Winter 2023

Health & Welfare e-Newsletter

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Flu season often continues well into spring. The flu shot is your best defense against the virus – and a safe, effective way to protect the people around you.

For more information, visit kp.org/flu or ask a Kaiser Permanente team member.

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kp.org/flu

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Ready to start moving in a healthier direction?

Changing your habits can be hard, but working with a wellness coach can help you make it happen. You'll get one-on-one guidance and support from one dedicated coach who can help you set goals, stick to them, and, most importantly, see results.

What do you want to work on?

Wellness coaching can get you started on a healthy path – and give you tools, resources, and encouragement to help you see it through. It can help you:

- Achieve a healthy weight
- Stop using tobacco
- Become more active
- Reduce stress
- Eat healthier

How wellness coaching works

Our wellness coaches are health educators with expertise in preventive health care and behavior-change counseling. They don't tell you what to do – they use your goals to create a customized action plan and help you discover techniques that work for you.

Make the first move

Call **1-866-862-4295,** Monday through Friday, to make an appointment. Coaching is offered in English and Spanish,[1] no referral is needed, and there's no charge for Kaiser Permanente members.[2] For more information, visit **kp.org/coaching**.

[1]Spanish-speaking wellness coaches are not available in Hawaii.

[2]Information about the coaching services you receive will be included in your electronic health record and accessible by your Kaiser Permanente care team (not available for Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington members at this time).

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kp.org/coaching

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Health tip: Healthier ways for the holidays

The holidays may be a challenging time to stay healthy – both physically and mentally. With holiday parties full of decadent food and drinks and busy schedules that may not allow time for our normal routines, we may find it difficult to make healthier decisions. We may find ourselves overindulging, leading to holiday weight gain. The holidays are also a stressful time for many. Overbooked schedules, spending time with difficult family members, dealing with loss, and overspending on holiday gifts may all lead to increased stress. With a little forethought and planning ahead, however, it is possible to embrace and enjoy the holiday season.

Tips for healthier holiday eating[1]

1. Don't skip meals. Skipping a meal with the goal of saving calories prior to a holiday event may often backfire and lead to overeating.
2. Contribute a healthier dish. Ensure at least one nutritious choice is available at potlucks.
3. Choose your splurges. Scan the buffet or dinner table and choose a couple holidays favorites to splurge on instead of foods that you may have any other day of the year.
4. Think color. Make a plate look festive by including fruits and veggies. Aim to cover half your plate.
5. Choose beverages wisely. Limit alcohol, which is high in calories. Liquors, sweet wines and mixed drinks contain 150 to 450 calories per glass. Choose instead water or seltzer, infuse water with seasonal fruit, lemon, or cinnamon or try a hot or green tea with honey.

Consider a budget friendly holiday[3]

Have a plan when it comes to holiday spending so you don't overextend yourself. The plan may include creating a budget or could be to find a way to make more money – pick up extra hours at work, get an extra seasonal job, or clean out your basement or garage and sell unwanted items. Whatever you choose, having a plan helps us feel that we have some control over our lives, and that we're empowered.

Some considerations for holiday spending:

- Create a budget and stick to it
- Suggest a gift exchange
- If traveling, book early and consider traveling during off-season peak hours
- Get creative with gift-giving
- Start traditions that are lower in cost, such as a drive to look at holiday lights

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Tips for coping with holiday stress[2,4]

In addition to holiday eating, stress may result in overindulging. While the holiday season may be a time of joy, it may also be hectic and stressful. To cope with this stress, prepare yourself in the following ways:

1. Create a game plan. Spend a little time up front getting organized. Make a list of what you need to buy. Try to shop ahead of time and if you will be cooking, plan your menu.
2. Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no may leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you cannot participate in every project or activity.
3. Make time for your health. In the holiday rush, don't let your well-being fall by the wayside. Try to stay on your normal sleep schedule and get regular exercise. If you can't find a 30-minute chunk of time for exercise, break it up into three 10-minute sessions spread through the day.
4. Give yourself a break. Amid doing things for others, it's easy to forget to take care of ourselves. If you feel stress building up, get away for a few minutes. Find a quiet corner and do some deep breathing. Listen to calming music, or just sit.
5. Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Focus on mindfulness[2]

1. Accept imperfection. Before the holidays, acknowledge things may not go exactly as planned. It's okay to not be perfect
2. Where does this fit in the grand scheme of things? Don't let the long grocery line spoil your afternoon.
3. Respond with kindness. You cannot change how others act, but you may change how you respond to situations.
4. See if you may extend an act of kindness to those you know are without family and friends during this time of year.

