



# Family time



[AetnaBetterHealth.com/NewJersey](https://AetnaBetterHealth.com/NewJersey)

Aetna Better Health® of New Jersey

## It's that time again! Get your flu shot

Getting a flu vaccine each fall can nearly cut your risk of getting the flu in half.

Almost everyone 6 months and older needs a yearly flu shot. Getting vaccinated is even more important if you or someone you live with is at higher risk for complications from the flu.

This group includes older adults; pregnant women; young children; and people with chronic health problems, such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease or cancer.


People in high-risk groups may become very sick if they get the

flu. Some may have to go to a hospital.

Past vaccines won't protect you, because flu viruses change. It takes two weeks to build immunity to the flu virus. Try to get vaccinated by the end of

October. That way your body will be ready to fight the flu when it gets here.

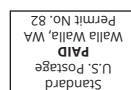
*Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

 Teens and preteens should also get vaccines to protect them from meningitis, a serious infection. Adults may need these shots too. Ask your provider about meningococcal vaccines.

M-ENG

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## Am I eating too much sodium?

You could be raising your risk for a heart attack or stroke

If you're not paying attention to your sodium intake, you're likely getting too much — and your health could pay the price.

A whopping 90% of Americans eat too much sodium. Most adults get around 3400 milligrams (mg) daily, but the recommended upper limit is 2300 mg.

Sodium helps the body maintain a healthy fluid balance. It's also key for normal nerve and muscle function. Too much, though, causes the body to retain fluids, which can raise blood pressure and damage blood vessels. That can lead to high blood pressure and increase the risk for heart attack and stroke.

### Simple steps to slash your sodium intake

Dietary sodium doesn't just come from the saltshaker. In fact, more than 70% of the sodium we eat comes from packaged foods and restaurant meals. Sodium also occurs naturally in some foods, like milk and celery.

When you consider all of these sneaky sources, it's easy to see how sodium can add up — but with a little effort, you can curb your intake without sacrificing flavor:

**Read the label.** Check the sodium content of packaged foods before buying and seek out lower sodium products.

**Cook with less salt.** Season foods with spices, garlic, citrus and herbs instead of salt. They bring out flavors without the need for much extra salt.


**Drain and rinse canned foods.** Canned beans and vegetables tend to be high in sodium, but you can get rid of most of it with a quick rinse. You can also look for ones with no added salt.

**Take the saltshaker off the table.** Break the habit of adding an extra sprinkle right before eating. You might be surprised by how quickly your taste buds adjust!

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*



## Know the salty six

 Pay particular attention to the American Heart Association's list of the saltiest foods, and find alternatives when possible. These foods include:

- **Breads and rolls.** They don't taste salty, but they may have a lot of sodium. You can easily consume too much sodium if you regularly eat breads and rolls.
- **Pizza with pepperoni.** It contains about a third of your daily sodium allowance. Substitute veggies for the meat.
- **Sandwiches or fast-food burgers.** You don't have to steer clear completely. Just have half a sandwich with a salad instead.
- **Cold cuts and deli meats.** Swap some of the meat for fresh vegetables.
- **Canned soups.** Seek out low-sodium options or make your own soup.
- **Taco and burrito fillings and toppings.** Opt for veggies and lean proteins.

## Three-bean chili with chunky tomatoes

Makes 4 servings.

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 cup onion, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup celery, rinsed and chopped
- 1 cup green bell pepper, rinsed and diced
- 1 can (15 ounces) low-sodium black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 ounces) low-sodium red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 ounces) low-sodium pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 cans (14 ounces each) no-salt-added diced tomatoes with basil, garlic and oregano
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon chili powder

### Directions

- In an 8-quart soup or pasta pot, heat the oil over medium heat until hot but not smoking.

- Add onion. Cook and stir until onion starts to soften, about 5 minutes.
- Add celery and green pepper. Cook and stir another 5 minutes, until all vegetables soften.
- Add drained and rinsed beans to pot.
- Stir in tomatoes, cumin and chili powder.
- Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer 10 to 20 minutes to blend flavors.
- Serve immediately.

If you can't find beans labeled "low sodium," compare the Nutrition Facts panels to find the beans with the lowest amount of sodium. Rinsing can help further reduce the sodium level.

