

Your Health & Wellness Newsletter

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

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NUMBERS: BLOOD SUGAR

Most of us know that the key to maintaining good health is "everything in moderation." Too much or too little of anything we put in our body can impact our health. Sugar intake is no exception. Have you ever gotten lightheaded from skipping a meal? Or maybe you experienced shakiness a few hours after you ate something with more carbohydrates than usual. Your blood sugar will rise and fall throughout the day.

There are three main factors that can impact your blood sugar level:

- Your daily eating habits,
- Your physical activity, and
- If you are diabetic, your diabetes medicines.



NORMAL BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS

Self-monitoring results for someone without diabetes...

- A fasting blood sugar in the morning should be under 100mg/dL (70-99mg/dL)
- Before a meal should be 70-99mg/dL
- Two hours after a meal should be less than 140mg/dL

Self-monitoring results for someone with diabetes...

- American Diabetes Association recommends before meal levels of 80-130mg/dL
- Two hours after a meal should be under 180mg/dl

A1C results

- Normal A1C results for a person without diabetes should be below 5.7%.
- The recommended target for a person with diabetes is 7% or lower.



TESTING FOR DIABETES

When a health care provider is testing to diagnose diabetes or prediabetes, he/she may use a fasting plasma glucose (FPG) test or the A1C test. The FPG measures your blood sugar after you fast (nothing to eat or drink) for at least 8 hours and provides your blood sugar level for a single point in time. The A1C test does not require fasting, as it reports an average over a period of time.



MAINTAINING A HEALTHY BLOOD SUGAR LEVEL

Unhealthy blood sugar levels can lead to Type 2 diabetes and other major health complications. It's important to monitor and manage your blood sugar level, especially if you have already been diagnosed with diabetes. So, what is the best way to manage your blood sugar level?

You guessed it...eat healthy and exercise!

High fiber and whole grain foods help to lower blood sugar and may reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Regular physical activity and exercise can help you lose weight which also aids in reducing blood sugar levels and risks for chronic conditions.



Sign up for Nutritional Counseling

Your health plan covers two visits per 12 months at no cost to you. No diagnosis is required, and the visit can be with an in-network registered dietitian.

Talk to Your Doctor

Discuss any symptoms or concerns you may have, follow through on a meal plan and exercise routine and keep up with routine visits. If you are diagnosed with diabetes or another chronic condition impacted by blood sugar, your doctor can advise you on continuous monitoring and management.

See a Registered Dietitian

A registered dietitian may be able to give you more specific suggestions on foods and supplements that will best help you to manage your blood sugar levels.

HEALTH PLAN SPOTLIGHT

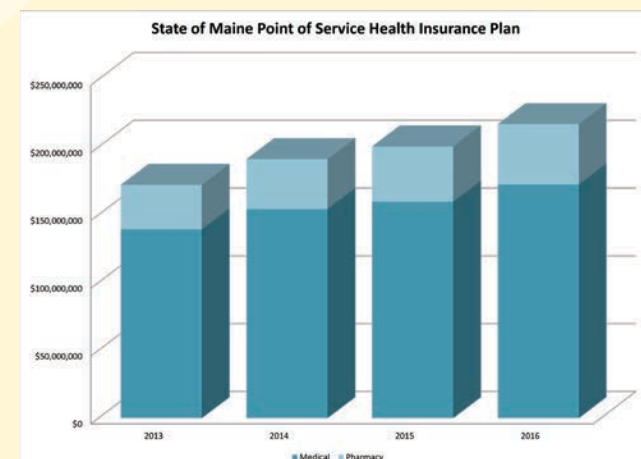


Why do health insurance plan costs go up?

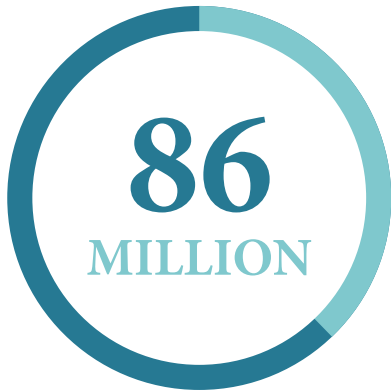
Health plan members directly affect the overall cost to the health plan through how much they use medical services. The more money the plan pays out to cover claims, the more money it needs to bring in through premiums.