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Sources:
[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 5 Healthy Eating Tips for the Holidays (cdc.gov) 2020. Accessed September 2022.
[2] Mayo Clinic. https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544 2021. Accessed September 2022
[3] Bank Rate. 10 Ways To Save Money During The Holidays | Bankrate 2021. Accessed September 2022.
[4] UT Southwestern Medical Center. 7 ways to manage family stress during the holidays | Mental Health | UT Southwestern Medical Center (utswmed.org) 2021. Accessed September 2022

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Health tip: Women's health

Understanding women's health

It is important to understand women's health, as it may vary from that of men. Women are faced with unique health concerns across the lifespan that may impact their overall well-being. Specifically, women may be challenged by things such as certain types of cancers, changes in reproductive health, eating disorders, osteoporosis, and domestic violence.[1]

During each stage of life, it is important to understand the types of diseases that may affect a woman, as well as one's risk factors, recommended preventive screenings and healthcare needs. As these things evolve, a woman's best defense toward developing a chronic disease is prevention and action.

Disease prevalence, risk, and prevention

Although women are at risk for many diseases, specific ailments, such as heart disease and certain types of cancer, tend to affect women more often.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women, killing 1 in 5 women in the United States. Key risk factors for developing heart disease include high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking.[4]

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death from cancer in American woman, affecting mostly white females. Although there are several risk factors for developing breast cancer, the main threat is age—most breast cancers are diagnosed after age 50. Prevent the development of breast cancer by receiving a mammogram at the recommended timeframe.[5]

Cervical cancer is another form of cancer that effects only women. Like breast cancer, there are many risks for cervical cancer. However, the major risk factor for developing cervical cancer is being diagnosed with HPV—spread mainly via sexual contact. Therefore, it is recommended to receive a pap smear to screen for cervical cancer once you become sexually active, or by age 25.[6]

Colorectal cancer should also be taken seriously, as it is the third leading cause of death from cancer in the United States, not just among women. Age, family history, and lifestyle choices may increase the likelihood of developing colorectal cancer. Moreover, it is recommended to begin screening for colorectal cancer at age 45, regardless of gender.[7]

To prevent the development of these diseases, it is crucial to understand your risk, get recommended screenings, and see a physician regularly.

Facts to know[2,3]

14.4%
of women over age 18 are in **fair or poor health**

41.8%
of women over age 20 are **obese**

Less than 50%
of women over age 18 meet the federal guidelines for **aerobic physical activity**

20M
women suffer from **eating disorders**

continued

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DELTA DENTAL

Follow the floss **to a healthier smile**

Nobody wants to lose a tooth, but gum disease — which causes tooth loss — can sneak up on you. To get rid of the bacteria that causes gum disease you have to get rid of all the plaque. Flossing at least once a day helps clean plaque from hard-to-reach places between teeth and under the gum line — lowering your risk of cavities and helping to prevent gum disease.

It's easy to smile when you feel good. LifeSmile® is a wellness program that's part of your Delta Dental benefits provided by your employer. It's easier to maintain good oral health habits when you have some support. LifeSmile® has the answers to your dental questions and can help keep you smiling for a lifetime.

Foolproof flossing in six quick steps:

1. Pull about 18 inches of floss and wrap most of it around the index or middle finger of each hand so you have only a few inches between your hands.
2. Hold the floss between your thumbs and fingers and saw between each set of teeth until the floss gently pops between the teeth.
3. Pull the floss tight against the side of one tooth so it forms a "C" shape and slide it up and down.
4. Gently get down below the gum between each tooth and gum line.
5. Repeat for each pair of teeth.
6. Remember to floss the backside of the back tooth in each corner of your mouth.

Dental floss: Which is right for you?

- There are two basic types of floss: nylon multistrand (traditional floss) and monofilament made from a single strand of a synthetic plastic (may be less likely to shred but is usually more expensive).
- Floss comes in different thicknesses and flavors and the traditional may be waxed or unwaxed.
- Each type works well so try different brands and types and see what works best for you.
- Which type is better for your oral health? It's a matter of personal preference. The best one is the one you will use correctly every day.
- Just remember: While water picks, mouthwash or dental sticks can help remove debris, they are no substitute for brushing and flossing.
- Daily flossing and brushing are the best way to effectively care for your teeth and gums between visits to the dentist.

