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healthwise

a PERS Health Insurance Program newsletter | Fall 2023



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Flu shots—your best protection against the flu

Why it's critical to get vaccinated especially if you're over 65.

Influenza (flu) can be a serious illness, especially for older adults. People 65 years and older are at higher risk of developing serious complications from flu, due in part to changes in immune defenses with increasing age. The flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from becoming seriously ill.

What are symptoms of the flu?

Common symptoms of the flu include:

- Cough
- Fatigue
- Fever and chills
- Headaches
- Muscle and body aches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat

Annual vaccination is the best protection

The best thing you can do to protect yourself from the flu is get your flu shot. Influenza vaccines are not 100% effective, but they significantly lower the risk of getting the flu and of having severe illness if you do get it.

The vaccine, which changes every year, includes protection against what are expected to be the most common strains of the influenza virus circulating. Because the flu virus changes so quickly, you should get an updated vaccine every year to protect against the newest strains.

When should I get vaccinated?

For most people who need only one dose of flu vaccine for the season, September

and October are generally good times to be vaccinated against flu. Talk with your healthcare provider about the vaccine that is best for you and when it's best to get it.

Where can I get vaccinated?

A flu shot is easy to get and is available at a variety of health care settings, including your doctor's office, nearby health clinics and some pharmacies.

Other proactive ways to protect yourself

In addition to getting vaccinated, many of the tactics we practiced to prevent COVID also work to protect against the flu, including:

- Avoid touching your face
- Clean and disinfect high-traffic surfaces, like countertops, regularly
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Stay away from crowded places
- Stay in good overall health with diet and exercise
- Wash your hands (or using sanitizer if washing is not available)
- Wear a mask

Learn more about the flu and flu vaccines at:

[cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/65over.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/65over.htm)

Sources:

blog.providence.org/blog-2/protect-yourself-this-flu-season

[cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/65over.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/65over.htm)

Courtesy of Providence Health Assurance



Heart Healthy Diet

DASH: Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension

A study conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University Medical School of more than 400 adults with prehypertension, or stage 1 high blood pressure, found that combining a low-salt diet with the heart-healthy DASH diet substantially lowers systolic blood pressure.

The DASH eating plan is in line with dietary recommendations to help prevent osteoporosis, cancer, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. DASH was not intended as a weight loss tool; however, because it has an emphasis on real foods, heavy on fruits and vegetables, balanced with the right amount of protein, DASH may be a weight loss solution.

It includes plenty of these:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains
- Fat free or low-fat milk products
- Fish, poultry and lean meat
- Beans, nuts and legumes

It limits:

- Sodium
- Saturated fats
- Added sugars

DASH doesn't require any special foods or supplements

It simply calls for a certain number of daily servings from various food groups. The number of servings depends on the number of calories you choose to eat every day. Your caloric needs depend on your age, gender and activity level. You can choose the “regular” DASH plan, which limits your daily sodium intake to around 2300mg or you can choose the lower sodium version, which limits your daily sodium intake to around 1500mg. The less salt you eat, the more you may be able to help lower your blood pressure.

Source:

UnitedHealthcare Newsroom, UnitedHealthcare Newsroom [DASH eating plan tips](#) | [UnitedHealthcare \(uhc.com\)](#)

Courtesy of UnitedHealthcare®



Volunteering? Good for You

Whether you've donated your time for years or you're just dipping your toe in the water, good things happen when you help others.

Among the silver linings of reaching... ahem...a certain age: you've got skills. A lifetime of experience has taught you valuable lessons in getting things done. Why not apply those skills where they'll do some good by volunteering? It can be an excellent way to...

Stay connected

No matter your age or life situation, volunteering can take your mind off your worries and connect you with others in your community. Feelings of isolation and loneliness can melt away when your social circle opens up to more people.

Boost your self-esteem

The sense of accomplishment you earn from helping others can give you a healthy dose of confidence. Many volunteers report getting significant satisfaction from the contributions they make.

