

A magazine about  
your health for BCN  
Advantage members  
Fall 2019

# Your Health

## ADVANTAGE

**Make  
home  
sweet  
home  
safe**

**SHOULD  
YOU CURB  
YOUR BINGE-  
WATCHING?**

**Breathe easier:  
All about COPD**

BCN Advantage<sup>SM</sup> **HMO**  
BCN Advantage<sup>SM</sup> **HMO-POS**



Blue Care  
Network  
of Michigan

Medicare and more

Confidence comes with every card.®

BCN Advantage is an HMO-POS and HMO plan with a Medicare contract.  
Enrollment in BCN Advantage depends on contract renewal.

Health and wellness or prevention information.



# FALL 2019



6



12



22

28



## INSIDE

- 4** A 1960s Cowgirl goes vintage
- 6** Winterize your exercise
- 8** Breathe easier:  
All about COPD
- 10** Make home sweet  
home safe
- 12** Life's a bowl of cherries
- 13** Healthy recipes
- 14** We've made it easier for  
you to get your flu shot
- 16** Dr. K's Corner: Making the  
right care choice
- 17** Ask the Pharmacist: I don't  
have high cholesterol, so  
why do I need a statin?
- 18** Take the helm of your  
health journey
- 19** Home from the hospital:  
What next?
- 20** Carbs count when  
managing diabetes
- 22** Blood pressure by  
the numbers
- 23** Puzzle
- 24** Are you getting  
enough sleep?
- 26** Should you curb your  
binge-watching?
- 28** Need answers? Go to  
[www.bcbsm.com](http://www.bcbsm.com)
- 30** Health Briefs
- Back cover**  
Your health plan goes  
where you go

**KATHRYN LEVINE**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Blue Care Network

**SCOTT PRIEBE**

Director, HMO Medicare Government  
Programs Administration  
Blue Care Network

**ROB SAWALSKI**

Manager, Market Communications  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

**EDITOR**

Laura Hipshire  
Medicare Market Communications  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

**FEATURE WRITER**

Tammy Sanchez

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

William Beecroft, M.D.  
Laura Cornish, Pharm.D.  
John Dowsley  
Sandra Gutman  
Mark Harwood  
Mary Jablonski, R.N.  
Mary Jane Johnson  
Marc D. Keshishian, M.D.  
Brittney Q. Lewis, B.S.N., R.N.  
Lee Pavach  
William Pompos, L.M.S.W., A.C.S.W.  
Sonja Rashed, R.N.  
Camillya Christian-Smith, R.N.  
Hashim Yar, M.D.

We welcome your letters. Some articles  
may be reprinted with permission.  
Please send your comments and requests  
for additional copies and reprints to:

Editor, *Your Health Advantage*  
Medicare Market Communications —  
Mail Code 0210  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan  
600 E. Lafayette Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48226-2998



# Dear Member:

Burnt orange, amber yellow and crimson red leaves cover the ground. Bonfires crackle in the cool, crisp air. And stews and soups simmer away, filling us with anticipation. Fall is finally here.

I hope you'll make the most of this short season, whether you enjoy watching your favorite football team, taking a walk around the block or visiting your local cider mill.

This edition of *Your Health Advantage* features recipes with cherries, including a Bacon, Lettuce and Cherry Sandwich and tasty Cherry Pie Energy Bites.

Flu season is in full swing. On **Pages 14-15**, we're debunking some common flu shot myths.

Hooked on certain TV shows? Read about the hazards of binge-watching on **Page 26**.

You'll also meet Janet Boutilier, who restores vintage campers, on **Pages 4-5**. Janet is a member of Mid-States Region Tin Can Tourists, a vintage trailer and motor coach club.

"I've never come across a group of people as nice and generous as the Tin Cannery," says Janet.

Learn what blood pressure numbers mean on **Page 22**, and find out if you're getting enough sleep on **Pages 24-25**.

Our summer issue featured a digital version – did you read it? We hope you'll give us your feedback using the digital link we sent or the enclosed business reply card.

Also in the summer issue, we asked: What is your healthy snack? Here are some of your responses:

**"Celery and peanut butter."**  
– **Sharlene O., Barryton, Michigan**

**"Apples."**  
– **Janet J., Ravenna, Michigan**

**"Energy power bars."**  
– **Michael K., Bay City, Michigan**

As always, we love hearing from you. I hope you enjoy reading *Your Health Advantage*. Have a great fall season.

Wishing you good health,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott Priebe".

Scott Priebe  
Director, HMO Medicare Government Programs  
Administration





# A 1960s COWGIRL GOES VINTAGE



Janet Boutilier and  
her dog, Uncle Otto,  
camp together in  
1960s Cowgirl.





**"Everyone is welcome with the Tin Canners,"** says Janet Boutillier, 70, of Carleton, Michigan. In 2012, Janet became a member of the Mid-States Region Tin Can Tourists after renovating *1960s Cowgirl*, her 1963 Wolfe Camper. TCT is a motor club for all makes and models of vintage trailers and motor coaches.

Her son, Fred, helped her dig out and tow the 14-foot camper she found behind a neighbor's house. It took her a year to complete the renovations and transform the junked trailer into her prized *1960s Cowgirl* – a true treasure for Janet.

Janet says each TCT trailer has a theme and name. She chose the Western motif because of her love for horses. In the camper, she has a photo of herself at age 2, astride a mustang, next to a photo of her, at 22, riding an Appaloosa. No longer riding horses, she enjoys the Western items that bring fond memories of those days.

### FLIPPING 'TIN CANS'

Janet took on the task of restoring her "tin can" into what she calls her "cabin on wheels." She has flipped several trailers, either to help friends or sell. Renovating is hard work, so she recently switched her focus from restoring the whole trailer to just the canopy. Janet takes orders from other campers to custom fit their trailers, and the money she makes from the sales pays her campground fees for the summer.

In addition to her building projects, Janet loves to fish and has a goal to learn fly fishing. She got inspired by a story in *Your Health Advantage*, published in spring 2016, that gave her hope that if someone else her age learned, she could, too. She shares her love for nature with her granddaughters, who are her camping companions and fishing partners.

