



2024 | Q1 BULLETIN



Welcome!

As we begin this new year, I'm excited to bring you a new edition of Whole You — a newsletter from MHS.

We hope your year is starting off well. What are your goals for this year? This issue has some tips for setting goals and reaching them. To help, we'll explore ways to eat healthy this winter and discuss heart disease and tips to quit smoking. We'll also look at different ways to get help when you're sick. Dinner plans? Check out our healthy corned beef and cabbage recipe.

We want to pass along an important reminder about your Medicaid redetermination. It's the eligibility process you must go through to keep your Medicaid coverage. You may get a notice from the state about the steps you need to take to renew your coverage. (You may not need to do anything at all.) You can also visit fssabenefits.in.gov/bp/#/ to see what steps you need to take to confirm your eligibility. If you no longer qualify, our other health plans may be an option. You can read more about this in the next article.

We hope you enjoy this year's first newsletter and that it helps you take care of the whole you.





Important: Keep your coverage!

Annual Medicaid renewal:

It's happening now. And for Medicaid members, that means redetermination — in other words, the process you need to go through to confirm your eligibility. These steps are different in different states, but no matter where you live, once a year, your state will need to make sure that you're still eligible for coverage.



Here are three important things to know:

- 1** You (or your child) should get a letter from FSSA before your Medicaid anniversary. This letter will explain how to verify that you are still eligible.
- 2** If you (or your child) are eligible for Medicaid, you can keep your coverage or choose another plan. If you (or your child) are no longer eligible for Medicaid, you can check out our Medicare and Marketplace choices by visiting wellcare.mhsindiana.com for Medicare or ambetter.mhsindiana.com for Marketplace.
- 3** If you (or your child) don't get a letter or you don't know your anniversary date, you can confirm your eligibility with FSSA online. Go to fssabenefits.in.gov/bp/#/. You can also confirm eligibility by calling FSSA at 800-403-0864.

HAVE YOU MOVED OR CHANGED YOUR PHONE NUMBER?

Make sure your state has your current contact information. You can do that by visiting fssabenefits.in.gov/bp/#/. And if you have any questions or need help with the process to keep your Medicaid coverage, contact MHS Member Services at 1-877-647-4848.

Got goals?

For many of us, the start of a new year is a time to set new goals.

What are yours? Here are some tips to help you set and keep objectives for the new year.

- **Start with your “why.”** Is your goal to lose weight? Eat healthier? Exercise more? Whatever goal you set, think about why it matters to you. Maybe it’s to have more energy, be there for your kids and grandkids, or just feel better. Keep that reason in your mind as you work toward your goal.
- **Keep it real.** It’s great to dream big. But big changes can take time. So if you have a big goal, break it up into smaller mini-goals. This will help you stay on track and not give up.
- **Celebrate success.** Think about healthy ways to celebrate your progress. Maybe you treat yourself to a stroll through your local library, download a new workout playlist, take a selfie to track your progress or arrange a winter walk with friends.
- **Keep things positive.** If your goal is to lose weight and you have the willpower to stop eating sweets completely, good for you. For many of us, that’s hard. So instead of no sweets at all, try giving yourself one bite of dessert then switching to fruit.
- **Remember the water** Water is an important part of many health goals. Try drinking a 12-ounce glass of water before and after every meal. You’ll feel fuller longer — and it’s good for your brain and kidneys too.
- **Stay open to change.** Life isn’t perfect. We’ll always have things that get in the way of our goals. Don’t give up or be upset if you need to change things up. Making progress however you can is a win.
- **Speak up and team up.** Share your goals with people who care about you. Or team up with friends or a group who shares the same goals. Having other people who know what you’re working toward will help you stay motivated.



Eat right this winter

When the weather gets cold, we get hungry.

