



mhs

# WHOLE you

2023 | Q1 BULLETIN



## Welcome!

*As we once again enter into a new year, we welcome you to another edition of Whole You, a newsletter from MHS.*

We have plenty of helpful tips to start the new year strong. You'll learn more about key information on heart disease, healthy alternatives to your favorite snacks, and why wellness visits are so important.

We really hope you enjoy this edition and that it helps you take better care of the whole you.

### GET THE MOST FROM YOUR HEALTH PLAN

Make sure you're getting all the benefits from your healthcare plan. The online member portal is a great place to discover all of the amazing perks designed to help you stay healthy.

### TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN DO:

- Get care through our virtual care services
- Join our Smart Start for Your Baby® program
- Get answers to questions about your coverage
- Find or change your doctor
- View your claims status and more!

**VISIT [MHSINDIANA.COM/LOGIN](https://mhsindiana.com/login) TO SIGN UP TODAY!**



# The Importance of Wellness Visits

*In the past, people only went to the doctor when they, or someone they knew, was sick. But as time has gone on, we know that even if you seem healthy it doesn't mean that you are.*

***Making yearly checkups, often called wellness visits, a habit is always recommended.***

But why are they so important? If we can stop illnesses early, we can reach better outcomes. That's why preventive care has become a big part of healthcare today, and why checkups with your doctor are key.

As stated earlier, these visits allow doctors the chance to catch diseases sooner. In turn, that allows for an increase of successful treatments and reduces your healthcare costs. Another benefit of regular visits is that your doctor can assess your overall health. Your care provider can review prescriptions, check vaccination statuses, examine your body with screenings, and give lifestyle advice to improve your health. Finally, wellness visits help establish a relationship with your doctor. The more your doctor knows about you and your history, the better your treatment can be.

But wellness visits aren't just for your doctor, they're for you, too. Visits are a great time to ask questions, raise concerns, and learn more about how to care for your health. With My Health Pays® rewards and transportation benefits, there's never been a better time to make a trip to the doctor. Consider bringing these questions with you to your next checkup.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

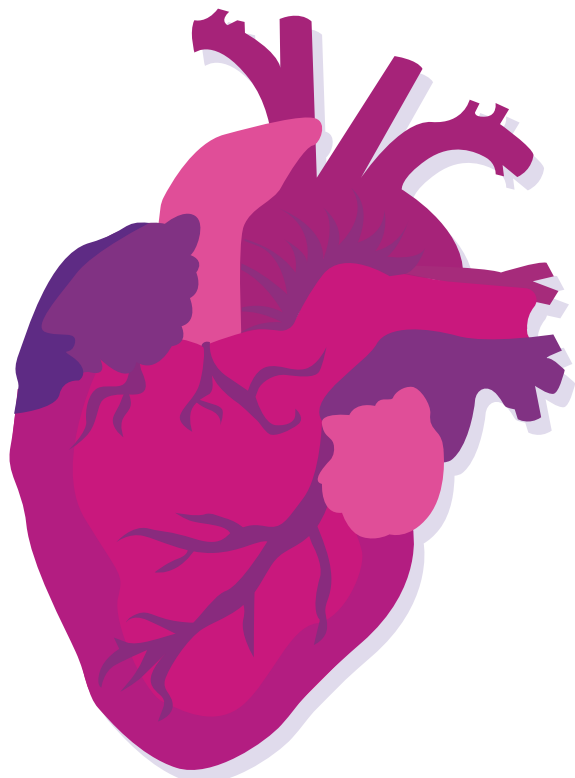
- ***Am I due for any vaccinations?***
- ***Are there any screenings you think I should get?***
- ***Does my family history put me at risk for any illnesses?***
- ***Are there lifestyle changes I should make?***
- ***Do I need any changes to my prescriptions?***
- ***Can you explain my test results?***
- ***Are the symptoms I'm experiencing normal?***
- ***Do I need a specialist? And will I need a referral?***
- ***Will I need a follow-up visit?***

# Keep Your Heart Pumping

*Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. About 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease. The term “heart disease” can describe a range of conditions such as coronary artery disease, heart rhythm problems, heart defects from birth, heart valve disease, and heart infections.*

***With lifestyle changes, and in some cases medicine, you can prevent and reduce your risk for heart disease.***

*Here’s some key info to remember:*



## **RISK FACTORS**

Major factors that can lead to developing heart disease are high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking. About half of people in the United States have at least one of these three risk factors. But that’s not the only thing that can put you in danger of heart disease. You can be at a higher risk if you have diabetes, are overweight, have an unhealthy diet, are physically inactive, and/or use alcohol excessively.

