

STATE of MAINE

SOURCE

for

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS & WELLNESS

Your Health & Wellness Newsletter

Brought to you by the State of Maine's Division of Employee Health & Benefits

# THE BENEFITS OF FALL...

Now that fall has arrived and the temperature has begun to drop, some may be making the mistake of putting their running shoes away until next summer. Did you know your body burns more calories during the colder weather? Your body uses more energy to generate heat, thus shedding even more calories than it would during warmer temperatures due to your metabolic rate increasing to warm your body.

There are also delicious, healthy foods available in the fall that we miss out on during the summer: root vegetables and crisp fruits — the perfect comfort foods to enjoy as the weather begins to cool.

## SIMPLE EVERDAY EXERCISES

**Yard Work**— Raking the yard is a lot like doing the laundry: there is always more coming the next day. This is an easy, productive exercise that keeps your body moving more than it does when using a leaf blower. The average 150 pound person will burn about 235 calories in 45 minutes of leaf-raking.

**Go for a walk or jog** – Be quick and brisk. You burn fewer calories if you walk at the strolling rate of a 30-minute mile, so challenge yourself to a faster pace. Also seek trails with inclines, dips or some sort of variations. This will burn twice the amount of calories than walking on a flat route.

**Enjoy the weather** – Before the snow hits the ground, take advantage of the crisp, cool weather. Instead of sitting in the break room, try going for a walk during your lunch break. If you are at soccer practice waiting for your children to be done, go for a walk, bring another parent with you as you walk.

## GET MOVING, GET STARTED

Let's not forget to do the one thing we encourage our kids to constantly do: Go outside. There are amazing benefits you can only receive during the cooler weather, so open up that door and take your first step.

## FALL FOODS WITH BENEFITS

### FOODS TO EAT THIS FALL



PUMPKIN

RICH IN POTASSIUM, GOOD SOURCE OF B VITAMINS, & MORE THAN 20% OF YOUR DIETARY REFERENCE INTAKES OF FIBER.

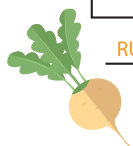
PARSNIPS

RICH IN POTASSIUM, GOOD SOURCE OF FIBER.



RUTABAGA

GOOD SOURCE OF FIBER, AND VITAMIN C.



SQUASH

HAS OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS, EXCELLENT SOURCE OF VITAMIN C.



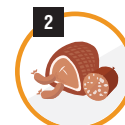
# NUTRITION: SODIUM

## the SALTY six

THESE SIX POPULAR FOODS CAN ADD HIGH LEVELS OF SODIUM TO YOUR DIET



BREAD & ROLLS



COLD CUTS & CURED MEATS



PIZZA



POULTRY



SOUP



SANDWICHES

ON AVERAGE, AMERICAN ADULTS EAT MORE THAN 3,400 MILLIGRAMS OF SODIUM DAILY, which is more than double the American Heart Association's recommended limit of 1,500 mg. Where does the sodium we eat come from?

You may be surprised to learn that only about 10 percent comes from home cooked meals and 25 percent from restaurants. The remaining 65 percent accumulates from processed foods you would find at the grocery store such as frozen pizzas or canned soup. One cup of chicken noodle soup can have up to 940 mg of sodium.

Too much sodium can increase your risk for high blood pressure, which in turn can lead to heart disease and stroke. Learning to read and understand food labels can help you make healthier choices, and practice portion control.

Just a reminder, that two nutritional counseling visits are provided per 12 months at no cost with an in-network provider under the State of Maine Point of Service health insurance plan. No diagnosis required (e.g. obesity) and visit can be with a registered dietician.

For more information contact Aetna Member Services at 1-855-850-0039.



# HOW TO LOSE WEIGHT & MAINTAIN IT

Changing the way you approach weight loss can help you be more successful at losing it. Most people who try to lose weight focus on one thing: weight loss. However if you set goals, begin to eat healthy foods, become more physically active, and learn how to change behaviors, then you may be more successful at losing weight. Over time, these changes will become routine and part of your everyday life.