### Nutrition information

Serving size: 2 cups. Amount per serving: 443 calories, 8g total fat (0g saturated fat), 0mg cholesterol, 73g carbohydrates, 22g protein, 16g dietary fiber, 331mg sodium.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



## Make a plan to quit smoking

Having a plan can make it easier to quit. Try these five steps:

1. **Pick a quit date.** Choose a date that is no more than a week or two away.
2. **Write down your reasons for quitting.** Maybe it's to improve your health. Maybe you're tired of smelling like smoke — or paying for cigarettes. Review your reasons often.
3. **Know your triggers.** Triggers are things that make you crave a smoke. They can be a cup of coffee, friends who smoke, parties or your commute. Think of ways to avoid your triggers.
4. **Prepare for cravings.** Cravings are powerful, but they only last a short time. Plan ways to outlast them, like taking a walk, sucking on a mint or chewing a piece of nicotine gum.
5. **Gather support.** Ask your provider about medicines or support groups. Also let your friends and family know your plans. Ask them not to smoke around you or offer you a cigarette. Teens may worry about losing friends if they quit — but real friends want you to be happy and healthy.

Source: [Smokefree.gov](http://Smokefree.gov)




## Coping with depression during the holidays

The holidays can be a tough and stressful time if you're feeling depressed. These tips may help you manage depression and even enjoy the merry season:

**Don't burn your holiday candle at both ends.** It's OK to scale back. Writing a to-do list can help you stay organized and feel less stressed. Ask for help if you need it.

**Stay on budget.** Overspending on gifts can add to worries. Set a budget, and stick with it.

### Ask for help

 If you're feeling overwhelmed by depression, ask your provider or care manager about support that may be available to you.

**Keep moving.** Exercise is a mood lifter. It helps with stress too. Take a walk, dance to your favorite holiday tunes or do some stretches.

**Don't isolate yourself.** If you feel like spending time with people, reach out. Can't be there in person? Get in touch with phone calls, greeting cards or video chats.

**Do your best to rest.** Life looks better after a good night's sleep.

**Make room for joy and relaxation.** Listen to music. Take a warm bath. Watch a funny movie.

**Know the risks of alcohol.** Drinking alcohol can make you feel more depressed. If other people are drinking, ask for a mocktail instead.

**Take your medicine.** If you take a medicine for depression, keep taking it just as prescribed.

Sources: *Mental Health America; National Alliance on Mental Health*

## A healthy diet helps ward off lead poisoning

Lead is a toxic metal. It can cause long-term health problems — and it can harm growing children the most.

Prevention is key. Keep your family away from any sources of lead. The most common source is chipped or peeling lead paint and its dust. Homes built before 1978 often used lead paint. If you think your home has lead, ask your local health department for expert help.


A healthy diet also helps. Kids who eat well may absorb less lead. Be sure to serve plenty of:

**Calcium.** Sources include milk, yogurt, and green leafy vegetables like spinach and collard greens.

**Iron.** Lean red meats, fortified cereal and bread, beans, cooked spinach, and potatoes have iron.

**Vitamin C.** Oranges, broccoli, strawberries, peppers and tomatoes contain this nutrient.

*Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Environmental Protection Agency*

 Lead poisoning may not cause symptoms right away. Ask your provider if your child needs a blood test for lead.

## Celebrate safely this season

For many people, holiday get-togethers involve alcohol. Drinking too much can lead to car crashes, violence and other problems. Try these ways to give the gift of safer gatherings.

### Know your limit

If you drink, do it in moderation. That means one standard drink per day for women and two per day for men. A standard drink means 14 grams of pure alcohol. That's the amount of alcohol in:

- 12 ounces of beer.
- 5 ounces of wine.
- 1.5 ounces of a distilled spirit such as tequila or whiskey.

If you are under age 21, pregnant, managing a medical condition or recovering from alcohol-use disorder, avoid drinking entirely.

### Know when to help others

To know if someone has had too much to drink, watch for signs such as:

- Confusion.
- Slurred speech.
- Muscle weakness or lack of coordination.
- Lack of concentration.
- Breathing problems.

If someone has had too much:

- Keep them away from any source of more alcohol.
- Don't let anyone take advantage of them.
- Never let them drive. Call them a taxi or ride service.

*Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*







## Healthy teeth for a healthy life

A healthy mouth helps keep your whole body well. By taking simple preventive steps, you can avoid serious health issues.

Common problems include:

**Cavities.** Never ignore a cavity — if it isn't treated, it will result in pain and/or infection.

**Gum disease.** This is when gums and bone around the teeth become inflamed. If

not treated, gum disease can cause infections and bone loss that loosens teeth. It may also raise the risk of heart disease and stroke.

**Tooth loss.** Untreated tooth decay and gum disease can result in needing to have teeth extracted.

**Dry mouth.** People who don't have enough saliva may be at higher risk for tooth decay

and infection. If you have frequent dry mouth, consult your physician or dentist.

### Tips for a healthy mouth

To help prevent problems:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss once a day.
- Buy a new toothbrush with soft bristles every three to four months.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Don't use tobacco.