In her spare time, Janet works at Dollar General. With the many projects

she's involved in, she considers the time at work her downtime. Janet says she's grateful for her health and notes that she isn't someone who can "just sit around."

### WOMAN'S BEST FRIEND

Janet spent summers camping as a child with her parents and siblings. Now, her dog, Uncle Otto, is with her on every trip.

This year, she helped put together The Rambling Rosies, a weekend camping group for women and their dogs. Their first camping trip was in May at Portage Lake and was all about girl – and dog – time. Other Rosie weekends happened throughout the summer.

### TIN CAN TOURISTS

"I've never come across a group of people as nice and generous as the Tin Canners," Janet says.

TCT was established in 1919 and has grown to be a national group. The purpose of the group is to bring people together to camp, make friends and have fun. Their rules are based on keeping the environment clean while having good, clean fun.

All styles of trailers are welcome, although the contests are specific to vintage trailers 20 years old or older. An annual membership to TCT costs \$25 (\$20 online), and all new members must attend an initiation ceremony to learn the TCT secret handshake, member sign and password.

Find more information about TCT at <https://tincantourists.com>.

### A TIP FOR S'MORE FUN ON YOUR CAMPING TRIP

Make delicious, healthy banana s'mores on your next camping trip. Visit [www.ahealthiermichigan.org](http://www.ahealthiermichigan.org) and search for "banana s'mores" to watch a video.

# Winterize your exercise



Fitness is a year-round commitment, but it can be hard to maintain your routine when it's cold outside.

## TAKE IT TO THE GYM

Blue Care Network members can verify their eligibility, get their SilverSneakers® membership cards and find a gym near them by visiting [www.silversneakers.com](http://www.silversneakers.com).





If you need motivation to leave the comfort of your couch, remember this: Staying active through the winter does more than help control your weight. Exercise reduces your risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes, improves sleep, increases energy and relieves stress. It also boosts your immunity during cold and flu season, according to the American Heart Association.

Whether you want to brave the cold or bring your workout routine indoors, get your body moving this winter and reap the rewards.

### SNOW DAY TIPS

When the thermometer plunges, a few extra steps can help you stay safe and warm while exercising outdoors. Here are some tips:

- **Do a warm-up first.** Your muscles, ligaments and tendons are more likely to get injured when cold.
- **Dress in light layers.** That way, you can remove or add clothing as needed. The innermost layer should be a fabric that holds body heat and doesn't absorb sweat. Wool, silk or polypropylene work best. (Avoid cotton because it traps moisture next to your skin and will make you feel colder.) Next, add a layer of fleece. End with an outer layer that protects you from blustery winds, rain and snow.
- **Don't forget your hat.** Mom was right; Up to 40 percent of your body heat can be lost from your head.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** It's easy to get dehydrated in cold weather, so be sure to bring your water bottle.

To add variety to your winter workouts, try activities such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Or get your heart pumping by tossing snowballs or building a snowman.

### MOVE IT INSIDE

When the weather outside is frightful, another option is to move your favorite activity indoors. Walk through a museum, jog or bike at the gym, swim in an indoor pool or shoot hoops on an indoor court. Now is the perfect time for that kickboxing, yoga or salsa aerobics class you've always wanted to try.

### LIVING ROOM WORKOUT

On the days it's just too cold, wet or icy to drive anywhere, exercise at home. You don't need a lot of space or expensive equipment to break a sweat. For an effective and convenient workout, do one of these activities during every commercial break of your favorite TV show:

- Push-ups
- Squats
- Lunges
- Planks
- Jumping jacks
- Jogging or marching in place
- Going up and down stairs
- Dancing

If you feel stuck in a rut, a new fitness toy – such as a hula hoop, stability ball, hand weights, resistance band, exercise DVD or fitness video game – can boost your motivation.

So, keep moving! Just because it's winter doesn't mean you have to hibernate. You can still stay in shape for next summer.

*SilverSneakers and the SilverSneakers shoe logotype are registered trademarks of Tivity Health, Inc. © 2019 Tivity Health, Inc. All rights reserved.*

**Sources include:** American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

# BREATHE EASIER:

All about COPD





**Breathe in, breathe out. Sounds easy enough, right? With chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a simple breath can feel like hard work.**

By getting the right diagnosis, seeking the proper treatment and boosting your physical activity levels, you can increase your quality of life and breathe easier. **Here are answers to five questions you may have about COPD.**

## 1 What is COPD?

COPD is a set of diseases that includes emphysema, chronic bronchitis and, in some cases, asthma. When you have COPD, the airways in your lungs become thick and inflamed. As a result, air can't flow in and out of your lungs as well as it should. COPD causes symptoms such as:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Wheezing
- Lots of phlegm

As the disease progresses, your symptoms can affect your ability to do everyday activities.

## 2 Who's at risk for COPD?

COPD most often occurs in adults ages 40 and older who smoke or used to smoke. You may also be at risk for developing the disease if you've had long-term exposure to air pollutants. Talk with your doctor about getting tested.

## 3 How is COPD diagnosed?

Getting a COPD test is easy. You'll take a deep breath in and then blow out as hard and as fast as you can into a device called a spirometer. The test measures how much air you blow out and how fast you blow it.

## 4 How is COPD managed?

COPD is often treated with the following medications:

- **Bronchodilators**—You take these using an inhaler or nebulizer, so the medicine goes right into your lungs.
- **Corticosteroids**—This type of medication is usually taken as a pill. You may need them for short periods of time if your symptoms suddenly get worse.
- **Combination medicines**—Corticosteroids and bronchodilators may be combined into an inhaler or nebulizer, so you get the benefits of both types of medicines.

In addition to taking your medicines as prescribed, you can make changes to help manage your symptoms:

- ✓ Quit smoking.
- ✓ Get a yearly flu shot and ask your doctor about the pneumonia vaccine.
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet.
- ✓ Stay active.