Since 2013, overall costs to the health insurance plan has gone up 26%, even though the number of members in the plan has dropped. In fact, the cost per covered person has gone up 33%.

Staying healthy reduces the amount health insurance has to pay out throughout the year, which is the most important factor in keeping premiums down.



BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR PREDIABETES



86 million American adults—1 in every 3—have prediabetes. 90% of people with prediabetes don't know they have it.

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/diabetesprevention>

If you are diagnosed with prediabetes, you can look at it as both bad news and good news.

The bad news is that your blood sugar level is higher than it should be and that you have to take corrective action before it becomes Type 2 diabetes.

The good news is that it's not too late to take steps to reduce your blood sugar levels to more acceptable levels and head off Type 2 diabetes.

Prediabetes means that your body is having difficulty producing enough insulin after you eat or that your body simply isn't responding to insulin efficiently. If you have this condition, you don't need to take insulin. You simply need to control your weight through healthy eating and exercise, and regularly monitor your blood sugar levels.

Some early symptoms include: you may get hungrier and thirstier than usual, you're losing weight despite eating more, you're going to the bathroom more frequently or you're feeling abnormally tired. The only sure way of diagnosing the condition is through a blood test. There are a few different tests, with the two most common being a fasting plasma glucose test and a hemoglobin (A1C) test.

	Type 1	Type 2	Prediabetes
Condition	Your pancreas stops making insulin, causing blood glucose levels in your blood to reach dangerous levels.	Your body doesn't use insulin properly, forcing your pancreas to work harder. Eventually, your body can't produce enough insulin to control blood glucose levels.	Your glucose (blood sugar) levels are elevated because your body isn't using insulin efficiently. If unaddressed, prediabetes leads to Type 2
Treatment	Requires regular insulin injections	Diet and exercise, oral medications and possibly insulin injections	Diet and exercise

If you have prediabetes, work with your doctor to develop a plan to lower your blood sugar, as you are in danger of developing Type 2 diabetes and the serious health risks (heart disease and stroke) that come with it.

If you're at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, you can get effective help at no cost. Anyone enrolled in the State of Maine Health Plan is eligible to participate in the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP).

The NDPP, established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a year-long program that helps participants make real lifestyle changes such as eating healthier, including physical activity into their daily lives, and improving problem-solving and coping skills.

Participants meet with a trained lifestyle coach and a small group of people who are making lifestyle changes to prevent Type 2 diabetes. Groups meet for 16 weekly sessions and then meet for six monthly follow up sessions. The program cost is covered in full by the State of Maine Medical Plan.

The program has produced true results, achieving positive outcomes for 58% of participants nationwide.

The goals are attainable. For instance, if a person weighing 200 pounds loses as little as 10 pounds, the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes is cut by half.

Find out if you are at risk by logging on to WellStarME, where you can also find a program near you.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention.



FOCUS!

Regardless of your age, it is important to get routine eye exams to evaluate your vision and overall eye health. During an exam, your eye doctor will evaluate visual acuity, depth perception, eye alignment and eye movement to ensure your eye health.* It is important for children to attend regular eye exams to evaluate their vision skills for schoolwork and activities.

Did you know a routine eye exam can detect early signs of diabetes? Blood vessels in the retina become damaged from high blood sugar causing scarring on the eye, commonly known as diabetic retinopathy. Early discovery and treatment can reduce the risk of permanent vision loss. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people who have diabetes should attend a dilated eye exam every year to protect their vision.

Keep an eye on your vision! One routine, preventive eye exam is covered 100% (no cost to member) per calendar year with an in-network provider.

*<https://www.cdc.gov/features/healthyvision>

Nutrition: UNDERSTANDING SUGAR

Sugar is sweet, but it's not just in sweets!

We don't need to read the label of most foods to confirm their high sugar content. We automatically know that cookies, donuts and cakes aren't showing up on this season's "healthiest foods" list. But sugar can be found in places you wouldn't think to look. Some common delights aren't as sweet, yet contain more sugar than you might think.

Some of these sweet surprises include:

TOMATO SAUCE

YOGURT

KETCHUP

SOUPS

SALAD DRESSING

You might also be surprised at the impact high sugar levels can have on your body. Obesity, diabetes and bad teeth are commonly known conditions caused by excessive sugar consumption. Did you know it can also affect your liver, raise your cholesterol and cause heart disease, too?

