



Your Health & Wellness Newsletter

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

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU!

With a new year comes a chance for new beginnings. Why not try to start the new year off right by taking the path toward better health? For instance, cut back on salty foods, drink more water and less soda, take the stairs instead of an elevator and consistently get a good night's sleep. Small changes can reap big rewards. If you want to tackle bigger challenges, like losing weight, preparing for a marathon or quitting smoking, don't feel overwhelmed. Talk to someone, make a plan, and above all, take one day at a time. You have all year to walk down that path!



MAKE A CHANGE...

SLEEP BETTER

Getting a good night's sleep on a regular basis is key to a healthy lifestyle. It can benefit your heart, weight, memory, mood, quality of life and more. Studies indicate that too much or too little sleep may even affect how long you live.

Tips for a restful sleep:

- Commit to a regular nighttime schedule.
- Eat dinner at least two hours before bedtime; avoid alcohol, chocolate and caffeine for several hours beforehand as well.
- Say goodnight to your iPad, laptop, smartphone and other devices at least an hour before your bedtime.
- Dim the lights - harsh lighting is not conducive to setting the sleepy mood.
- Turn off the TV. Read instead. (And no work in bed!)
- Take a hot bath, drink a cup of warm herbal tea, listen to soothing music or do some light yoga poses to relax before going to bed.

TACKLE A BAD HABIT

Still haunted by some bad habits you haven't been able to shake? Overcoming a bad habit - like being a procrastinator, eating too much fast food, snacking when not hungry or smoking cigarettes - will give you a great sense of accomplishment, improve your health and mood, and, in some cases, save you money. If you have some small faults you'd like to correct, don't try to get rid of them all at once; pick one and work on it until you have it under control. Then, try another one if you'd like. Especially if you're plagued with procrastination, don't put off until next year what you can do now!

OUT WITH THE OLD...NOT SO FAST!

As we ring in 2017, take time to say goodbye to the year we're leaving behind. What has the year been like for you? Experience any first times (for instance, snorkeling, eating quinoa, going on a cruise)? What was your single best memory? What was your biggest challenge? Any shoulda coulda wouldas spring to mind? How will 2016 be remembered in your household? A little reflection can help you decide what you want for the new year.



TOBACCO CESSATION

Is one of your New Year's resolutions to quit smoking? Your health plan can help. Plan coverage includes:

- First two 90-day treatment regimens for certain medications provided at no cost.
- Up to 8 tobacco cessation counseling visits per 12 months provided at no cost with an in-network provider.
- One lung cancer screening is provided per 12 months at no cost to eligible members. (Certain criteria must be met for a lung cancer screening. Contact your provider or Aetna Member Services at 1-855-850-0039 for more information.)



STAY ACTIVE IN WINTER

Just because temperatures are falling and snow may cover the ground, don't stay inside and hibernate. Get active! Fitness is important to keep you healthy during the cold-weather months. It boosts immunity, keeps off the weight and chases away the SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder). Whether indoors or out, you can stay fit.

TAKE A HIKE

Walking in the snow is a great cardio workout. It gets the heart pumping and burns more calories, because the snow makes you put in more effort with each step you take. Add in a few hills on your trek to really burn some calories. So, if you have a choice between walking indoors (on a track or treadmill) and going outside, opt for the great outdoors. Of course, be careful where you walk, and make sure you stretch first.

Remember to dress appropriately for the outdoors:

- Wear moisture-wicking fabrics, choose footwear with treads, and stay away from the cotton socks,
- wear sunscreen if outside for over 10 minutes, and
- stay hydrated – you still sweat and lose water in the cold.



HIT THE SLOPES

Snow-based activities, such as cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing, are a great way to spend the day outside.

Cross-country skiing works both your upper and lower body. It is hard work, but worth it if you want to burn a lot of calories. As a bonus, unlike downhill skiing, you don't need to travel to your favorite ski resort to do it – your backyard or a snow-covered park will do.

Snowboarding and snowshoeing are excellent winter fitness activities for improving balance and endurance while providing a great cardio workout. Both work the leg muscles (snowboarding also works the abdominal muscles).

Maine offers the least crowded skiing on the East Coast, with some of the best terrain. You can choose from ski resorts that cater more to families and leisure skiers, night skiing and boarding, snow-tubing or backcountry skiing. For travel suggestions, visit the Maine Office of Tourism's website at www.visitmaine.com.



FIND AN ICE RINK

Don't forget, the ice can be fun, too – lace up the skates and go ice skating or pass out some sticks, grab a puck and start a friendly game of hockey. Is shuffleboard more your speed? Try its distant cousin, curling or put together a game of broomball – neither requires skates or skating experience. Many indoor rinks offer skating lessons and skate rentals, while outdoor rinks may be equipped with warming huts, covered skating areas and lights for night skating. If you'd rather skip the ice, there are a few roller-skating rinks located throughout Maine.