Make sure to have regular dental visits. Most adults and children should see a dentist every six months.

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

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that causes high levels of sugar (glucose) in the blood. Too much sugar can harm organs and lead to serious problems. Diabetes can start in three ways.

**Type 1 diabetes.** Type 1 usually begins in children or young adults. It starts when the pancreas doesn't make enough insulin — or makes no insulin at all. That's why people with type 1 need to take insulin.

**Type 2 diabetes.** This is the most common type. It is usually found in adults, but kids can have it too.

Type 2 starts when the pancreas doesn't make

enough insulin — or doesn't use it properly. Genetics, diet and not being active may cause this type.

**Gestational diabetes.** Some women who've never had diabetes develop it when they are pregnant. This type of diabetes often goes away once the baby is born. If not treated, though, it raises the risk for future type 2 diabetes for the mom and the baby.

### Know your numbers


An A1C test can tell your provider more about your blood sugar levels. Your provider can tell you what your A1C should be. Most people with diabetes should have an A1C lower than 8%.

*Source: American Diabetes Association*



4. **How you feel on an emotional level.** Have you felt stressed out or in a down mood? Are you going through hard times? Life changes can affect your health too. Your provider cares about all areas of your well-being — not just your physical health.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; National Institutes of Health



Are you due for an annual wellness visit? Make an appointment with your provider today.

## Make the most of your child's check-up

Well-child check-ups help your child stay healthy. Your child's provider will:

- Check to see if your child is meeting milestones.
- Keep your child up-to-date on vaccines.

Ask your child's provider when to schedule visits.

### Get answers

A well-child visit is the perfect time to ask questions about your child's health or any parenting concerns you have. When your child is old enough, they can ask questions too.

Write down your concerns ahead of time. You might ask:

- Is my child up-to-date on vaccines?
- Is my child at a healthy weight?
- How can I convince my picky child to eat healthy foods?
- Is my child sleeping enough?

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

MONTHS							YEARS						
4	6	9	12	15	18	19-23	2-3	4-6	7-10	11-12	13-15	16	17-18
HepB	HepB					HepB series							
RV	RV*								HPV		HPV series		
DTaP	DTaP	DTaP		DTaP		DTaP	DTaP	Tdap	Tdap			Tdap	
Hib	Hib*	Hib	Hib*		Hib			Hib					
PCV13	PCV13	PCV13	PCV13		PCV13			PCV13					
							PPSV23						
IPV	IPV					IPV	IPV	IPV series					
	Flu, yearly (1 or 2 doses)									Flu, yearly			
	MMR		MMR		MMR			MMR	MMR series				
		VAR		VAR			VAR	VAR series					
	HepA series						HepA series						
							COVID-19 series						
MenACWY										MenACWY series			
							Men B						

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022)