## **WARNING SIGNS**

When it comes to heart disease, it can be tough to watch for symptoms. Signs range depending on the type of heart disease that person has, and it can take a heart attack, heart failure, or an arrhythmia to get a diagnosis. Symptoms may include chest pain, body pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea or vomiting, extreme fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, fluttering feelings in the chest, or swelling of body parts.

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEXES**

Men and women experience heart disease in different ways. For example, men typically feel chest pressure with a heart attack, while women experience nausea, sweating, and body pain. Men also generally develop heart disease at a younger age and have a higher risk of coronary heart disease than women. Women, in contrast, are at a higher risk of stroke, which often occurs at an older age.

## **STAYING HEALTHY**

Some causes of heart disease can’t be prevented. But there are things you can control to reduce your risk. Keep an eye on high blood pressure and cholesterol, make sure to exercise, and eat a diet that’s low in salt and saturated fat. Ask your doctor about more ways you can stay healthy.

## *As winter rolls along, it can be hard to get good exercise in.*

How can you have fun burning calories when it's 30 degrees outside — especially if winter sports aren't your thing? If the weather outside is frightful, we're here to give you some options to keep you moving.

### 1 TRY A CLASS

If you own an electronic device with an internet connection in your home, think about taking an online fitness class. There are many free or low-cost options out there. YouTube is one of our favorites. You can also check around your area for cardio, Pilates, dance, yoga, or other workouts done through services like Zoom.

### 2 EXPLORE THE MALL

If you live near a mall or indoor shopping area, that can be a great option for indoor walks. You can use the vast open areas to get your steps in for the day and relax a bit. There are many places you can continue to get moving indoors. You just have to look for them!

### 3 VOLUNTEER WORK

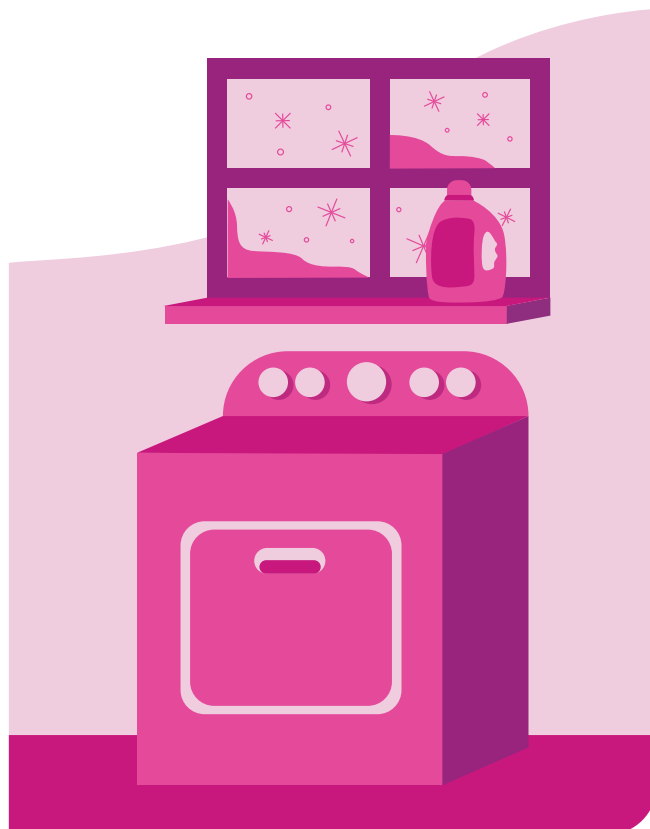
One way to stay warm is to volunteer! Look for work that involves physical activities, such as helping out at a gym or community center. Volunteering is a great way to help others while helping yourself. And you can see what kind of work is needed in your area.

### 4 DO YOUR CHORES

It's not the most fun answer, but doing chores can count toward physical activity indoors. Sweeping, vacuuming, moving furniture, and other cleaning can all get your heart pumping. You can even add workouts into your routine. Try doing squats as you load and unload your laundry. You'll be staying active and knocking things off your to-do list.

### 5 LAYER UP

And if none of the options so far work for you, you may have to layer up and brave the outdoors. It'll keep you warm and allow you to do the exercises you enjoy in the winter air.