FUN FACT: Playing in the snow for 30 minutes will burn 100 to 200 calories.

NOT SO FUN FACT: Shoveling the snow for 30 minutes will burn 200 to 300 calories.



MAKE IT A FAMILY AFFAIR

For families, don't forget the calorie burning fun of playing in the snow. Make snow angels, build a snowman (or a family of snow people), slip-slide away in a snow tube, go sledding or give back as good as you get in a snowball fight!

Snow doesn't deliver the only means for outdoor fun. Bundle up and head outside for a bit of cold weather science. If the temperature is below freezing, bubbles will turn into crystalized balls after a few seconds and shatter. You will need bubble solution and a bubble wand for this experiment. Have the kids blow bubbles and catch them on the bubble wand or let them float and see where (or if) they land. Or just dip the wand in the solution without blowing and watch the crystals form.

Want to take your family out for some fun? Schedule an ice fishing trip with a tour guide (and possibly cook your catch for lunch!) or have a merry time at one of Maine's many winter festivals, which will surely provide entertainment and food for the whole family to enjoy.

Whatever the activity, have fun, relish the time spent with each other and get a little exercise in at the same time.

DEHYDRATION IS NOT JUST A SUMMER PROBLEM.

Good hydration is as important as good nutrition.

Soft drinks and fruit juices contain a lot of sugar. Coffee and some teas have a good deal of caffeine in them. While those beverages do contribute to your daily water intake, pure water is calorie free, caffeine free and sugar free.

While staying hydrated is essential all year long, keep in mind that drinking water in the wintertime can be just as important as drinking it during hot summer months.

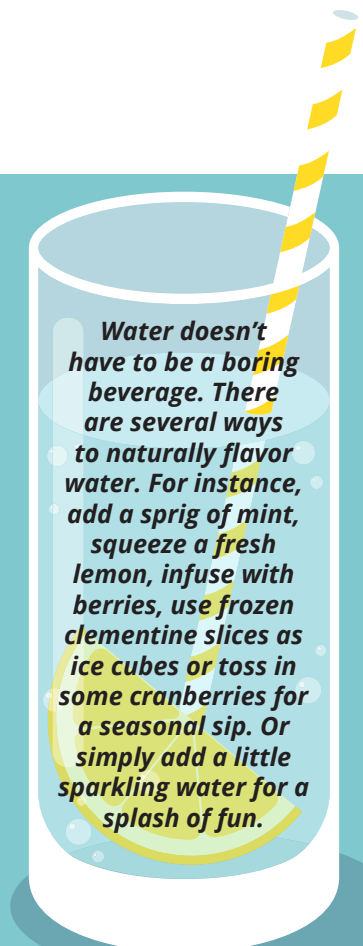
In cold weather, more moisture is lost through respiratory evaporation. Cold air holds less moisture than warm air, meaning that when it enters the lungs it absorbs more moisture before being exhaled and is replaced with cold dry air where the process is repeated. This increases the risks of dehydration, according to a study conducted by the American College of Sports Medicine.

Exacerbating the problem, the cold air reduces your thirst, causing you to drink less, according to the same study.

It only takes 2-5% fluid loss for a body to become dehydrated. (Warning signs pointing toward dehydration include chapped lips, dry and flaky skin, dry cough, nosebleeds, mild headaches, dark urine and acne.) Winter-related factors such as cold and dry air, wind chill, inadequate fluid intake, sweating/skin evaporation, heavy breathing and shivering all contribute to fluid loss.

Maintaining hydration can do wonders for your digestive system, energy levels, brain function, skin, immune system and overall health. Drinking water can even keep cravings at bay and help you avoid "winter weight."

Water doesn't have to be a boring beverage. There are several ways to naturally flavor water. For instance, add a sprig of mint, squeeze a fresh lemon, infuse with berries, use frozen clementine slices as ice cubes or toss in some cranberries for a seasonal sip. Or simply add a little sparkling water for a splash of fun.



IMPORTANCE OF PROTEIN



Everybody needs protein. Protein is an important component that exists naturally in every cell of the human body. From your hair, nails and skin on the outside of your body, to your hormones, enzymes, tissues, blood, bones, muscles and cartilage on the inside, protein plays many critical roles in keeping you alive and healthy.

Almost 20% of the human body is made up of proteins. Continuous daily intake of protein is essential – the dietary protein in the food we eat is our main source of the building blocks we need to sustain life. Because proteins are used to develop, grow and maintain our bodies, good nutrition (including sufficient protein intake) is essential during pregnancy and especially important for children and teens.

PROTEIN IS A CRITICAL FOOD GROUP

As a rule, we must consume protein in our diets. We can use both plants and animals as a source of dietary protein; vegetarians and meat eaters alike can find enough protein for sustenance. Significant amounts of protein can be found in meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, legumes, nuts, seeds and some vegetables.

