

You FIRST

Your Month of Well-being

September 2024

Healthy Aging

September is Healthy Aging Month. As we get older, we become aware that our physical and mental health, along with dietary and social needs change over time. It's important to realize that this change doesn't mean you've lost control! Take charge of your well-being by aging healthy with your body and mind.

Fast Facts on Older Adults

- With people in the U.S. aging better and living longer, older adults are one of the **fastest-growing groups** in the country.¹
- **Heart disease** remains the number one cause of death for Americans of all ages, especially those age 75 and older.¹
- Nearly **95%** of older adults have at least one chronic condition, like diabetes, arthritis or heart disease, and nearly **80%** have two or more.⁴
- More than **one out of four** older adults fall every year. Fear of falling can lead older adults to limit their activities, which can result in more falls, physical decline, depression and social isolation.⁴
- Oral health is important for overall health and well-being, but **35% of older adults** have not seen a dentist in the last year.⁴
- **One in four older** adults experiences a behavioral health problem such as depression, anxiety or substance abuse.⁴

Tips to Stay Active and Independent ³

- **Move more, sit less!** Regular exercise can help older adults stay independent and prevent health problems that come with age. Aim for moderate physical activity, like walking at least 150 minutes a week and muscle strengthening activities, like carrying groceries at least 2 days a week.
- **Be proactive.** Book regular check-ups, physicals and medical tests when needed, as many diseases can be prevented when caught early. Take vitamins, supplements and medications as prescribed.
- **Focus on quality nutrition.** Eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, avoid excess processed foods and stay hydrated!
- **Stay connected.** Schedule time each day to stay in touch with family and friends. Take a class to learn something new and meet people with similar interests!

Maintaining a Healthy Brain as You Age ²

- **Get a good night's sleep to rest your brain.** Sleep plays a key role in memory retention, alertness and coping ability.
- **Reduce stress and anxiety.** Too much stress can lead to the buildup of the hormone cortisol, which can interfere with brain functioning, often causing "brain fog".
- **Keep your mind engaged.** Activities that engage your mind help keep your brain in shape! Activities like crossword puzzles, reading books, playing musical instruments and volunteering all may help to improve brain function and memory.
- **Stay physically active.** Regular physical activity helps keep the brain healthy. It increases oxygen-rich blood flow to the parts of the brain responsible for thinking. Walking for 30 minutes each day, taking a dance class and swimming are just some of the activities that will not only benefit your body, but also your brain. Whichever you choose, be sure it is safe for you and that you enjoy it. Talk to your doctor before beginning any new exercise program.

Wellness Wednesday Webinars!

Join the CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst) Wellness and Disease Management team once a month on Wednesdays to learn more about that month's health observance and how you can prioritize your health and wellbeing!

September 4, 2024: Stay Active, Stay Healthy, Stay Happy

Join us for a Healthy Aging webinar designed for anyone interested in aging with vitality. Whether you're planning for your own aging journey or helping a loved one navigate theirs, this webinar will equip you with the knowledge and tools to embrace the process of aging gracefully.

Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to register!



CareFirst WellBeingSM Resources

- **Inspirations and Unwinding:** Find help to reduce daily worry and stress. Both programs include videos and audio for relaxation, mindfulness and better sleep behaviors.
- **One-on-One Health Coaching:** As part of your CareFirst WellBeing program, you can participate in personal health coaching—at no cost to you. Your health coach will work with you and provide the support, guidance and encouragement you need to see real results!
- **Noom:** Designed to help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight. It can also help lower the risk for chronic conditions like diabetes. There is no cost, and your privacy is assured!

Log in or sign up for [CareFirst WellBeing](#). Once logged in, select **Your Wellness Resources**. Next click **Health & Fitness** (for Noom and Coaching) or **Relax & Reset** (for *Inspirations and Unwinding*), then the program that interests you.

Featured Deal for September – Blue365 Wellness Discount Program

One great way to **Achieve a Healthier You** is to take advantage of Blue365, provided to you as a CareFirst member (with medical, dental, vision or disability coverage). Find your perfect gym for just \$28/month or get other great deals and discounts. **Register now for Blue365 at carefirst.com/wellnessdiscounts.**

Sources: ¹ [Get the Facts on Older Americans \(ncoa.org\)](https://www.ncoa.org/get-the-facts-on-older-americans/)

² [Daily Rituals to Keep Your Brain Healthy While You Age | Lifespan](https://www.lifespan.io/daily-rituals-to-keep-your-brain-healthy-while-you-age/)

³ [Healthy Aging Month | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](https://www.dhs.gov/healthy-aging-month)

⁴ [Get the Facts on Healthy Aging \(ncoa.org\)](https://www.ncoa.org/get-the-facts-on-healthy-aging/)