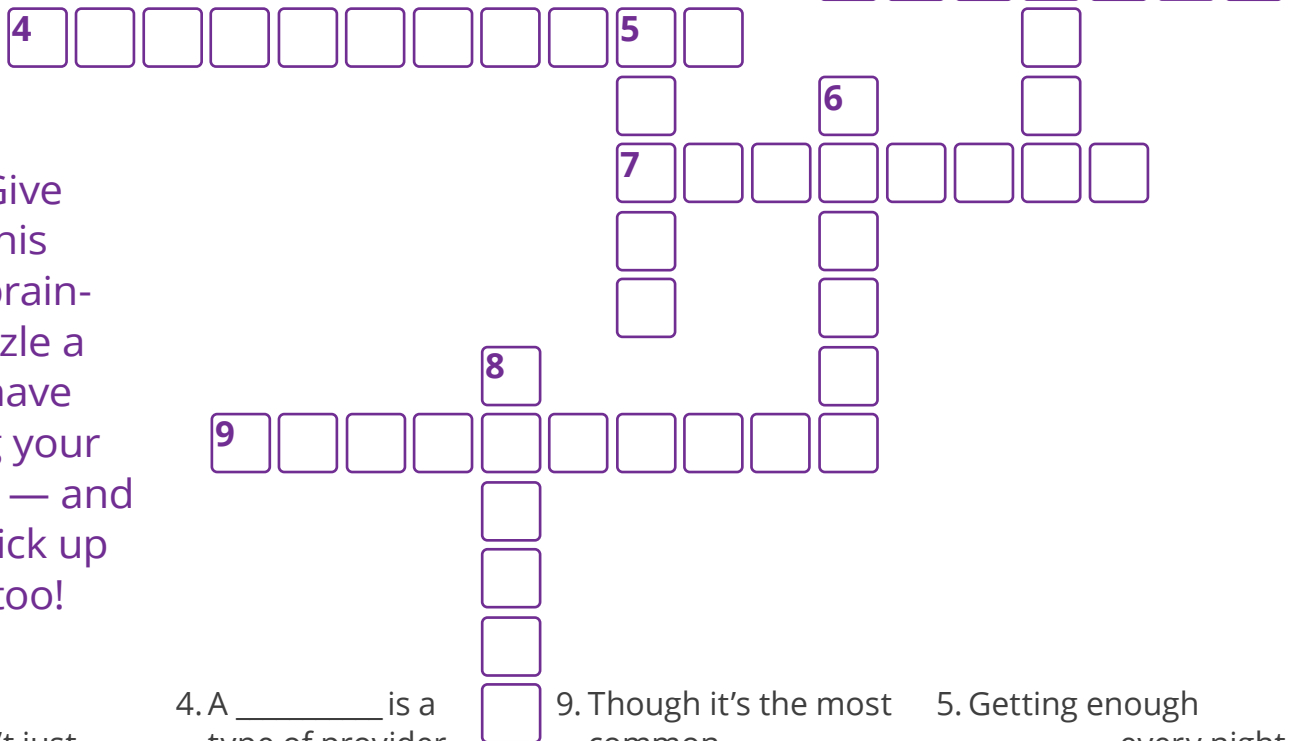


# MIND GAMES



Give this brain-

health puzzle a try. You'll have fun testing your know-how — and you may pick up a few tips too!



## Across

- Exercise isn't just for your body. To help keep your brain active, read, play games, do \_\_\_\_\_ (like crosswords!) and try new hobbies.
- Staying social can help keep your brain sharp. Make time for \_\_\_\_\_ and family. It's good for you!

- A \_\_\_\_\_ is a type of provider who specializes in treating the brain and spine.
- Move your body to protect your brain. Regular \_\_\_\_\_ has been shown to increase brain function and improve mental health.

- Though it's the most common, \_\_\_\_\_ disease isn't the only type of dementia.

- Getting enough \_\_\_\_\_ every night can help keep your brain healthy.

## Down

- Different types of dementia call for different \_\_\_\_\_, so it's important to get an accurate diagnosis.

- Eat a diet with plenty of \_\_\_\_\_ and veggies, whole grains, fish, and nuts.
- Loss of \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't always signal dementia. It can have other causes too.

## Answers:

Across: 2. Puzzles 3. Friends 4. Neurologist 7. Exercise 9. Alzheimer's  
Down: 1. Treatments 5. Sleep 6. Fruits 8. Memory



## Avoid Winter slips and falls

Snow and ice can make even the most mundane activities a little more dangerous.

Just walking down a sidewalk or going up and down steps can be tricky when they're coated with wet snow and ice.

### Don't fall for it

Here are four tips for staying on your feet when things get slippery:



#### Give them something to grip.

Spread sand or salt on icy areas, especially by doorways.



#### Wear the right footwear.

Use boots with good rubber treads.



#### Be on the lookout.

Pay attention to where you walk. Watch for icy patches.



#### Adjust your walk.

On ice, walk in a shuffle at a slow pace. Bending your knees slightly will help you keep your balance. To walk up an incline, turn sideways. Then walk in side steps upward. Bending your knees will help here too.

*Sources: AARP; American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Labor*

### Contact us



#### Member Services

**1-855-232-3596**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**TTY: 711**

**AetnaBetterHealth.com/  
NewJersey**

24-hour nurse line

**1-855-232-3596**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**TTY: 711**

#### MARCH Vision

**1-844-686-2724**

**TTY: 1-877-627-2456**

#### LIBERTY Dental Plan

**1-855-225-1727**

**TTY: 711**

#### Modivcare

**www.modivcare.com**

(medical transportation only)

**1-866-527-9933**

**TTY: 1-866-288-3133**

#### Access Link

(non-medical transportation — initial approval may take up to 30 days)

**973-491-4224**

**TTY: 1-800-955-6765**

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Phoenix, AZ 85040  
Telephone: **1-888-234-7358 (TTY 711)**  
Email: MedicaidCRCoordinator@aetna.com

You can file a grievance in person or by mail or email. If you need help filing a grievance, our Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

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**GUJARATI: ધ્યાન આપો:** જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાયતા સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. તમારા આઈડી કાર્ડની પાછળ આપેલા નંબર પર અથવા **1-800-385-4104** પર કૉલ કરો (TTY: 711).

**POLISH: UWAGA:** Jeśli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer podany na odwrocie Twojego identyfikatora lub pod number **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

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**ARABIC:** ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث باللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل على الرقم الموجود خلف بطاقتك الشخصية أو على **1-800-385-4104 (للصم والبكم: 711)**.

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