Studies show we eat more during fall and winter than during other months. People want “comfort food,” which tends to be high in calories and fat. At the same time, bad weather can make it harder to get outside and stay active. What can you do to eat healthy this winter? Here are some tips to eat better while satisfying some of those winter cravings:

- **Tea up.** A steaming cup of tea or even hot water can provide satisfying warmth and comfort and make you feel full.
- **Fill the soup pot.** Use those vegetables at the bottom of your crisper drawer. Toss them in a soup pot with greens, lentils, beans, whole grains and even some lean protein. Add healthy clear vegetable or meat broth (avoid cream) for a satisfying meal that you can enjoy for days.
- **Peel some sunshine.** In the winter, it can be hard to find some fresh fruits. But you’ll almost always be able to find oranges. Pick up some for a healthy snack — or put them into a salad with winter greens like Swiss chard, collard greens or kale.
- **Eat your broccoli.** Maybe as a kid you weren’t a fan of broccoli, cauliflower or Brussels sprouts. It’s time to give these winter treasures another chance. Try tossing them with a bit of olive oil, salt and pepper and browning them in the oven — delicious!
- **Smile with salmon.** Darker winter days and bad weather can make it hard to stay in a good mood. It turns out, salmon has vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids, which are great health and mood boosters.
- **Make a smart swap.** Many of us crave fatty foods in winter. If that’s you, you can add a healthy twist and still satisfy your craving. For instance, instead of regular mac and cheese, use whole-grain pasta and add some veggies and a lean protein, like chicken.
- **Sweeten the deal.** Dessert, anyone? Choose a square of dark chocolate. In small amounts, it can reduce your risk for heart disease. That’s a win for your taste buds and for your heart!



Need care? Who do you call?



Let's say you have a terrible earache or bad cold. Who should you call? Your primary care provider (PCP) is a great choice. This doctor will help you if you have a cold, earache, sore throat or rash. Your PCP can also help you with injuries like a sprain, minor cut or burn. Your PCP is also a good choice if you have stress or anxiety.

But what if you have quick questions about medicines or your health? Many of us might not think of our local pharmacist. We should. Your pharmacist is there to provide good advice at no cost to you, helping you manage your prescriptions and health.

ASK YOUR LOCAL PHARMACIST ABOUT:

- Your prescriptions or over-the-counter medicines
- Side effects from medicines and how to handle them

- Medication refills
- How your medicine works
- Which medicines are safe to use with each other
- How to stay on track using your medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines when you have a cold or the flu, a headache or a sore throat
- Questions about vaccinations
- How to use blood pressure monitors, inhalers or glucose monitors

You can find a PCP or pharmacy near you at findaprovider.mhsindiana.com/location. If you're not sure where to go for the care you need, call our 24/7 Nurse Advice Line — they can help you. Call 1-877-647-4848.

Hearts win

Have you noticed?

Hearts are everywhere. February is American Heart Month. It's a great time to think about taking care of your heart. Here are 5 ways to take care of that most important organ that faithfully keeps you going day after day.

1. Eat for your heart.

For breakfast, cook plain oatmeal — not the instant packets — and add strawberries and bananas as toppings. For lunch, try a salad made from kidney beans, chickpeas and black beans — and enjoy some avocado on the side. For dinner, choose salmon, trout or tuna. And if you want a snack, opt for berries, walnuts, almonds or pistachios.

2. Work it out.

Exercise for 20 to 30 minutes every day. It can be an exercise class or a simple brisk walk or home exercise routine. Add to this by keeping your body moving whenever you can. That can mean housework, like mopping or scrubbing, or an active game of tag or catch with pets, kids or grandkids.

3. Take a stand.

Our lifestyles involve a lot of sitting. Too much sitting. But when you move, it gets your blood flowing and helps your heart. So even if your workday involves a chair and desk, get up and move for a few minutes every hour. Schedule time throughout the day for short “walk breaks.”

4. Breathe. Chill. Repeat. None of us like stress. Your heart doesn't either. Stress raises cholesterol and blood pressure, and both of these things are bad for your heart. Sometimes, we cope with stress with fatty foods or other unhealthy habits. For a better option to reduce stress, try making a list, exercising, meditation or yoga. Find healthy ways to stay calm and protect your heart.