*Losing just 5-10 percent of your current weight over 6 months will lower your risk for heart disease and other conditions.*



Eat Healthy Foods



Set Realistic Goals



Be More Physically Active



Learn to Change Your Behaviors

# HEALTHCARE COSTS OF OBESITY

## WHAT IS OBESITY COSTING YOU?

Currently in the United States, obesity proves to be one of the biggest drivers of preventable chronic diseases and healthcare costs. Estimates range from \$147 billion to nearly \$210 billion per year. It also has a direct impact on the State of Maine health plan and the premiums you pay.

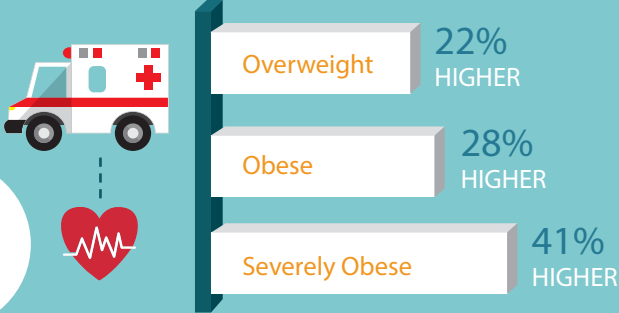
Setting the right goals is an important first step to losing and maintaining weight. Even a small weight loss (just 5-10 percent of your current weight) will help to lower your risk of developing weight-related diseases.

## BREAKDOWN OF THE COSTS

- Obese adults spend 42 percent more on direct healthcare costs than adults who are a healthy weight.

- Per capita healthcare costs for severely or morbidly obese adults (BMI >40) are 81 percent higher than for healthy weight adults. In 2000, around \$11 billion was spent on medical expenditures for morbidly obese U.S. adults.
- Moderately obese (BMI between 30 and 35) individuals are more than twice as likely as healthy weight individuals to be prescribed prescription pharmaceuticals to manage medical conditions.
- Costs for patients presenting at emergency rooms with chest pains are 41 percent higher for severely obese patients, 28 percent higher for obese patients and 22 percent higher for overweight patients than for healthy-weight patients.

Visit [www.maine.gov/deh](http://www.maine.gov/deh) and click on the Wellness tab to view the wide variety of wellness resources available.



*Difference in Emergency Room Costs for Patients presenting with chest pains compared with a healthy-weight Patient.*

# CHRONIC CONDITION FOCUS: STRESS, DEPRESSION & ANXIETY

Know that when it comes to Stress, Depression & Anxiety that there is no over-the-counter, miracle remedy that will work overnight. The only medicine that will work the best is time, so give yourself a break. Here are some tips from Mental Health America:

- Learn your triggers** – It's important to identify and understand what and where your stress comes from.
- Know your limits** – Don't take on more responsibility than you can handle right now.
- Take things one at a time** – The last thing you need is to attempt to multitask. Just do one project or assignment or chore at a time. Don't pile up all the other responsibilities in your mind.
- Talk with someone** – Just being able to confide in a trusted friend, counselor or minister can help minimize and reduce your stress level.
- Practice stress reduction techniques** – Try tensing and relaxing the muscles in your toes and progressively working your way up to your neck and head, repeat words or suggestions in your mind to relax and reduce muscle tension. Take a visual journey to a peaceful, calming place or situation. Picture yourself on a beach (if that's what calms you) imagine the feel of sand between your toes, the sound of crashing waves, and the salty breeze.

## LIVING RESOURCES PROGRAM

Personal issues, planning for life events or simply managing daily life can affect your work, health and family. Your Living Resources Program provides support, resources and information for personal and work-life issues.

Living Resources is company-sponsored, confidential and provided at no charge to you and your dependents. Eligible members can schedule up to 5 short-term counseling visits at no cost.





# BACK TO SCHOOL HEALTH TIPS: PREVENTING COLDS & FLU

Head back to school ready and prepared for Cold & Flu season with these five simple tips:

**Ward off Germs:** Germs are spread through hand-to-hand contact or when sneezed or coughed into the air. To minimize exposure, avoid shaking hands, keep away from others who are sick and stay out of crowded rooms.