You can get dietary proteins from the following sources:

- Fish, in general, has less fat than meat and contains omega-3 fatty acids.
- Remove the skin on poultry to eliminate most of the saturated fat.
- Beans (such as pinto, black, kidney and garbanzo; also lentils and split peas) are loaded with fiber and have more protein than any other vegetable protein.
- Nuts (and nut butter) are a great source of protein, particularly almonds. Added bonus: Nuts are

healthy sources of fat.

- Whole grains such as wheat germ and quinoa have more protein than refined or “white” food (white bread, white rice).
- Some plant-based foods (like legumes, tofu, tempeh and other soy protein products) can provide the same amount of protein as meats.
- Use lean cuts of meat (beef or pork) and trim away the fat.
- Both egg whites and egg yolks are ideal sources of dietary protein, but egg whites contain more without the cholesterol (and eggs in general are practically carbohydrate-free).
- Low-fat dairy products are a good source of protein.
- Brussel sprouts, broccoli, spinach, kale, mushrooms, asparagus and artichokes are high-protein vegetables.

The type of protein you eat may factor in to weight loss goals and your overall health. For instance, avoid eating deli meats, hot dogs, sausages and other processed meats – they are not a dieter’s friend (and can be high in salt). You will probably want to seek out alternatives to milk and other dairy products if they cause digestive issues. And while nuts are a healthy source of fat, keep in mind they are also high in calories.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING...

While protein is essential for a healthy diet, eating more protein than your body needs could cause some health issues, like kidney stress, intestinal irritation and dehydration. Calories from excess protein will be converted to sugar and then to body fat. Increased blood sugar levels from processing excessive amounts of protein could fuel cancer cell

growth. Eating too much protein with your meals could also result in a nutritional imbalance; you will need to take steps to avoid nutrient deficiencies (like eating more high-fiber complex carbohydrates in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables). On the lighter side of bad effects, too much protein might make your breath smell bad. Of course, too little protein in your diet could lead to a sluggish metabolism, weight issues, malnutrition, low energy levels and fatigue, bone and joint pain, muscle wasting or soreness and low immunity (susceptibility to infections and disease). So, balance is the key.

DAILY PROTEIN INTAKE

The amount of protein required varies by person and depends on overall calorie needs for your age, sex and activity level. The daily recommended intake of protein for healthy adults is 10% to 35% of total daily calories from protein sources.

In general, FDA recommendation is for 50 grams of protein per day for both men and women. Consult with your primary care physician or nutritionist for the number that is right for your protein needs.

In winter, it may be tempting to overindulge during the holidays or warm yourself up with one too many cups of hot cocoa instead of tea, but keep in mind that you should be following the same healthy eating guidelines that you normally would any other time of the year. Make sure to include lean protein, whole grains, vegetables and fruits when planning your meals.

CALENDER OF EVENTS:

JAN

Cervical Health Awareness Month

Don't forget, your health plan covers Routine Gynecological Care Exams at 100% with no copay when you receive care from an Aetna network doctor or specialist.

FEB

American Heart Month

DID YOU KNOW?

If you are enrolled in the State of Maine's Point of Service health insurance plan, any portion of your deductible that was met in the last quarter of the calendar year rolls over as a credit and is applied to the new year. For more information, contact Aetna Member Services at 1-855-850-0039.

HEALTHY RECIPE: SLOW COOKER HARVEST BEEF STEW

Per serving: Calories 311; Fat 4.2 g (Saturated 1.9 g); Cholesterol 45 mg; Sodium 211 mg; Carbohydrate 42 g; Fiber 7 g; Protein 24 g

- 1 lb. bottom round beef roast, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 large Russet potato, cut into ½-inch dice (about 2 cups)
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 medium sweet potato, cut into ½-inch dice (about 2 cups)
- 2 cups peeled, thinly sliced carrots
- 10 oz. packaged, frozen pearl onions
- 14.5 oz. canned, no-salt-added, diced tomatoes
- 14.5 oz. canned, low-sodium beef broth
- 1 cup water
- 3/4 tsp. dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 10 oz. packaged, frozen peas
- 2 Tbsp. dried parsley

Prep Time: 10 min

1. Cut the bottom round beef roast into 1-inch cubes and add into a 4-to 6-quart slow-cooker bowl. Chop the potato into ½-inch dice, adding to the beef cubes, along with the flour. Use a spoon to stir mixture together.
2. Cut the sweet potato into a ½-inch dice and thinly slice carrots. Add the sweet potato and carrots into the slow cooker bowl over the meat. Top with the pearl onions, diced tomatoes, beef broth, water, thyme, salt and pepper.
3. Cover the slow cooker with a lid and cook until beef is tender, about 10 to 12 hours on low heat or 5 to 6 hours on high heat. Right before serving, stir in the frozen peas and dried parsley. Cover and let peas cook, about 5 to 10 minutes. Serve.



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