Get your body moving

If you choose opportunities that involve physical activity (things like gardening, working with children, or picking up litter), you can reap cardio and strength-building benefits while skipping a trip to the gym.

2024 Plan Information Is Here!

Watch your mailbox in September for the 2024 benefit and rate information. You can view the schedule for plan change presentations at pershealth.com/presentations/.

Sharpen your mind

"Use it or lose it," they say. By doing knowledge work, such as teaching or mentoring young people, you're employing cognitive skills that would otherwise sit idle.

Use your gifts

Do you have a special talent you can share? Maybe it's something you take for granted. But those basic guitar chords could be just the thing that sparks a teen's musical awakening. Art, business, science—there are many areas where expertise can be put to use.

Ready to dive in?

Opportunities to volunteer are all around you. If you're wondering where to begin, here are some places to try:

- The United Way
- Local arts groups (museums, theaters, studios)
- Libraries
- Schools
- Senior centers
- Youth organizations
- Family shelters
- Food pantries
- Animal rescues
- Civic organizations
- Places of worship
- Hospitals

Sources:

[Forbes.com/health/healthy-aging/volunteer-opportunities-for-older-adults](https://forbes.com/health/healthy-aging/volunteer-opportunities-for-older-adults)
[CreateTheGood.aarp.org/volunteer-ideas/senior-guide.html](https://createthegood.aarp.org/volunteer-ideas/senior-guide.html)

Courtesy of PacificSource

Oven-Roasted Butternut Squash

Ingredients

- 1 medium to large butternut squash
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- About ¼ cup water

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Carefully cut the butternut squash in half. Scoop out the seeds and discard, then cut it again to have 4 long wedges or quarters.
3. Place the quarters, cut side up, into a baking dish or a rimmed sheet pan. Drizzle with olive oil and generously sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Using your clean hands, give it a quick rub all over it. Pour a bit of water to the bottom of the dish.
5. Transfer to the oven and roast for 35-45 minutes, or until fork tender.
6. Check from time to time to make sure it doesn't burn as the water evaporates. Add a bit more water if needed, but don't add too much, we want the squash to still be able to caramelize on top.
7. Broil for a couple of minutes to give it a nice golden-brown top.

Nutritional information (per serving)

Serving size: ¼ of a butternut squash

Number of servings: 4

Calories	147
Total fat	7g
Saturated fat	1g
Cholesterol	0mg
Sodium	299mg
Total Carbohydrate	22g
Dietary Fiber	4g
Sugar	4g
Protein	2g

Source:

healthyfitnessmeals.com/oven-roasted-butternut-squash

Courtesy of Providence Health Assurance

Favorite Pancakes (with eggs)

Ingredients

- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon spice such as cinnamon, nutmeg, or pumpkin spice (optional)
- 1 egg
- 1 cup nonfat or 1% milk (add 2 tablespoons more for thinner pancakes)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla (optional)

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Mix flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl. Add the spice if desired.
3. In a separate bowl, beat egg until well blended. Add milk and oil. Add the vanilla if desired.
4. Add liquids to dry ingredients and stir just until lumps disappear.
5. Lightly spray a large skillet or griddle with nonstick cooking spray or lightly wipe with oil. Heat skillet or griddle over medium-high heat (350 degrees in an electric skillet). The skillet is hot enough when a few drops of water sprinkled on it skitter and bounce around.
6. Pour about ¼ cup of batter per pancake onto the hot skillet or griddle. Cook until bubbles come to the surface of the pancake and the edges start to look dry. Turn over. Cook until cooked through and the bottom is golden brown.
7. Refrigerate leftover pancakes and enjoy them reheated for up to 2 days.

Nutritional information (per serving)

Serving size: 2 (4 inch) pancakes

Number of servings: 4

Calories	260
Total fat	9g
Saturated fat	1.5g
Cholesterol	50mg
Sodium	560mg
Total Carbohydrate	37g
Dietary Fiber	1g
Sugar	6g
Protein	8g

Source: [Favorite Pancakes \(with eggs\) \(foodhero.org\)](https://www.foodhero.org)

Courtesy of PacificSource



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