- Sugar delivers "empty calories" (no useful nutrients) and can therefore contribute to nutrient deficiencies.
- Sugar is comprised of glucose and fructose. Fructose may turn into fat and remain in the liver. Consistently high blood sugar can lead to a fatty liver and other health problems.
- Studies now link the amount of sugar in a person's diet with the risk of heart disease. In addition, excess sugar can raise blood pressure and cholesterol.

You don't have to stop eating sugar altogether. However, it is important to read nutrition labels so you can select healthier options and cut down on your sugar intake. There are plenty of foods that naturally contain healthy sugar, like fruits and vegetables, which also provide valuable vitamins and minerals, and can help keep you healthy from head to toe!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

MAR

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

- Reminder: the health plan covers a colorectal cancer screening 100% with an in-network provider.

National Nutrition Month

APR

Alcohol Awareness Month Stress Awareness Month

eNEWSLETTER AVAILABLE!

The monthly print newsletters are also available electronically. To subscribe, visit www.maine.gov/deh and complete the subscription form.

HEALTHY RECIPE: SOUTHWEST QUINOA CAKES

Serving size: 2 cakes & ¼ cup salsa | Makes 6 servings

Per serving: 363 calories; 17 g fat(6 g sat); 7 g fiber; 35 g carbohydrates; 19 g protein; 128 mcg folate; 141 mg cholesterol; 6 g sugars; 0 g added sugars; 904 IU vitamin A; 16 mg vitamin C; 283 mg calcium; 4 mg iron; 656 mg sodium; 527 mg potassium

This healthy quinoa cake recipe is packed with protein from the black beans, eggs, cottage cheese and quinoa. We like to serve the quinoa cakes with a mouthwatering and incredibly easy blender salsa; if you don't like the heat, leave out the chipotle pepper. We like the look of red quinoa, but any color quinoa will work just as well.

2 cups water
1 cup quinoa, preferably red quinoa
4 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup canned black beans, rinsed
¾ cup reduced-fat cottage cheese
¼ cup sliced scallions
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt, plus a pinch, divided
1 cup shredded pepper Jack cheese
1 14-ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
1 clove garlic
1 small chipotle pepper in adobo sauce
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 avocado, chopped

Prep Time: 35 min Ready In: 1 hr

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat a 12-cup nonstick muffin tin with cooking spray.
2. Bring water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Stir in quinoa. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook until the grains are tender and reveal their spiraled germ, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool for about 10 minutes.
3. Add eggs, beans, cottage cheese, scallions, flour, baking powder and ¼ teaspoon salt to the quinoa and stir until well combined. Divide the mixture among the muffin cups (about ¼ cup each). Top each quinoa cake with about 1 tbs cheese.
4. Bake the cakes until puffed and a little brown on top, about 20 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 5 min. Gently loosen and remove with a paring knife.
5. Meanwhile, place tomatoes, garlic, chipotle pepper and a pinch of salt in a blender and puree until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl and stir in cilantro.
6. Serve the cakes with the salsa and avocado.



State of Maine
Division of Employee Health & Benefits
 114 State House Station
 Augusta, ME 04333-0114



RESOURCES:

Health Insurance: Aetna Member Services, www.AetnaStateOfMaine.com or 1-855-850-0039

WellStarME: www.WellStarME.org

CompareMaine: www.CompareMaine.org

Living Resources Program: www.GuidanceResources.com
 (web ID: LivingME) or 1-844-207-LINK (5465)

eNewsletter Subscription: www.maine.gov/deh

The State of Maine
Division of Employee
Health & Benefits

www.Maine.gov/deh

Subscribe to our latest news
and like us on Facebook!



Executive Director:
Christine Brawn

Mailing Address:
 114 State House Station
 Augusta, ME 04333-0114

Location:
 111 Sewall Street, Augusta, ME

Phone:
 Main: (207) 624-7380
 Toll-Free: 1-800-422-4503
 TTY: Maine Relay 711

In this issue:

- ★ **Understanding Your Numbers: Blood Sugar**
- ★ **Health Plan Spotlight**
- ★ **Be on the Lookout for Prediabetes**
- ★ **National Diabetes Prevention Program**
- ★ **Focus!**
- ★ **Nutrition: Understanding Sugar**
- ★ **Calendar of Events**
- ★ **Healthy Recipe: Southwest Quinoa Cakes**



This newsletter can be made available in alternative formats. Please contact Employee Health & Benefits for assistance.