plan's network.

1. **Abdominal aortic aneurysm one-time screening** for men of specified ages who have ever smoked
2. **Alcohol misuse screening and counseling**
3. **Aspirin use** to prevent cardiovascular disease and colorectal cancer for adults 50 - 59 years with a high cardiovascular risk
4. **Blood pressure screening**
5. **Cholesterol screening** for adults of certain ages or at higher risk
6. **Colorectal cancer screening** for adults 45 - 75
7. **Depression screening**
8. **Diabetes (Type 2) screening** for adults 40 - 70 years who are overweight or obese
9. **Diet counseling** for adults at higher risk for chronic disease
10. **Falls prevention** (with exercise or physical therapy and vitamin D use) for adults 65 years and over, living in a community setting
11. **Hepatitis B screening** for people at high risk, including people from countries with 2% or more Hepatitis B prevalence, and U.S.-born people not vaccinated as infants and with at least one parent born in a region with 8% or more Hepatitis B prevalence.
12. **Hepatitis C screening** for adults age 18 - 79 yrs
13. **HIV screening** for everyone age 15 - 65, and other ages at increased risk
14. **PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) HIV prevention medication** for HIV-negative adults at high risk for getting HIV through sex or injection drug use
15. **Immunizations** for adults - doses, recommended ages, and recommended populations vary:
 - Chickenpox (Varicella)
 - Diphtheria
 - Flu (influenza)
 - Hepatitis A
 - Hepatitis B
 - Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
 - Measles
 - Meningococcal
 - Mumps
 - Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
 - Pneumococcal
 - Rubella
 - Shingles
 - Tetanus
16. **Lung cancer screening** for adults 50 - 80 at high risk for lung cancer because they're heavy smokers or have quit in the past 15 years
17. **Obesity screening and counseling**
18. **Sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention counseling** for adults at higher risk
19. **Statin preventive medication** for adults 40 - 75 at high risk
20. **Syphilis screening** for adults at higher risk
21. **Tobacco use screening** for all adults and cessation interventions for tobacco users
22. **Tuberculosis screening** for certain adults without symptoms at high risk

Find an in-network provider:

www.providersearch.medmutual.com



Tips for Maintaining or Achieving a Healthy Weight

The start of a new year is a great time to make changes that improve your health. Thinking about your weight is a good place to start. To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, you should eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, get enough sleep and reduce your stress. Whether you want to lose weight, gain weight or maintain your current weight, there are *steps you can take* to reach your goal.

Eat a balanced diet. An *eating plan* that helps manage your weight includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, high-fiber foods and lean sources of protein, such as fish. You should also limit foods high in saturated and trans fats, and foods with added sugar and sodium. You can still enjoy these foods, but balance is the key.

Get moving. Besides eating a healthy diet, a great way to help control your weight is to get *regular exercise*. Starting a fitness program can help you lose or maintain weight and lower your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and certain types of cancer. Choose activities you enjoy and aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. You should also incorporate *strength training* into your exercise regimen. Increasing muscle mass makes it easier to burn calories to help you maintain a healthy weight.



Get enough sleep. There is some evidence that sleep duration affects the hormones that regulate hunger. If you don't get enough sleep, you may feel hungrier than you would if your body was fully recharged. A lack of sleep also leads to fatigue and less physical activity. Aim for *7-8 hours of shuteye* each night.

Reduce stress. Feeling emotional, nervous or anxious can take a toll on your physical health. To help *cope with stress*, take a break from reading the news, make time to do things you enjoy, talk to trusted friends or family members and connect with community organizations. If you recognize you need more help, talk to a psychologist, social worker or counselor.

Save up to 50% on a WeightWatchers® membership

If you'd like to start living a healthier lifestyle, you can join WeightWatchers and save almost 50% off the regular cost as a Medical Mutual member. You can create your own personalized plan with the help of WeightWatchers nutrition experts who can teach you how to eat the foods you enjoy and still be successful.

Visit *My Health Plan* and then click on WeightWatchers under the Healthy Living tab for details on how to enroll.

Talk to your doctor

Talk to your primary care provider (PCP) if you are concerned about your weight. If you don't have a PCP, you can use MedMutual Find a Provider after logging in to *My Health Plan*.

HEALTHY LIVING RECIPE:

Chicken Breasts with Red Wine Sauce

INTRODUCTION

This is a lighter take on the classic Italian preparation of Chicken Cacciatore (or Chicken Hunter Style). Our made-over version uses white meat rather than dark and less oil to cut almost 60 calories per serving and reduce the fat and sodium of the traditional recipe.

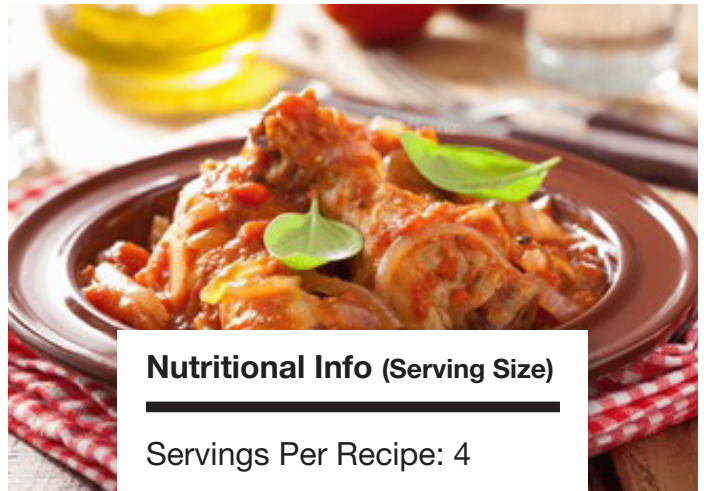
DIRECTIONS

1. Slice the chicken breasts in half and pat dry with a clean cotton cloth or paper towel. Season with pepper.
2. Place the oil in a medium saucepan with a heavy bottom and a lid; once the oil is hot, add the chicken. Lightly brown the chicken on all sides, remove from the pan, and set aside.
3. Add the onions, mushrooms, and garlic to the hot pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions turn light brown, 4 to 5 minutes.
4. Add the wine; stir to combine with the vegetables and scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen the browned bits. Simmer until the wine reduces by half in volume, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, Worcestershire, chili powder, thyme and mustard; then return the chicken to the pan. Bring to a simmer and then reduce heat to low. Cover with a lid and simmer for 35 to 40 minutes.

Garnish with the chopped parsley and pearl onions (if desired) before serving.

Note: In choosing a wine for cooking, always use one that's good enough to drink. Never buy "cooking wine," which is full of additives and sodium. Keep a four-pack of small wine bottles on hand for cooking.

Halved pearl onions is a classic garnish for this dish. To serve them, peel and lightly brown them in a small sauté pan just before the chicken is done cooking. Add to the dish just before serving.



Nutritional Info (Serving Size)

Servings Per Recipe:	4
Amount Per Serving	
Calories:	287.6
Total Fat:	11.4 g
Cholesterol:	79.0 mg
Sodium:	306.0 mg
Total Carbs:	8.9 g
Dietary Fiber:	1.7 g
Protein:	30.6 g

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 1 yellow or white onion, sliced
- 1 cup mushrooms cut into quarters
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup (4 ounces) red wine (see Note)
- One 14.5-ounce can stewed tomatoes, with liquid
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp thyme
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 12 pearl onions, peeled and halved

Minutes to Prepare: 5

Minutes to Cook: 45

Number of Servings: 4