5. Stop smoking.

Smoking reduces your blood flow and causes high blood pressure, making your heart work harder. It's never too late to quit. In fact, just one year of not smoking reduces your chance of heart disease and stroke by half. You'll learn more about how to quit smoking and protect your heart in the next article.



MAKE A MENTAL NOTE — every time you see those decorative hearts this season, let them remind you to take care of your very own precious heart.

Here's to the quitters

Anyone who has tried to stop smoking knows it's not easy. Smoking becomes a part of our everyday life, from what we do with our hands to how we handle ourselves in social settings to how we relax or get through stressful times. Quitting is hard. But if you smoke, quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health, for your budget and for everybody around you.

QUIT FOR YOUR LIFE. It's the single most important thing you can do for the length and quality of your life. The minute you quit, your body benefits.

QUIT FOR THE MONEY. Smoking costs you. And the price is going up. A pack-a-day habit will cost most smokers almost \$2,000 a year and sometimes more.

QUIT FOR YOUR LOVED ONES. Cigarette smoke hurts everyone who smells it. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke. Kids who live with smokers get more colds and infections. Even in small amounts, cigarette smoke increases risk for coronary heart disease, stroke and lung cancer.

QUITTING IS IMPORTANT. But how can you do it?

Here are some tips to help you quit smoking once and for all.

BEFORE YOU QUIT:

- Get rid of all your cigarettes, lighters and matches.
- Make a list of ways to distract yourself when you have cravings.
- If you get texts, emails or mailings from tobacco companies, opt out now.
- Tell people you are quitting. Ask them for support. If they smoke, ask them not to smoke around you.
- Have a friend or someone you can call for support when you have cravings.

ONCE YOU QUIT:

- Avoid places where you will be tempted to smoke.
- Keep things like straws, pencils and cinnamon sticks handy for times when you'd normally smoke.
- Avoid stores and other places that sell cigarettes.

WHEN YOU HAVE CRAVINGS:

- Pull out your list of ways to distract yourself.
- Talk with your doctor about medicine to help you quit or a higher dose if you need it.



Corned beef and cabbage — a healthier take

Around this time of year, many of us start looking forward to spring. And if for you, spring means St. Patrick's Day and corned beef and cabbage, we've got a healthy version of this tasty dish. The difference is in the simple act of brining your own corned beef, rather than using the chemical-filled store-bought kind. You can also make this in a crock pot or instant pot.

3 to 5 days before you cook, you'll need:

- Beef brisket, 4 to 5 pounds
- 2 quarts of water
- 1 cup of sea salt
- Half cup of cane sugar or brown sugar
- A cinnamon stick or a little cinnamon powder
- 1 tablespoon mustard seed
- 2 tablespoons black peppercorns
- 10 whole cloves
- Ginger
- Thyme
- 5 crushed cloves of garlic or a little garlic powder
- 3 crushed bay leaves

After 3 to 5 days, remove the beef and wash off the brine.

Then you'll need:

- 1 cabbage
- 2 onions
- 2 carrots
- 2 cloves of garlic
- Olive oil
- Caraway seeds
- Thyme
- Basil

THE PREP:

1. The brining will take 3 to 5 days.
2. Make the brine: Put the water, salt, sugar and spices in a large pot and heat, stirring often, until the sugar and salt melt. Cool it off by adding some ice, and put it in the fridge until it's very cold. It is very important that the brine is cold before you add the meat.
3. Combine the brisket with the brine in a big plastic bag or glass container. Make sure the brine completely covers the brisket.
4. Place in the fridge. If you use a bag, put it inside another dish in case it leaks. Leave it there for 3 to 5 days. Each day, flip it over and move the brine around.



THE STEPS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Put the cleaned beef on a rack in a roasting pan.
3. Add some water to the pan, cover the pan and put it on the top shelf in the oven for 2 hours, uncovering after 30 minutes.
4. While the meat is cooking, chop vegetables into large pieces and place them on a baking sheet.
5. Drizzle some olive oil and sprinkle the spices on the vegetables.
6. Cook the meat and vegetables another half-hour or until everything is tender.

Now you're ready to enjoy your delicious and healthier corned beef and cabbage meal. Yum!