## 5 How do I exercise with COPD?

It's hard to think about exercising when breathing isn't easy. But exercise actually gives you more energy and improves your COPD symptoms. Being more active may help you:

- Participate more in daily activities
- Strengthen muscles used for breathing
- Control your blood pressure and cholesterol
- Manage your weight
- Ease feelings of anxiety and depression

Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program. He or she may recommend a pulmonary rehabilitation program, which teaches you how to safely exercise with COPD.

Working with your doctor and taking care of your health can help you feel better with COPD. And before you know it, you'll be breathing easy.

**Sources include:** American Lung Association; National Institutes of Health

# MAKE *home sweet home* SAFE

There are many ways to keep your home safe as your health and abilities change with age. Here are some basic things you can do to prevent hazards like falls, fires and foodborne illnesses.

## BATHROOM

- Before going to bed, remember to turn on (or plug in) nightlights.
- Use nonskid strips or mats.
- Install grab bars on both sides of your shower or tub and near the toilet.

## KITCHEN

- Store items you use often within reach.
- Use appliance thermometers to confirm your fridge stays at or below 40 degrees and the freezer is at 0 degrees.
- Check food “use by” dates. Watch for signs of spoilage. Toss anything you aren’t sure about. Check out the FoodKeeper App at [www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp).
- Dispose of expired medications and those you no longer take. Many of them can go in the trash. Some should be flushed. Check the instructions.



**MAKE A FIRE ESCAPE PLAN.** Determine two ways to get out of each room and an outside meeting place. Practice at least twice a year. Account for the use of canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids and other devices.





**SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS BELONG ON EVERY LEVEL OF YOUR HOME.** Along with a fire alarm in each bedroom, hang a smoke and CO alarm outside each sleeping area. Replace alarm batteries when you change your clock for daylight saving time.

### BEDROOM

- Position your bed near a light switch.
- Put your eyeglasses, phone and a flashlight next to your bed.
- Keep canes, walkers, wheelchairs and hearing aids where you can get to them easily.
- Make sure you have a working fire alarm less than 10 years old. If you might not hear it go off, install one with a strobe light or bed shaker.

### WALKWAYS

- Keep low tables out of the way. Position all furniture so there's clear space to walk.
- Remove clutter from stairs and floors.
- Don't use small throw rugs. Carpet should be flat and tight to the floor.
- Keep your home well-lit. Add nightlights throughout, including bathrooms and bedrooms.
- Have tightly fastened handrails on both sides of stairs. Consider adding handrails in hallways.

**Sources include:** National Institutes of Health; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U.S. Fire Administration; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

**BEFORE PUTTING MEDICATION IN THE TRASH,** consider submitting it to a local drug take back program. Otherwise, take medicine out of its container and mix it with coffee grounds or cat litter. Seal it in a plastic bag. Cross out your name and other personal information on the package.



# Life's a bowl of cherries

**When you see nothing but cherries across the board, it's no wonder you feel like you've hit the jackpot. Cherries may lower your risk for certain diseases, including arthritis, cancer, diabetes and heart disease.**

Research shows that cherries have many other potential benefits. However, keep in mind that most studies use a high daily dose of cherries. Check with your health care provider before adding large amounts of fresh or frozen cherries or cherry juice to your diet. And ask him or her if eating more cherries can help you with the following:

## **Ease soreness after exercise**

Tart cherries can help with muscle pain after working out. Researchers also believe the antioxidants and anti-inflammatory traits in tart cherry products may reduce muscle damage that can happen when you exercise.

## **Assist with arthritis**

Arthritis affects one in four U.S. adults. A recent review in the journal *Nutrients* reported that cherries have antiarthritic properties and may lower the frequency of arthritis flare-ups.

## **Cut down on gout attacks**

Gout is a condition caused by too much uric acid building up in the joints. These joints can swell and cause extreme pain. The *Nutrients* review cited a study in which gout patients who ate fresh cherries or drank cherry extract for just two days showed a 35 percent lower risk of gout attacks.

## **Control cholesterol**

A study in the journal *Food & Function* found that drinking tart cherry juice for 12 weeks can lower systolic blood pressure and low-density lipoprotein, or "bad" cholesterol, in older adults. High blood pressure and high LDL levels can put you at risk for heart disease.

## **Boost sleep**

Melatonin is a hormone that helps control your sleep and wake cycles. It's found in tart cherry juice and whole tart cherries.

## **Manage diabetes**

Eating cherries may promote healthy glucose regulation, which makes them a nutritious option for people with diabetes.

When life hands you a bowl of cherries, eat them! You'll reap the healthy rewards in no time.

**Sources include:** American Heart Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health; National Sleep Foundation



## **WITH A CHERRY ON TOP**

For more yummy cherry recipes, search for "cherry" at [www.ahealthiermichigan.org](http://www.ahealthiermichigan.org).



## Bacon, Lettuce and Cherry Sandwich

### Servings: 1

4 to 6 slices of turkey bacon  
2 slices of whole grain bread  
1 to 2 Tbsp. chevre (cheese made from goat's milk) at room temperature  
8 cherries, fresh or frozen, pitted and halved  
1 to 3 leaves of lettuce, a small handful of arugula or your preferred leafy green

1. Weave the bacon into a square or "bacon blanket." Microwave, bake or fry until crisp. Transfer bacon to a plate lined with a paper towel or brown paper to briefly drain.
2. While the bacon is frying, lightly toast your bread. Spread half of the chevre on each slice while it's warm.
3. Carefully arrange your cherry halves on top of the chevre on one slice of bread, then add the bacon blanket and finally add your leafy green of choice. Top with the other piece of toasted bread. Serve immediately.



Healthy  
recipe

*Nutritional information per serving: 431.8 calories, 19.2 g total fat, 6.5 g saturated fat, 60 mg cholesterol, 587.7 mg sodium, 48.1 g total carbohydrate, 7.3 g dietary fiber, 13.2 g sugar and 22.8 g protein.*

## Cherry Pie Energy Bites

### Servings: 20

1 cup rolled oats	1/3 cup cherries fresh, pitted and chopped
1/3 cup chia seeds	
1/3 cup unsweetened shredded coconut	1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
3/4 cup nut butter	1/3 cup honey
1/4 cup ground flaxseed	1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 cup dried cherries	1/3 cup dark chocolate chips

1. Stir all the ingredients together until well combined. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
2. Use a cookie scoop (1 inch) to roll the chilled mixture into balls. Store them in the refrigerator or freezer in an airtight container. Keep bites separated by parchment paper.

