Winter 2022

Health & Welfare e-Newsletter

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A BETTER WAY TO TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS

24/7 emotional support with the Ginger app

The Ginger app offers 1-on-1 support for many common challenges – from anxiety, stress, and low mood to issues with work, relationships, and more. Ginger's skilled emotional support coaches are ready to help 24/7. Kaiser Permanente members can use the app at no cost, no referral needed.[1,2,3,4]

What can employees do with Ginger?

- Text with a coach anytime, anywhere, 24/7.
- Discuss goals, share challenges, and create an action plan with their coach.
- Get personalized, interactive skill-building tools from a library of more than 200 activities.
- View recaps from each texting session, track progress, and work with their coach to adjust action plans as needed.

Ginger's emotional support coaching can help employees with anxiety
47% of Ginger users with anxiety saw their symptoms improve.[5]

Around-the-clock support is always available
Employees can access personalized support in their moment of need.

1. The Ginger app and coaching services described above are not covered under your health plan benefits, are not a Medicare-covered benefit, and are not subject to the terms set forth in your *Evidence of Coverage* or other plan documents. These services may be discontinued at any time without notice. The app and coaching services are not available to any members under 18 years old. **2.** The app and coaching services are neither offered nor guaranteed under contract with the FEHB Program, but are made available to enrollees and family members, 18 and older, who become members of Kaiser Permanente. **3.** The app and coaching services are not available to Medi-Cal members. **4.** Kaiser Permanente members can text with a coach using the Ginger app for 90 days per year. After the 90 days, members can continue to access the other services available on the Ginger app for the remainder of the year at no cost. **5.** Sarah Kunkle et al., "Association Between Care Utilizationand Anxiety Outcomes in an On-Demand Mental Health System: Retrospective Observational Study," *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, January 2021.

Employees can get Ginger now at **kp.org/coachingapps/scal**

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Health tip: Understanding colds and flu

Did you know?

- Common colds are the leading cause for children missing school and adults missing work.[1]
- During an average flu season about 8% of the U.S. population gets sick from flu.[2]
- The flu can be spread to others from 6 feet away.[3]
- The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated annually.[2]

Is it a cold or the flu?

The common cold and the flu are both upper respiratory infections. However, they are caused by different viruses and the symptoms may be more severe with the flu virus verses a cold. Keep in mind that symptoms alone may not be enough to tell the difference between the two.

While a common cold can be caused by more than 200 viruses (rhinovirus is the most common); the seasonal flu is caused by the influenza A or B virus. This is why there is a vaccine available for the flu and not for colds.

Cold relief[4]

There is no cure for the common cold. To help you feel better treat your symptoms while your body fights off the virus. Since the common cold is caused by a virus, antibiotics will not help it get better. A runny nose or cold almost always gets better on its own. To feel better when you have a cold, consider the following:

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of fluids such as water and clear liquids. This will help loosen mucus and help prevent dehydration.
- Know that over the counter (OTC) medications may help with symptoms but do not make your cold go away faster as the virus needs to run its course. You should take all medications as directed. If symptoms do not go away call your health care provider for medical advice. Be sure to talk with your child's health care provider before using a non-prescription OTC medication for your child.

Cold facts[4]

Colds are usually milder than the flu.

People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose.

Symptoms usually include sneezing, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, watery eyes, headache and fatigue.

Symptoms usually last for 7 to 10 days and may last up to 2 weeks.

Colds usually do not result in serious health problems such as pneumonia, infections, or hospitalizations.

Flu facts[5]

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus.

Flu viruses are most common during the fall and winter.

Symptoms of the flu are worse than the common cold and may include fever, chills, sore throat, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children).

Fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common with the flu and more intense than when associated with a cold.

The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated annually.

continued

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How will I know if I have the flu?[6]

There are tests available to diagnose the flu. The most common test is the "rapid influenza diagnostic test." This test can provide results in 30 minutes or less. The ability of these tests to detect the flu can vary greatly, and may be better at detecting the flu in children than in adults. Most people with flu symptoms do not require testing because the test results usually do not change how you are treated. Your health care provider may diagnose you with the flu based on your symptoms, and their clinical judgment, or they may choose to use an influenza diagnostic test.