**Keep Hands Clean:** The first and easiest line of defense against the spread of germs is washing hands often. Wet, lather, and scrub for twenty seconds. Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end, twice, to ensure the approximate handwashing time.

**Eat Immune-Boosting Foods:** Soluble fiber—found in citrus fruits, apples, carrots, beans and oats—helps fight inflammation. Broccoli is packed with vitamins A, C, and E, as well as numerous antioxidants, making it one of the healthiest vegetables you can put on your table.

**Clear the Nose and Sinuses:** Germs often settle first in the nose and sinuses, so it’s important to keep nasal passages clear by either flushing them out with a saltwater solution or loosening secretions with a facial steamer or vaporizer.

**Stay Active:** Movement mobilizes the immune system. Kids who sit too much – especially indoors – get sick more often. Movement also mellows the mood, as stress depresses the immune system. Simple household chores like walking the dog or checking the mailbox can help your child stay active.

**The seasonal flu vaccine is covered at 100% (zero copay) on the State of Maine’s Point of Service health insurance plan when provided by an in-network provider. For more information contact Aetna Member Services at 1-855-850-0039.**

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Maine State Employees  
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Appeal

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

### OCT

Domestic Violence Awareness Month  
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
National Bullying Prevention Month  
National Depression and Mental Health  
Screening Month

**Reminder: A regular screening  
mammogram and up to 2 diagnostic  
mammograms per calendar year are  
covered at 100% with an in-network  
provider under the State of Maine  
Point of Service health insurance plan.**

### NOV

American Diabetes Month  
Great American Smokeout – Nov 19  
Lung Cancer Awareness Month

## HEALTHY RECIPE: SAUSAGE & PEPPER SKEWERS

Per serving: Calories 396; Fat 13 g (Saturated 2 g); Cholesterol 56 mg; Sodium 356 mg; Carbohydrate 45 g;  
Fiber 5 g; Protein 24 g

1 cup couscous  
2 bell peppers (red and yellow),  
cut into chunks  
1 (12-ounce) package chicken sausage  
(preferably garlic-flavored), cut into  
1-inch pieces  
1 large red onion, cut into chunks  
1 cup cherry tomatoes  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
1/4 cup fresh parsley  
1/4 cup fresh cilantro  
4 scallions, roughly chopped  
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

Soak eight 8-inch skewers in water for 15 minutes. Preheat a grill or to medium high. Prepare the couscous as the label directs.  
Toss the bell peppers, sausage, onion and tomatoes in a bowl with 1 tablespoon olive oil; season with salt and pepper.  
Thread onto the skewers, alternating the sausage and vegetables. Grill, turning, until the vegetables are slightly softened and the sausage begins to brown, 6 to 7 minutes.  
Mix the parsley, cilantro and scallions in a blender with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, vinegar and water. Season with salt and pepper.  
Brush the skewers with some of the pesto and continue to cook, turning, until the tomatoes are tender and the sausage is charred, 6 to 7 more minutes.  
Toss the couscous with half of the remaining pesto and season with salt and pepper. Serve with the skewers and the remaining pesto, for dipping.

## HOW TO USE WELLSTARME

Getting started with WellStarME is easy. Simply go to [www.WellStarME.org](http://www.WellStarME.org). Once you register and activate your WellStarME account, you will answer a few simple questions. Based on your answers, WellStarME creates a profile for you.

WellStarME begins by assessing your health numbers – blood pressure, cholesterol levels and body mass index (BMI) – and eating habits to evaluate your overall health. This assessment allows WellStarME to better understand your current health level and identify certain risks.

Your baseline numbers are square one on your path to better health. Once you have that starting point, WellStarME helps you establish personalized goals.

You can track your exercise. It also offers strategies for preventing Type 2 diabetes and ending tobacco use.

Your scorecard is a snapshot of your overall health, showing you how well you’re progressing on the factors that make an impact. The WellStarME star system makes it easy to monitor your progress. Achieve all gold stars and you’ll know you’re on the right track.





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 Newsletter

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**Division of Health & Benefits**

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