*Nutritional information per serving: 132.7 calories, 7.6 g total fat, 1.4 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 3.1 mg sodium, 14.9 g total carbohydrate, 3 g dietary fiber, 8.2 g sugar and 2.8 g protein.*



*Note: Frozen cherries or canned cherries can be substituted for the fresh cherries if fresh aren't available. Just drain well.*

Source: [www.ahealthiermichigan.org](http://www.ahealthiermichigan.org)



Rx

NAME .....

DATE .....



Get Your

Flu Shot

TODAY!

SIGNATURE .....

REFILLS .....



# We've made it easier for you to get your flu shot

Now you can get your annual flu vaccine at one of more than 60,000 pharmacies across the United States when you show your Blue Cross member ID card. It's that simple!

## Find a pharmacy near you

Google reports that there are 67,000 pharmacies in the U.S. Your pharmacy is probably on our list. Here are two quick ways to check or to find a participating pharmacy wherever you are:

1. Go to **www.bcbsm.com/medicare**: Click on *Find a Doctor*. Scroll down and click on *Find a Pharmacy*. Click on *Find a Pharmacy* again. Click on "OK" when the pop-up message appears. Enter your ZIP code and click on the *Locate Pharmacy* button.
2. Use the **Blue Cross mobile app**: Go to *Express Scripts*, open the main menu and select *Find a Pharmacy*.

## Easy to get reimbursed

We've also simplified our vaccine reimbursement form if a pharmacy charges you for a flu or pneumonia vaccine. The form is available online, or you can request one by calling the customer service number on the back of your ID card.

## It matters to everyone

When you get a flu shot, your family, friends, community and even your pets will thank you. Now is the perfect time to protect yourself and your loved ones.



**Sources include:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Harvard Medical School; *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*



## True or false

**We've heard reasons for not getting a flu shot from people who don't regularly get one, so we asked the experts.**

**Reason: I'll get the flu from the flu vaccine.**

**EXPERTS SAY: FALSE.**

The flu shot is made from an inactivated virus that can't transmit infection. So, people who get sick after receiving a flu shot were likely already exposed to the flu.

**Reason: I'm healthy. I don't need the flu shot.**

**EXPERTS SAY: FALSE.**

Even healthy people get sick. Plus, you can get infected with the flu virus and have no symptoms. During this time, you can spread the virus to others.

**Reason: I got a flu vaccine last year, so I don't need one this year.**

**EXPERTS SAY: FALSE.**

The strain of influenza going around changes every year. Plus, your immune protection declines over time. You need an annual vaccination for best protection against the flu.

## Making the right care choice

**Not sure where to go for a health problem or service? Here's a guide to help you decide.**

### Your regular doctor

Make your primary care provider your first choice whenever possible, especially when you need treatment for chronic conditions or preventive care like immunizations and checkups. This helps you build a relationship with your doctor, which can lead to better care during future visits.

### Urgent care

If your doctor's office is closed or you can't get an appointment, visiting an urgent care center may be an option. They're usually open nights and weekends and can treat problems such as:

- Minor cuts and burns
- Animal bites
- Strep throat
- Nausea
- Rashes
- Flu (chills/feeling feverish)

### Specialists

At times, you may need to call a specialist. These doctors are experts in specific fields. For example, you might visit a specialist for:

- Allergies (allergist)
- Skin problems (dermatologist)
- Kidney and urinary tract diseases (urologist)
- Heart issues (cardiologist)

### Emergency care

Some symptoms can't wait for treatment; they may be life-threatening and need immediate care. These include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Fainting or sudden dizziness
- Chest pain or pressure lasting two minutes or more
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Fever of 105 degrees or higher
- Sudden or severe pain
- Changes in vision
- Confusion or changes in mental status or ability to speak
- A broken bone

### Connecting through a call or online

What about for those in-between moments – when you have a minor illness or injury but aren't sure whether it warrants a doctor's appointment? Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's 24-Hour Nurse Line can help. Call 1-800-775-BLUE (2583) at any time to speak with a registered nurse. He or she can answer your health questions and recommend over-the-counter medications or other at-home treatments.

You can also connect with a doctor online without an appointment for minor illnesses when you can't get to your primary care doctor's office. To use Blue Cross Online Visits<sup>SM</sup>, download the BCBSM Online Visits<sup>SM</sup> app, visit [www.bcbsmonlinevisits.com](http://www.bcbsmonlinevisits.com) or call 1-844-606-1608. TTY users, dial 711.

With so many care options, making the right call about where to go can feel like a guessing game. Keep this article for future reference to feel confident about your decision.



**Marc D. Keshishian, M.D.,** is senior vice president and chief medical officer of Blue Care Network.

**Sources include:** American Academy of Family Physicians; American College of Emergency Physicians; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



## I don't have high cholesterol, so why do I need a statin?

Statins have been hailed as wonder drugs in the fight against heart attack and stroke, but many patients still question whether it's right for them. Before making your own decision about statin therapy, consider all the facts.

### What statins do

Your body needs a specific enzyme to make cholesterol. Statins block this enzyme and cause cholesterol production to slow down. This means far less cholesterol is flowing in — or clogging up — your arteries. Statins currently on the market include atorvastatin, fluvastatin, lovastatin, pravastatin, rosuvastatin and simvastatin. But if they all do the same thing, why are there so many? Here's why:

1. Each statin works a slightly different way.
2. Some statins are more potent than others.
3. Your body may react differently to one statin over another.
4. Competing drug companies make statins.