It is possible to have the flu, as well as other respiratory illnesses, and COVID-19 at the same time.

Some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, which may make it hard to tell the difference between the two based on symptoms alone. Diagnostic testing may help your health care provider determine if you have the flu or COVID-19.

When treating the flu:[7]

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink a lot of fluids like water, broth, sport drinks or electrolyte beverages to prevent becoming dehydrated.
- Use a humidifier to help make breathing easier.
- The use of over the counter medications may relieve some flu symptoms, but will not make you less contagious.
- Know that antiviral medications can reduce the duration of your illness and the complications associated with the flu. These should be started as early as possible, preferably within 48 hours after the onset of the illness.
- Follow up with your health care provider if you experience side effects or worsening symptoms that may require emergency care.

Preventive measures may reduce your risk of developing the flu[8]

- Protect yourself and others by staying away from people who are sick and by staying home from work and social activities if you are ill.
- Wash your hands. Hand washing is the most protective way to keep germs away. When washing your hands be sure to lather well with soap including the backs of your hands, under your nails and between your fingers. Scrub for at least 20 seconds, rinse well and dry.
- Live a healthier lifestyle by eating healthier, exercising, getting adequate sleep and managing your stress levels.
- Get the annual flu vaccine. The flu vaccine may reduce flu illnesses, doctor visits, and missed work and school due to the flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations.

Sources:

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4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Common Colds: Protect Yourself and Others, https://www.cdc.gov/features/rhinoviruses/, accessed September 2022.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Flu Symptoms & Complications, https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/symptoms.htm?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fflu%2Fconsumer%2Fsymptoms.htm, accessed September 2022.
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8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Habits to Help Prevent Flu, https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm, accessed September 2022.

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Simple ways to be kind to yourself

Practicing self-care is good for the mind, body, and spirit—especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's been a challenging year, but here are some simple things you can do to boost your mood, beat stress, and find more joy in your everyday life.

Take a break

Whether you're working from home or at your workplace, busy with kids or everyday housework, we can all use a break. Take a moment to stretch or focus on your breath. Even just 10 minutes of mindful movement can make a big difference.

Sleep well

Lack of sleep can affect the way you feel mentally and physically. If you're having trouble sleeping due to extra stress during the pandemic, try limiting your screen time before bed. Make changes that might help you let go of any extra stress from the day.

Stay connected

Staying connected with friends and family—either by phone, online, or in person—can do wonders for your physical and emotional wellness. Regular video chats are a great way to keep in touch. You can also plan visits with precautions to help protect one another from COVID-19.

Visit **kp.org/mindbody**.

Kaiser Permanente health plans around the country: Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., in Northern and Southern California and Hawaii • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Colorado • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Georgia, Inc., Nine Piedmont Center, 3495 Piedmont Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30305, 404-364-7000 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc., in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., 2101 E. Jefferson St., Rockville, MD 20852 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest, 500 NE Multnomah St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97232 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington or Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington Options, Inc., 601 Union St., Suite 3100, Seattle, WA 98101

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Health tip: Sleep for health

Think you do just fine getting 5 or 6 hours of sleep? Like the nearly **35%** of adults getting less than the recommended 7+ hours, you are short-changing yourself. Sleep affects every aspect of your waking life—it is essential to your overall well-being.

Poor quality and insufficient sleep has short-term and long-term consequences. In the short-term, poor sleep may result in loss of attention span, poor decision-making, fatigue and irritability, while long-term implications, which are more compelling, include an increased risk for obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, and depression.[1]

Getting adequate sleep helps:

- Maintain brain function
- Improve daytime performance and safety
- Reduce your risk for disease
- Improve your emotional health

7-9 hours

While the amount of sleep you need will change over the course of your life, and sleep needs vary from person to person, it is recommended that adults get 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.

