





August


# Member Newsletter


## Get on track with health tests and screenings!


During the pandemic, you may be among the millions who put off getting screening tests for cancer and other diseases. However, a postponement could delay a diagnosis and treatment for a health problem. Here are some reminders to help you get back on track:


 **Screening tests can help find possible problems or diseases, even if you don't have symptoms.** Checkups and screening tests help find diseases or health problems early, when they are easier to treat and cure. While they can't diagnose a disease, they can help you find out if you need more testing for a possible problem.

 **Know the recommended tests based on your age, sex, risk factors and family history.** Ask your healthcare provider about screening for high blood pressure; cholesterol; diabetes; osteoporosis; skin, breast, colorectal, cervical, prostate and lung cancers; HIV; and Hepatitis C. Your doctor may also recommend screening for STDs or mental health conditions, like depression. **For more information, visit:** [health.gov/myhealthfinder/doctor-visits/screening-tests/get-screened](https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/doctor-visits/screening-tests/get-screened)

 **Additional checkups and exams are vital.** Healthy adults should see a dentist once or twice a year and an eye doctor regularly. Get exams more frequently as recommended by your provider if you have dental disease, vision or eye problems or chronic conditions, or are at high risk for specific diseases.

 **Tell your doctor about diseases that run in your family.** This may determine what additional specialized screening you may need.

 **Prepare a list of questions.** Ask how the tests are conducted, what they may find and how often you need them. Ask about any potential benefits and risks of the tests, including the chance of false positives (meaning it says you may have a disease you really don't have, which could lead to more tests).

 **Find out about when you will get the test results.** Ask your provider if they have an app to view the results online. Call your health practitioner's office if you do not receive the results and/or ask the doctor or nurse to explain what the results mean.

**Want personalized help?** Depending on your company's health benefits, Health Advocate can help with questions, test result interpretations, doctor appointments and more.



Find activities that work for you and make them part of your routine—you'll be glad you did!

## The importance of winding down

With all of our day-to-day obligations, the pressures of home and work life, and other issues you and your loved ones may be facing, it is easy to get caught in a whirlwind of stress, frustration and anxiety. The culmination of these feelings can be detrimental to well-being if you don't have an outlet to release these feelings and wind down. These tips can help.

**Take time to unplug.** Spend time free from technology and screens. Pick an out-of-sight place to stash your devices, and enjoy the peace and quiet.

**Lose yourself in something you love.** Did you previously have a hobby that you just couldn't get enough of? Well, what are you waiting for—get back to it! Hobbies are a great way to get some “me time.”

**Tense your tension.** Select the area of your body where you hold stress. Inhale and tense this area (for example, if it's your forehead, wrinkle your forehead and furrow your brows) and inhale to the count of three. Next, release the tension while slowly exhaling to the count of four.

**Exercise.** Take a walk around the neighborhood, practice yoga in your living room, or do any activity that gets you moving. Exercise is a tried and true method of stress relief as it releases feel-good hormones that can help give you a sense of well-being.

**Just take a break.** Sit on your couch and look out the window, spend a few minutes enjoying your outdoor space, or take five minutes to sit quietly and follow your breath —there are countless options to help you feel less fragmented and more connected and balanced.

**Find a bedtime routine.** By doing the same activities each night before bed, you can train your body to wind down in preparation for sleep, which is crucial for sleep quality and quantity.

# The best help to offer aging parents

Like many adults, you may have a senior parent or parents facing health, financial, safety or other issues including prolonged isolation brought on by the pandemic. If so, you may wonder how to respectfully help them navigate aging for better well-being. Here are some tips to consider:



**Share your concerns with close relatives.** Bonding early and often over these issues can help ease the responsibility, especially when seniors reach an advanced age.

**Don't try to control the conversation.** Gently bring up sensitive subjects, acknowledging their role in decision-making and asking for their ideas. To start the dialogue, you might say, "I noticed your fenders are dented, and I'm concerned that driving may be becoming difficult for you. What do you think about discussing some options to help make this easier and safer for you?"

**Keep them engaged and independent.** Physical, social and mental engagement helps improve brain function and can increase longevity! A growing number of seniors are now connected to the internet, so help them engage virtually. Set up social media accounts to involve them in their family and friends' lives, locate online exercise classes for seniors, or arrange attendance at a virtual event or religious service.

**Choose the right time to discuss their plans for their future.** You might start by asking about where they keep their financial documents like insurance policies, wills, tax returns, investment, or banking records, in case they are ill.

**Do some homework and offer information.** Gather brochures about affordable or free meal services, transportation, and other community services. Check [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org) for assistance for people over 55 that helps pay for prescription drugs, healthcare, utilities, and other essential items or services. Provide pamphlets about additional Medicare, Medicaid or other government assistance.

**Know when to seek professional help.** Is your loved one showing symptoms of extreme forgetfulness, depression/apathy, weight loss, lack of interest in eating nutritious food, etc.? Are they struggling with loneliness? Ask your practitioner for a referral to an expert or call Health Advocate to help your parent get an appointment. This may include virtual counseling.

**For more help,** talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a licensed counselor.

## Immunization Awareness Month

Over the past few years, the COVID vaccines may have been the immunization that is most top of mind. To learn about other vaccinations, the CDC's handy assessment tool, *What Vaccines Do You Need?* aimed at those 19 or older, can guide you based on your age, medical status, job and other factors. [www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched/](http://www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched/)

Go to the CDC's main vaccination site and search the immunization schedule for infants, children, pre-teens, pregnant women, travel and more: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/)