### Not all about cholesterol

It's true that your doctor may prescribe a statin if your LDL cholesterol level is 190 or higher. But don't be surprised if your cholesterol is in a healthy range and statins still come up in conversation. There are other

reasons why someone may need this drug, such as having:

- Diabetes
- A history of cardiovascular problems
- A high risk of developing heart disease in the next 10 years

So, when doctors think about whether you need a statin, they're considering your cholesterol along with the following:

- Age
- Race
- Gender
- Blood pressure
- Smoking history

### If you need a statin

Most patients tolerate statins well. Tell your doctor if you start to experience memory problems, sore muscles or anything else that's concerning. Work with him or her to find the statin that's best for your body and your budget. Switching to a different statin may help reduce side effects.

No matter which statin you use, always take it as prescribed. And



remember that medication isn't a substitute for healthy living. You still need to focus on:

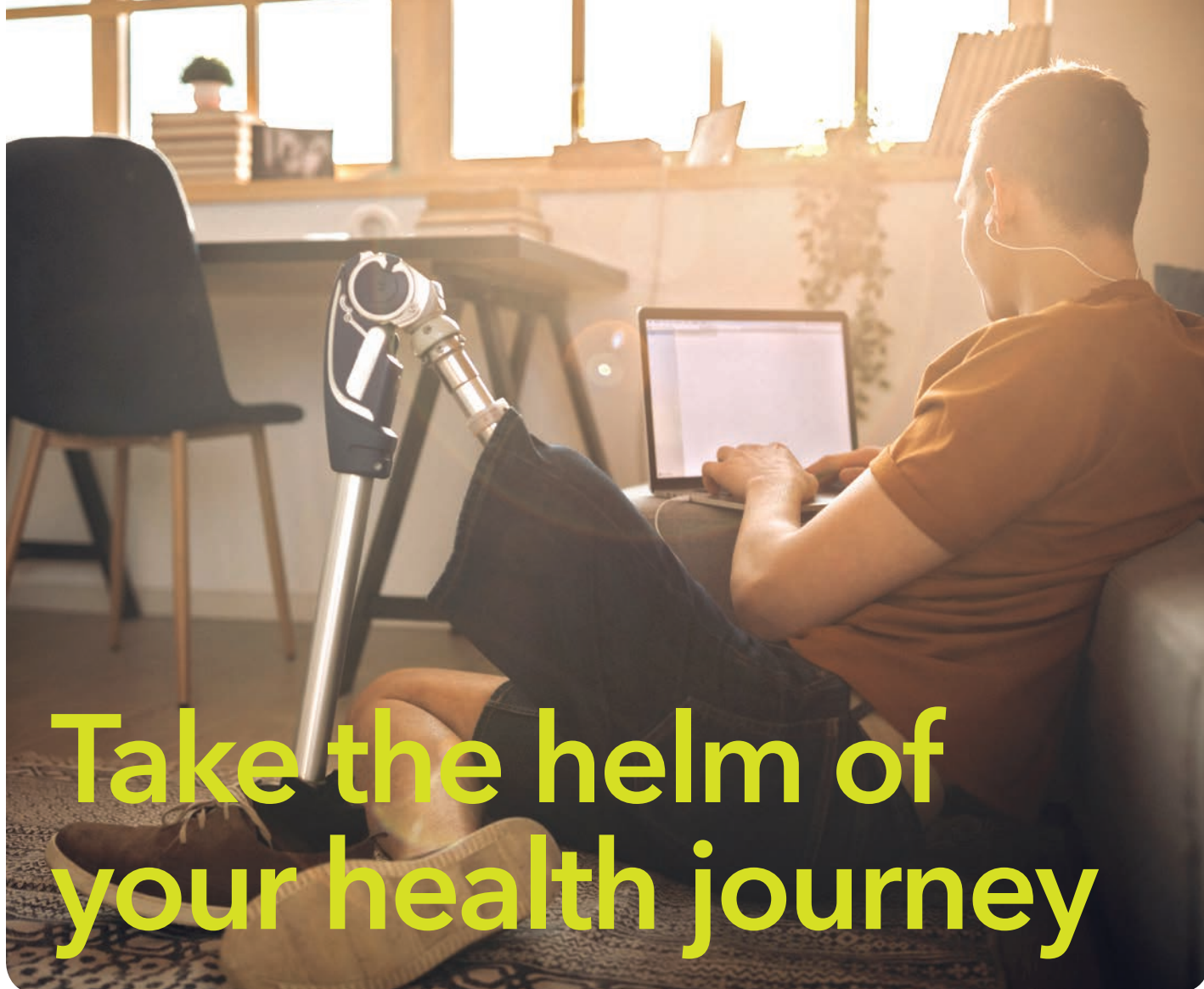
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Eating lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, poultry, fish and nuts. Avoid red meat, fried foods and whole milk dairy products.
- Aiming for at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity five days a week.
- Quitting smoking. For nonsmokers, try to stay away from secondhand smoke.

**Sources include:** American Heart Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

---

**Laura Cornish, Pharm.D.,**  
is Pharmacy Manager, Medicare  
Part D, Senior Health Services.





Steer your health in the right direction using the online tools and resources available 24/7 with Blue Cross® Health & Well-Being, powered by WebMD®. You already have access to this feature. To use the Blue Cross Health & Well-Being site:

1. Register for your member account at **[www.bcbsm.com/medicare](http://www.bcbsm.com/medicare)** or log in if you already created one.
2. Click the *Health & Wellness* tab. Do the one-time quick verification registration if this is your first time visiting the site.

Check out what you can do at the Blue Cross Health & Well-Being site:

- Get a clearer picture of your health and take the first step toward total wellness with the interactive health assessment tool.
- Participate in Digital Health Assistant programs that can help you take small steps toward whatever health goals and activities you choose.
- Store personal health information safely

and securely in one place in your Personal Health Record.

- Choose from more than 100 fitness apps and medical devices, and sync them to the site for an easy and convenient way to track and store your health and fitness data in one place.
- View short, live weekly webinars designed to support you in your personal well-being journey.
- Access helpful online tools and resources, including videos, recipes and calculators.
- Download the mobile app for access on your smartphone.

Take advantage of the wide variety of programs and resources to help you get and stay healthy. When it comes to managing chronic conditions, Blue Cross Health & Well-Being has you covered with programs designed to help you improve your quality of life and be the captain of your health.