A list of "to-do's" that may help you snooze

Power down to recharge	Blue light from screens can disrupt your circadian rhythm and affect your ability to sleep. Turn off your mobile devices at least 30 minutes before you head to bed.
Keep a regular pattern of bedtime and waking	Try going to bed and waking up around the same time every day (yes, even on the weekends).
Make your bedroom all about sleep	A comfortable mattress, pillow and bedding will help you get a good night's sleep. Keep your room dark, cool and quiet (you may consider using "white noise" to mask startling sounds).
Say "no" to that late-day "cup of joe"	Because it is a stimulant, caffeine may disrupt sleep. Avoid caffeine after lunch. Also, avoid alcohol before bed. Even though alcohol might make you feel sleepy, it can disrupt sleep later in the night.
Still awake?	If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes or so, get up and go into another room and do something relaxing, such as reading or listening to soft music until you feel tired.

A health care provider may help diagnose a sleep disorder by asking questions about sleep schedules and habits. It's important to let your provider know if you think you might have a sleep problem such as feeling sleepy during the day, not waking up feeling refreshed or you are having trouble adapting to shift work.

[1] Source: Adapted from the National Institute of Health. Sleep Deprivation and Deficiency. https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sdd/why. Accessed June 2021.

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DELTA DENTAL

A Season of Smiles

Avoid dental dangers during the holidays

From holiday shopping to wintertime weather, the end of the year can be intense. Make sure the festivities don't harm your teeth — know what oral health risks to look out for this time of year and what you can do to stay smiling.

Dry Mouth

The danger: As temperatures drop, relative humidity levels indoors and outdoors can fall, leaving your skin, hair and mouth dry. To top it off, some holiday favorites high in salt or caffeine can make dehydration even worse. Not only does this problem cause bad breath, it also boosts your chance of cavities.

The solution: Drink plenty of water throughout the day, especially after coffee or alcohol. If you need to crank up the heat to get through winter, consider using a humidifier to keep a healthy level of moisture in the air.

Jaw Pain

The danger: End-of-year stress can take a toll on your oral health. Clenching your teeth, a common symptom of stress, can lead to jaw problems.

The solution: Reduce the stressors in your life. Practice physical exercises to relax your head and shoulders, and consider squeezing a stress ball when the pressure piles on.

deltadentalins.com/enrollees

What Is a Caries Risk Assessment?

Caries Risk Assessments (CRA) are a way for dentists to measure the chances of patients getting new cavities. They will use things like health care, diet, medical history, and anything that might affect a person's chances of getting a cavity. When there are more bad habits than good habits, the patient is at more risk of getting new cavities.

High Risk

- At high risk of developing new cavities
- Patient has cavities showing or only just taken care of by a dentist

Moderate Risk

- At moderate risk of getting new cavities
- Has more factors that help cause new cavities than help against new cavities
- Most people are at this risk level
- Often the patient has a history of cavities, but have none at the moment

Low Risk

- At low risk of developing new cavities
- Has more factors helping against new cavities
- No promise of a cavity-free future; Person still needs to maintain the protective risk factors

Risk Factors

- Poor oral care habits
- Regular eating of food or drinks with sugar
- Low contact with fluoride
- Low socioeconomic status
- Dry mouth caused by medications or disease
- Physical and/or mental disabilities
- Brushing and other dental care can be difficult
- Existing fillings, retainers, or braces are common sites for new cavities

Protective Factors

- Good daily dental care habits that include fluoride toothpaste and flossing
- Regular professional dental care
- Fluoride rinses, gels, or varnishes
- Sealants (protective coating) on adult teeth

Better habits like watching your diet and seeing a dentist twice a year can help you lower your risk. Seeing a dental professional can help you have better oral health and less cavities in the future.

**Disclaimer: This assessment cannot tell you about every part of a person's health. It is still very important to have an exam with your dentist and hear what they may have to say. More assessments may be needed for those with health concerns. It is best to think of this as a starting point for a person's better long term health.

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