# Switching It Up: Tips for Healthier Snacking

We all know the feeling of cravings. There are those delicious snacks and meals out there that we would do anything to get our hands on. But oftentimes the food we crave can be unhealthy for us. And if we eat that food too often, it can lead to bad health outcomes for our bodies. But if certain snacks and meals are so unhealthy, why does our body crave those foods?

Despite what some believe, our bodies do not crave certain foods because we're lacking the nutrients found in them. Our food cravings are caused by a multitude of factors, but mainly we crave food because our body seeks serotonin — the hormone commonly associated with making people feel happy. When we experience things like stress and anxiety, our brain chemistry gets

messed up. Ingredients in snacks, such as refined carbohydrates, give us a short-term surge in serotonin that helps our body balance our brain chemistry. It may not be easy, but there are ways to substitute junk foods for delicious and healthier alternatives. Here are some good snacks you can try the next time you're feeling a craving.

## **Healthier Snacks:**

- Fresh Fruit
- Greek Yogurt
- Dark Chocolate
- Plantain Chips
- Trail Mix
- Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat
- Hummus With Vegetables
- Sweet Potato Fries
- Baked Tortilla Chips
- Cottage Cheese



# Year-Round Checklist

As the new year begins, many of us have resolutions and hopes for the coming months. Often people say they'll start heading to the gym, or begin that new healthier lifestyle. But a lot of us end up forgetting or losing interest as time goes on. That's why we've created this handy checklist and calendar for you to track your goals and maintain a healthy lifestyle!

RESOLUTION	COMPLETE BY	DONE?
		Y N
		Y N
		Y N
		Y N
		Y N

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER

# Staying Safe With Safe-Sex Habits

## *Pleasure is important, but keeping yourself protected is, too.*

Sex can come with some risks and life-altering consequences if you're not prepared for them. Here are some helpful tips so you can have fun and stay safe.

**TALK FIRST:** Before engaging in sexual activities, think twice about your new partner. Consider discussing your sexual histories. And whether you have one or multiple partners, be sure to set some boundaries and clear expectations as well. Don't forget to be aware of you and your partner's body. Look out for sores, blisters, rashes, or other symptoms, and talk to your doctor about any concerns.

**USE CONDOMS:** If you aren't looking to start a family, every time you have sex you should use a condom. It can protect you from STDs, STIs, and help to prevent pregnancy. Condoms are widely accessible, hormone-free, come in male and female varieties, and can easily be carried with you wherever you go. Just make sure you get the right condom for you, as improper sizes can lead to condoms failing and materials like latex can cause issues for those who are allergic.

**AVOID SUBSTANCES:** Before engaging in sex, avoid using drugs or alcohol. These substances can alter your state of mind and might lead you to participate in higher-risk sex.

**CONTRACEPTIVES:** Along with a condom, there are other ways to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. Women can take oral contraceptive pills, use an intrauterine

device (IUD), a hormonal implant or injection, or an emergency contraceptive pill. Talk to your doctor about what's best for you.

**SEX MYTHS:** A key part of having safe sex is knowing what not to do. Some common myths are that condoms protect against all STDs and that the pull-out method won't get a woman pregnant. Although very effective, condoms do not work 100% of the time against all diseases, and the pull-out method is not an approved form of birth control. All men secrete fluid during sex and studies have shown that these fluids do contain active sperm. Make sure to stay informed on best practices so you can be wary of other false sex myths.







# The Basics of Redetermination



*As a part of our Medicaid community, sooner or later you're going to run into the word redetermination. And it's a very important thing to keep in mind. But what is it exactly?*

Redetermination is the process a Medicaid member must go through to keep their coverage. Processes differ from state to state, but once a year the State needs to verify a member's eligibility to see if they still qualify for coverage. Currently this process has been halted due to the public health emergency caused by the outbreak of COVID-19. For a long time members haven't had to renew their Medicaid coverage.

Once the process restarts, renewals will begin again and you may be going through it for the first time.



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*It's important to know that you will need to act and to renew your coverage by a certain date. Look for notices to follow.*

It's important to know that you will need to act and renew your coverage by the date your health plan alerts you to do so. To check if you still qualify, you will be asked to update your contact information and include some personal details. You can visit **mhsindiana.com** to see if you still qualify for your coverage. And if you no longer qualify, there's no need to worry. We have Marketplace plans that are an option for you to continue your healthcare coverage. Visit **ambetter.mhsindiana.com** to learn more.