# Home from the hospital: What next?

After a hospital stay for a mental health condition, follow-up care is crucial.

Sometimes, a hospital stay is just what you need to get a serious health condition under control. That's true after a heart attack — and it's just as true after a mental health crisis.

You can stabilize your mental state with 24/7 hospital care, but what happens after you go home?

You need to keep building on the progress you made in the hospital, or a mental health issue, such as depression or anxiety, may get worse.

## Take steps toward lasting recovery

If you were in the hospital, your health care team planned for the day you would go home. Make sure you follow their instructions.

One of the first things you should do after leaving the hospital is see your mental health specialist. Ideally, this should happen within seven days. Prompt follow-up care may speed up your recovery and reduce your risk of needing another hospital stay.

When medications are part of your treatment plan, it's crucial to keep taking them as directed. Your doctor can monitor how well the medication is working. If side effects occur, your doctor can help you manage them.

Often, a therapist is part of your support team. If so, schedule a visit with him or her as well. Therapy can help you readjust to life at home and stay on the road to recovery.

Contact BCN Behavioral Health at 1-800-431-1059 (TTY: 711) if you're having difficulty scheduling or keeping an immediate appointment after a hospital stay.

## Keep moving in the right direction

In your first weeks back home, give yourself time to heal, just as you would after a serious physical illness. Ease back into your activities. Follow a predictable routine for eating and sleeping. And, if any problems come up, don't hesitate to call your health care team.

**Sources include:** Depression and Bipolar Alliance; *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*; National Committee for Quality Assurance; Psychiatric Services



# Carbs count when managing diabetes



**Making smart choices about what you eat and drink is important for managing diabetes. Counting carbohydrates ("carbs") is one way to do that.**

To count carbs, you add up all the carbs you consume in foods and beverages. The goal is to keep the total for a meal or snack within a target range, which you've set with your diabetes care team. On a day-to-day basis, this can help you better manage your blood sugar levels. If you take insulin, it may also help you decide how much to take.

In the long run, better diabetes control can help you stay healthier for longer. So, although it may take some time and effort to learn how to count carbs, the payoff is well worth it.

## **CARBS INCREASE BLOOD SUGAR**

Carbs are one of the three main nutrients found in food, along with protein and fats. Inside the body, carbs turn into blood sugar. So, carb-rich foods affect your blood sugar levels more than other foods do. Foods and beverages that contain carbs include:

- Grains and grain-based foods, such as bread, pasta and rice
- Starchy vegetables, such as potatoes, corn and peas
- Fruit juices and fruits, such as apples, oranges and bananas
- Legumes, such as dried beans and lentils
- Dairy products, such as milk and yogurt
- Sweets, such as cakes, cookies and candy
- Sugary drinks, such as sodas, fruit drinks and sports drinks

The amount of carbs you need depends on your weight, activity level and diabetes medications. Work

with a dietitian or diabetes professional to set a carb goal that is right for you. As a rule, most women with diabetes should get about 45 to 60 grams of carb per meal. Most men with diabetes should get about 60 to 75 grams per meal.

## **IT'S EASY AS 1, 2, 3**

To count carbs, follow these steps before a meal or snack:

1. **Determine how many servings of a food or beverage you plan to consume.** Look at the food label to calculate one serving. For foods without a label, use an app, website or book as a guide.
2. **Determine the grams of total carbohydrate per serving.** You can also find this information on the food label (or in the app, website or book).
3. **Multiply the two numbers.** This tells you how many grams of carbs you'll get if you consume the amount you had planned. If the number is too high, adjust your eating plans as needed.

Why bother? Better blood sugar control reduces your risk for diabetes-related problems, including heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness and foot amputation. So, the effort you put into counting carbs really counts for something.

## **NEED MORE HELP?**

Access online educational resources on diabetes by logging in to your member account at [www.bcbsm.com/medicare](http://www.bcbsm.com/medicare).



# Create your plate



**Sources include:** American Diabetes Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health



## Blood pressure by the numbers

Blood pressure numbers may leave you scratching your head. What do all those numbers mean? Let's break it down.

### KNOW THESE NUMBERS

Your blood pressure is measured using two numbers. The first number is the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats. The second number is the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart rests between beats.

A blood pressure reading of less than **120/80** mmHg is within the normal range. A High Blood Pressure reading is **130/80** mmHg or higher. Everyone 18 and older should get screened for HBP at least once a year.

### WHO'S AT RISK?

The following risk factors can increase your chances of having HBP:

- 1. Family history.** If a parent or close relative has HBP, you're more likely to get it, too.
- 2. Age.** The older you are, the more likely you are to get HBP.
- 3. Gender.** Until **age 64**, men are more likely to get HBP.  
At ages **65 and older**, women are more likely to get HBP.
- 4. Race.** African-Americans are the most likely to develop HBP.

Lifestyle choices can also influence your risk for getting HBP. These include:

- Smoking
- Eating foods high in sodium and low in potassium
- Not getting enough physical activity
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Being obese

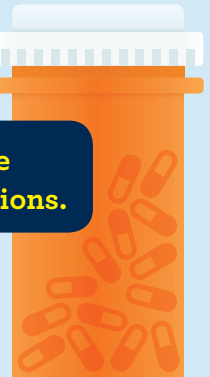
Not happy with your numbers? Small lifestyle changes can make a huge positive impact. Work with your doctor to get your blood pressure in a healthy range.

**Sources include:** American Heart Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

## Controlling HBP

If you want to keep your HBP in the normal range, you may be required to:

Take  
medications.



Be **physically active**. Get at least **30 minutes** of moderate-intensity activity, such as brisk walking, at least **five days a week**.

Quit smoking.



Reduce  
**sodium** in  
your diet.  
Consume  
no more  
than **1,500  
milligrams**  
a day.







# PHOTO HUNT GAME

Use your sleuthing skills to find the eight differences between these two photos. Circle the differences. The answers are on Page 27.





# Are you getting enough sleep?

When it comes to shut-eye, seven or eight hours is your goal. Nighttime stretches of sleep within this range help you stay healthy and feel good during the day.