> "I was already brushing every day, it didn't take much to add flossing to my routine."
>
> *- Michael, Firefighter*

LifeSmile® can help you prevent disease and keep you on the path toward a healthier, happier life. For more tips, tools and resources to help you improve and maintain your oral wellness and overall health throughout the year, make sure to bookmark oralhealth.deltadental.com.

Adult Care

LIBERTY cares about more than just teeth!

Maintaining a Clean and Healthy Mouth

Teeth are pretty amazing. They help us eat and drink to survive. Our teeth do the job of breaking down food into digestible particles and our tongue helps push the food particles down to our stomach. Gums serve an important role, too: protecting our teeth. Our mouth is an important food processing "machine" that our body needs to function. We can easily take our mouth for granted, but if the mouth isn't healthy, our overall health can decline.

At LIBERTY Dental Plan, our primary goal is to educate and teach our members the importance oral health has on overall health and well-being. We encourage our members to establish a "Dental Home" – an environment where families have regular dental checkups.

Let's look at the important role teeth and gums have, and how we can keep our mouths clean, healthy and happy.

Inside our mouths

When we eat, and drink, some small food particles and drink residue gets left behind in our mouth, and collects in the spaces between our teeth and gums. Because these food particles and drink residues are so small, we don't even think about it, or the potential harm they can do inside our mouth. These particles and residues mix with our saliva, and if left unattended, turn into a sticky film called **plaque.**

fact:

There are 300 different types of bacteria inside your mouth - some freindly, and some not so friendly

This plaque bacteria releases an acid that attacks the outer shell of your teeth, which leads to **cavities.** If the mouth is not regularly cleaned, then more plaque bacteria builds up on our teeth and can harden into a rough substance called **tarter** (or calculus). Tarter collects along your gum line, and if left unattended, can lead to **gingivitis** (inflammation of the gums) and **gum disease**. Once tarter forms, only a dentist with special tools can remove it.

Now we know that we have an enemy within our mouth that can damage our teeth, gums and overall health. To prevent this, we must practice daily oral health care to minimize damage and to maintain a clean, healthy and happy mouth.

Did you know
Bacteria are living organisms that eat, grow, reproduce and discharge waste matter (biofilm) known as dental plaque

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Daily oral health hygeine:

1 Frequently rinsing your mouth

Clean, pure water can help rinse away plaque bacteria. After eating or drinking sugary drinks, place some water in your mouth and swoosh it around to gently rinse your mouth and help flush away food particles and drink residues. You can also use a small capful of mouthwash in place of water. Before bedtime, it is important to note that you should avoid drinking any sugary drinks right before bed, which will promote plaque bacteria. It is best to drink only water right before bed.

A simple rinse with water can help remove food particles in your mouth, and can reduce plaque from forming

2 Brushing your teeth 2X every day

While rinsing your mouth helps to remove excess food particles and residues from drinks, brushing your teeth and gums is the best way to properly clean your mouth to safeguard your teeth and gums from plaque bacteria. **Brush your teeth twice a day**. Using a soft to medium bristle toothbrush (manual or powered) and a small amount of toothpaste of your preference, brush your teeth and gums thoroughly for at least **2 minutes**. Hold your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle so that the toothbrush hits the crevices where the gums meet the teeth. Brush the front, back and top surfaces of the teeth, then finish with a quick brushing of the tongue. After a thorough brushing, your teeth will be sparkling clean and happy.

If you are unsure how to properly brush your teeth, ask your dentist to be shown then proper technique at your next visit.

When to replace your toothbrush: every 3-4 months, *or sooner if the bristles become frayed. A worn toothbrush won't clean your teeth and gums properly. If brushing your teeth with a manual toothbrush is difficult due to hand, arm or shoulder problems that limit movement, use a powered toothbrush. If you are not sure what type of toothbrush is best for you, talk with your dentist.*

3 Flossing your teeth 1X every day

There are crevices between teeth that a toothbrush just can't reach. For this reason, it is strongly advised that you learn to make **flossing your teeth 1X every day** a part of your daily routine. Only use dental floss or disposable floss picks to reach and clean plaque bacteria from crevices between teeth. Floss between every tooth in your mouth, especially the teeth way in the back. It doesn't matter what time of day you floss, all that matters is that you do it. If you are unsure how to properly floss your teeth, ask your dentist to be shown the proper technique at your next visit.

If you don't of floss daily, then you are putting your teeth and gums at a higher risk for cavities and gum disease. To reduce this risk, you can schedule deep cleanings with your dentist 4X a year (every 3 months). At minimum, 3X a year (every 4 months).

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