

# You FIRST

*Your Month of Well-being*

**FEBRUARY 2025**

## A Heartfelt Focus: Prioritizing Heart Health

February is American Heart Month—a time to reflect on the steps we can take to care for our most vital organ. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., but many risk factors are preventable through simple, consistent changes to your lifestyle. Do your part and take care of your heart by implementing some of the below tips!

### Stress Less for a Healthy Heart

Stress can have a negative impact on heart health, but you can manage it with these strategies:

**Connect with others**—Social interactions can help **lower stress** and **improve your overall mood**. Join a local hobby group!

**Rest up**—Sleep is essential for recovery and heart health. Go for **7–9 hours of quality sleep** each night.

**Practice relaxation**—Dedicate a few minutes daily to **deep breathing or meditation**.

Try this **quick relaxation exercise** below.

- Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
- Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four.
- Hold your breath for four seconds.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for six seconds.
- Repeat for 3–5 minutes.

[Stress Less for a Healthier Heart Fact Sheet | NHLBI, NIH](#)

### Heart-Healthy Eating

Eating well is one of the most important steps you can take to support your heart. By making mindful choices, you can enjoy foods that are both delicious and heart-friendly:

#### Lower in Sodium

- Use herbs, spices and citrus to season your meals instead of salt.

#### Lower in Fat

- Choose lean proteins like chicken, turkey, fish and plant-based proteins such as beans and lentils.

#### Lower in Sugar

- Replace sugary snacks and dessert with naturally sweet options like fresh fruit or yogurt.

**Scan the QR code** to access a collection of [heart-healthy recipes](#) from the American Heart Association (AHA).



AHA Heart-Healthy Recipes

## Know Your Numbers

One of the best ways to take charge of your heart health is by knowing these key numbers.

**Blood pressure:** Ideal is **below 120/80** mmHg. High blood pressure can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

**Cholesterol levels:** Aim for a total cholesterol level **below 200 mg/dL**. High cholesterol can lead to plaque buildup in your arteries.

**Blood sugar:** A fasting blood sugar level **under 100 mg/dL** is considered healthy. Elevated levels can increase your risk of diabetes and heart disease.

**BMI and waist circumference:** These numbers provide insight into your weight and potential heart health risks.

Take time this month to schedule a check-up or health screening. Talk to your doctor about your concerns. Early detection and management are key to maintaining a strong, healthy heart.

### 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!

#### February 5, 2025: What Your Heart Wants

Learn essential tips for maintaining a healthy heart. From knowing your numbers to improving your diet, we'll cover practical ways to protect your cardiovascular health all year round.

Click [here](#) to register!

To access resources to the right, log in to or sign up for [CareFirst WellBeing](#). Once logged in, select **Your Wellness Resources**. Next, click **Health & Fitness** or **Relax & Reset** and then the program of interest.

*You need to meet clinical eligibility criteria through an online assessment for Noom and Eat Right Now.*

### CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Member Resources

- **Craving to Quit:** Quitting tobacco can lower your risk for many health conditions including heart disease. Our program's expert guidance, support and online tools make quitting easier than you might think!
- **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!
- **Eat Right Now:** An innovative program that combines neuroscience and mindfulness to help you and your relationship with eating and make meaningful, lasting lifestyle changes.
- **Inspirations and Unwinding:** Find help to reduce daily worry and stress. Both programs include videos and audio for relaxation, mindfulness and better sleep behaviors.

This well-being program is administered by Sharecare, Inc., an independent company that provides health improvement management services to CareFirst members. Eat Right Now is administered by Sharecare, Inc. and Noom is administered by Noom, Inc., independent companies that provide health improvement management services to CareFirst members. Sharecare, Inc. and Noom do not provide CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield products or services and are solely responsible for the health improvement management services they provide.

## Blue365 Featured Deal for February

### Save 20% on Wearable Solution for Stress, Sleep, and Focus

TouchPoint Solution offers wearable stress relief embedded with patented BLAST (bi-lateral alternating stimulation tactile) technology designed to reduce stress by up to 74% in 30 seconds. To take advantage of Blue365, register now at [carefirst.com/wellnessdiscounts](https://carefirst.com/wellnessdiscounts).