In fact, sleep and mental health go hand in hand. Lack of quality sleep can make people feel irritable, fatigued and forgetful. It can even lead to anxiety or feeling depressed. But depression and anxiety can also be triggered by sleep disturbances. It's important to talk about your overall health when discussing sleep problems — and how to address them — with your doctor.

## The 'rule' of 3

Most people have trouble sleeping at some point. With the sleep disorder insomnia, however, one or more of the following symptoms last at least three months and occur at least three nights a week:

- Not being able to fall asleep
- Waking up too early
- Not feeling rested after sleeping

You may also wake up during the night and have trouble falling back to sleep. Older





adults, women and people with depression or other conditions, like sleep apnea and asthma, have a higher risk for insomnia.

A variety of medicines can influence how you sleep. For example, insomnia can result from taking beta-blockers used to manage high blood pressure. High stress and time changes during travel can also increase your risk.

### Move more, sleep more

Brisk walking and other moderate to vigorous physical activities can boost the quality and length of your sleep at night.

Both early morning and afternoon workouts can improve your nighttime sleep. Evening exercise is a little trickier. Some people can work out at night without problems.

If that's you, don't change your routine. For most people though, strenuous workouts late in the evening are likely to delay falling asleep. Replace evening exercise with simple stretches or yoga to relax and prepare for bed.

### Fuel your slumber

Having caffeine and foods that cause heartburn at night can hurt your efforts to sleep. So can sugary treats and white bread. Instead, try oatmeal or nut butter on whole wheat crackers. The National Sleep Foundation also suggests these snacks:

- **Almonds or walnuts:** Eating these nuts can help you sleep more soundly thanks to the hormone melatonin.

- **Cottage cheese with fresh raspberries:** Ward off low serotonin levels with the amino acids in this lean protein. The berries offer another dose of melatonin.
- **Kiwi:** Two of these little guys before bed can increase how long you sleep by an hour over the course of the month if you have insomnia.

Small changes to your habits can help with many sleep problems. But reach out to your doctor if you continue to struggle. Share your symptoms and past efforts to sleep better. Bring your current medications to your visit. Together, you can find and treat the cause.

**Sources include:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

### TRACK YOUR SLEEP

Want to take a closer look at your sleep health? Download the National Sleep Foundation's free app. Go to [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org) and search for "sleeplife."

# SHOULD YOU CURB YOUR BINGE- WATCHING?

Netflix. Amazon Prime. Hulu. Whichever way you view your favorite shows, you may want to hit pause on your binge-watching habit. While it may seem like a harmless way to pass the time, research suggests that may not be the case. In fact, extended periods of screen time can affect both your body and mind. Here's a look at the hazards of binge-watching and how to avoid them.





### SITTING TOO MUCH

According to new research, people who watch a lot of TV are more likely to develop dangerous blood clots. Sitting on the couch for a prolonged period can cause blood to get trapped in your lower extremities. This may lead to the development of blood clots, which can result in a life-threatening condition called pulmonary embolism.

Researchers found that people who exercise regularly still have a higher risk for blood clots if they spend hours glued to the tube each day. The key, it seems, is spending less time on the couch.

If you're not quite ready to give up your favorite show, try to limit the amount of time you're sitting in front of the TV. For example, every time there's a commercial break, get up and do some lunges, planks, squats, sit-ups or wall sits.

If you're watching a show that doesn't have commercials, assign each of the above exercises to a specific character's action. For example, if you're watching "The Office," do 10 lunges every time the character Michael Scott offends someone.

### NOT SLEEPING ENOUGH

Regularly watching a flat-screen TV before bedtime can impact your sleep – as much as 14 minutes on average. That's because the screen emits a blue light that can hinder the release of melatonin, a hormone that induces sleep. Blue light can also reduce your REM sleep. This can leave you feeling groggy the next day, even after a full night's rest.

Turn off the TV at least an hour before bedtime. Instead, relax with a book, or take a bath before bed. Remove all screens – even your phone – from your bedroom to get a good night's sleep.

### EATING TOO MUCH

Binge-watching can sometimes lead to mindless munching. A recent study found that the more time adults spend watching TV, the greater their risk for overeating. To prevent binge eating, enjoy meals at your dinner table instead of in front of the TV. Get rid of unhealthy snacks in your home to help remove the temptation.

If you love TV, don't worry – you don't have to give it up. But you should adopt healthier viewing habits. You might find that when you tame your binge-watching, you enjoy your TV time even more.

**Sources include:** American Heart Association; American Optometric Association; National Institutes of Health; National Sleep Foundation

## PHOTO HUNT GAME PUZZLE ANSWER

From Page 23





# Need answers? Go to

[www.bcbsm.com](http://www.bcbsm.com)

BCN Advantage policies are available online at **[www.bcbsm.com/medicare](http://www.bcbsm.com/medicare)**. Here's how to find information that affects your care:

Enter *Frequently Asked Questions* in the search box for:

- How you can get primary care, specialty care, hospital services and behavioral health services whenever you need care, both during and after business hours
- How to submit a claim for covered services
- How to obtain care and coverage when you're out of our service area, and what benefit restrictions may apply
- How your pharmacy plan works
- Resolving problems: How you can send us a complaint or grievance of a coverage decision that you don't agree with
- How to appeal a decision

Enter *Rights and Responsibilities* in the search box for:

- Your rights and responsibilities

You can also find these policies in your *Evidence of Coverage*. To order a copy customized to your plan, call Customer Service at the number on the back of your BCN Advantage ID card.



We're  
available to  
talk about  
our plan  
management  
activities



Did you know we have comprehensive Utilization Management and Case Management programs that promote cost-effective and medically-appropriate services for our members? Some of our key efforts include:

- Referral management
- Prior authorization
- Complex Case Management
- Behavioral health services

We're available to discuss these activities during and after normal business hours. Staff members identify themselves by name, title and organization when receiving or returning calls. We also provide language assistance. Call the number on the back of your member ID card for information about our Utilization Management program (TTY: Call 711).

#### **APPROPRIATENESS OF CARE**

Utilization Management decisions rendered by Blue Care Network are solely based upon appropriateness of care and services within the limits of a member's plan coverage. Medical necessity is determined through the application of medical review criteria that are objective and based on sound clinical evidence.

#### **NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT DECISIONS**

BCN doesn't specifically reward practitioners or other individuals who conduct utilization review for issuing denials of coverage or service. Financial incentives for Utilization Management decision makers don't encourage decisions that result in underutilization of services.

BCN has numerous processes that monitor the utilization of service to ensure members receive the appropriate health care services.

#### **EVALUATING MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY**

The Medical Policy Administration of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the Care Management department of Blue Care Network of Michigan are responsible for evaluating new technologies and the new applications of existing technologies, the development of medical policies related to these technologies and the development of coverage recommendations. This process includes, but is not limited to, the following areas for potential new technologies: medical procedures and services, medical devices, surgical procedures, behavioral health procedures and pharmaceuticals.

## Get your mammogram

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. If you haven't had a mammogram this year, put it on your calendar for this month. Mammograms help detect breast cancer early and can save lives. Women ages 40 and older should get a mammogram every one or two years. Talk with your doctor about the schedule that works best for you.

Among other risk factors, you may be more likely to get breast cancer if you:

- Drink alcohol
- Are overweight or obese
- Aren't physically active
- Are age 55 or older
- Have a family history of breast cancer

**Sources include:** American Cancer Society

## Just quit it!

The Great American Smokeout is Nov. 15. If you're ready to quit smoking within the next 30 days, consider tobacco-cessation coaching with Blue Care Network. It's a 12-week, phone-based program to help you kick the habit. To enroll, call 1-855-326-5102.



## WHAT DOES BMI MEAN?

Your BMI is your body mass index. This is a number that helps you estimate how much body fat you have. To find your BMI, go to **[www.cdc.gov/bmi](http://www.cdc.gov/bmi)** and click on "Adult BMI Calculator." A normal, healthy BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9 for most people.

If you want to lower your BMI, consider making these lifestyle changes:

- **Eat healthy:** Avoid foods with high saturated fat. Focus on adding more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, nuts and beans to your diet.
- **Exercise:** Work up to 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. Need ideas to meet that goal? Try walking, swimming or dancing.

Want to find out how healthy you are? Take a free online health assessment through WebMD by logging in to your member account on **[www.bcbsm.com/medicare](http://www.bcbsm.com/medicare)**. Click the *Take the Health Care Assessment* icon.

**Sources include:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Everyone wants quality health care, but how do you know you're getting it? BCN Advantage has a quality improvement program that provides a comprehensive, standard way for us to measure, evaluate and improve clinical care and services. The program identifies the important aspects of health care, and continuously improves the quality and safety of the care and services we provide you. Two of the measurements used by BCN Advantage are the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (also known as HEDIS®) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services star rating.

HEDIS is the most widely used set of performance measures in the managed care industry, and is just one of the tools BCN Advantage uses to improve the quality of patient care. HEDIS makes it possible to compare the performance of health plans throughout the nation.

Medicare evaluates plans based on a 5-star rating system. Star ratings are calculated each year and may change from one year to the next. The star rating system uses quality measurements that are widely recognized within the health care industry to provide an objective method for evaluating health plan quality.

BCN Advantage received an overall 3.5-star rating from CMS for the 2019 star rating (2017 measurement year). Clinical HEDIS measures finished with a star rating of 4.5, which demonstrates BCN Advantage's commitment to strong clinical quality for our members. BCN Advantage's clinical HEDIS star performance ranked first in the state of Michigan, and 44th nationally.

The following clinical measures received a 4-star rating or higher (2017 measurement year):

- Adult BMI assessment
- Breast cancer screening
- Colorectal cancer screening
- Comprehensive diabetes care – blood sugar controlled, eye exams and testing for kidney disease
- Medication reconciliation post-discharge
- Controlling high blood pressure
- Plan all-cause readmissions

BCN Advantage will continue to focus on improving clinical HEDIS measures. Focus measures for 2019 include:

- Medication reconciliation post-discharge
- Comprehensive diabetes care
- Osteoporosis management in women who had a fracture
- Statin therapy for patients with cardiovascular disease
- Persistence of beta-blocker treatment after a heart attack

Our quality improvement programs help doctors measure and improve care. *Your Health Advantage* and **[www.bcbsm.com/medicare](http://www.bcbsm.com/medicare)** give you information about these programs. For more information about our quality improvement programs or guidelines, please contact our Quality Management department:

- By email at [BCNQIQuestions@bcbsm.com](mailto:BCNQIQuestions@bcbsm.com)
- By phone at 248-455-2808, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. TTY users should call 711.

Blue Care Network complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-800-450-3680 (TTY: 711).

ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم 1-800-450-3680 (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: 711).



Mail Code 0210  
600 E. Lafayette Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48226-2998

PRESORTED STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
  
BLUE CROSS  
BLUE SHIELD  
OF MICHIGAN

H5883\_YHAFall19 FVNR 1019

10239M CB 3886 OCT19

Developed by StayWell

## Your health plan goes where you go

If you want to check your *Explanation of Benefits* statement quickly or need more information about your health plan, register online today at **[www.bcbsm.com/register](http://www.bcbsm.com/register)**. Once you register your account with a computer, nearly everything you can do on the website you can do on your smartphone or tablet, too. It's that easy!

### MORE WAYS TO SAVE TIME

Ever wondered about your copays or coinsurance? Use the Blue Cross mobile app to get this information. The mobile app connects you securely to your health plan info when you need it.

Note: CMS requires us to provide paper copies of certain documents.

*Apple and the Apple logo are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Google Play and the Google Play logo are trademarks of Google Inc.*

### UNDERSTAND YOUR PLAN

The more you know about your health plan, the more prepared you are when you need care. You can use the app to:

- View your plan documents, such as your *Evidence of Coverage* and *Resource Guide*
- Receive notifications on your phone when a new EOB statement is available
- View your virtual ID card

Versions are available for your iPhone®/iPad® or Android™ smartphone or tablet. Download the free Blue Cross mobile app today from the App Store or Google Play.

