

HEALTH *Matters* Summer 2018



Summer Rx Health

Summertime means many of us are spending more time outdoors, and our daily routines and schedules are disrupted by vacations and holidays. While we all welcome the lifestyle changes that come with the season, it's important to consider how these changes affect those taking chronic medication. Be aware that some medications affect your body's ability to stay hydrated and can cause skin reactions and/or sensitivity.

Healthy Summertime Rx Practices:

- Check medication labels for information about sun exposure.
- Check medication labels for proper storage and temperature guidelines.
- Take extra precautions like drinking plenty of fluids, limiting sun exposure and reapplying sunscreen.
- Prepare extra reminders on your smartphone so you take medications on time, especially when traveling.
- Pack a full supply of your medication, plus extra in case you experience travel delays.
- Keep all medication together and in the original containers.
- If your travels take you to a different time zone, you may need to alter your dosing regimen.
- If your medication looks or smells different, call your doctor or specialist pharmacist to make sure the medication is safe for you to take.

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ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

A well-designed asthma action plan can be a great tool to effectively manage the condition on a daily basis.

Chronic asthma patients (and parents of children who suffer from it) know the stress associated with the frightening acute attacks and even long-term disabilities associated with the condition. Twenty-two million Americans, many of them children, suffer from chronic asthma.

Have a Plan

Having an asthma action plan in place can alleviate much of the stress and worry – and potentially save the patient's life.

Elements of an Action Plan

An effective asthma plan should include both long-term and acute management medications. It also should help identify and assess the severity of an attack and include treatment options preferable to the patient.

The action plan is typically broken down into three zones:

- Green: I feel good
- Yellow: I do not feel so good
- Red: I feel awful

Asthma guidelines recommend using a peak flow meter to measure the maximum amount of expiratory airflow. For your action plan, record your best readings when you are healthy, and then compare readings after an asthma attack. For instance, an asthma attack is considered in the red zone – or severe – when the peak flow reading is < 50% of the normal value or "personal best." Severe attacks may require immediate medical attention.

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DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to the newest issue of "Health Matters." As we head into the warm summer months, we'd like to pass along some important health information to help you make the most of this activity-filled time of year.

A few of the topics you'll find covered in this issue are information on better understanding depression, cholesterol basics, the upcoming health awareness months that you can honor for the betterment of your well-being, and, as always, a recipe for a delicious and healthy meal to share with those you love, or to keep all to yourself.

Nothing means more to us than knowing we've helped make our members' lives better. That's why we're so thankful for the privilege of being able to give you the highest-quality health care!

In good health,

Nancy Horstmann
Chief Executive Officer
CHRISTUS Health Plan



WHEN IT'S MORE THAN JUST THE BLUES...

Sadness is a rational response to troubling situations in our lives. In most cases, sadness is short-lived, and it goes away. However, depression goes beyond sorrow, and it doesn't go away. Depression is a real illness, a medical disease that causes ongoing feelings of sadness and loss of interest. Depression can cause physical symptoms too.



Depression affects how you feel, think and act, and if left untreated, it can lead to a variety of emotional problems as well as physical problems. Suffering from depression can make doing normal day-to-day activities a burden and may even make you feel as if life isn't worth living. Other symptoms of depression can include:

- Losing interest in friends and things that used to bring happiness
- Not sleeping well or sleeping too much
- Gaining or losing weight
- Feeling tired all of the time
- Having body aches and pains

It's important not to get discouraged. Depression is a treatable condition, and some people feel better with medication, counseling or other treatment. If you think you may be depressed, CHRISTUS Health encourages you to take the first step and make an appointment with your doctor. Your provider can make a diagnosis of this condition and then work with you to develop a treatment plan. Schedule your appointment today!

HOW TO CONTACT US

New Mexico and Texas Health Exchange: (844) 282-3025
Email: CHRISTUS.HP.memberservice.inquiry@christushealth.org
Hearing Impaired: 711

Ask the Pharmacist: PLAIN TALK ON CHOLESTEROL



Express Scripts cardiovascular specialist pharmacists help answer questions about cholesterol and good cardiovascular health.

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in America. Atherosclerosis – the hardening and narrowing of arteries – is the most common cause of this disease, increasing heart attack and stroke risks. Fortunately, you can control these risks by reducing high cholesterol. As blood cholesterol levels rise, so does the risk of coronary heart disease. But not all cholesterol is bad.

Good and Bad Cholesterol – There are two types of cholesterol, and the difference is significant.



Good cholesterol that **decreases** heart disease risk is known as HDL



Bad cholesterol that **increases** heart disease risk is known as LDL

Lifestyle Changes That Can Help Keep Cholesterol Levels Balanced

- ✓ **Eat healthy** Choose a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, and low in salt, fat and cholesterol.
- ✓ **Know your fats** Saturated fat, trans fat and dietary cholesterol raise LDL levels. Saturated fats come from animal fats and dairy products, and trans fats are found commonly in baked goods.
- ✓ **Eat the right fats** Choose good fats from seeds, nuts, oily fish and olive oil as part of a healthy diet.
- ✓ **Lose extra weight** Losing as little as 5% to 10% of body weight can significantly reduce LDL levels.
- ✓ **Exercise** Regular physical activity raises HDL levels. Thirty minutes of aerobic activity, such as brisk walking or jogging three to five days a week, can help one's body produce more HDL.
- ✓ **Stop smoking** Cigarette smoking decreases the good HDL cholesterol.

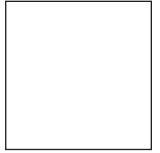
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REFRIED BLACK BEAN & SPINACH ROLLATINI



Simple to make and easy to eat, this black bean and spinach rollatini is perfect as a summer snack or meal.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole-wheat tortilla
- ¼ cup fat-free refried beans
- 1 tablespoon salsa
- ¼ cup bagged spinach leaves

DIRECTIONS

1. On the whole-wheat tortilla, thinly spread the fat-free refried beans, salsa and spinach leaves.
2. Roll up tortilla and cut into three pieces.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Calories: 368	Carbs: 65g
Total fat: 6g	Fiber: 5g
Saturated fat: 2g	Protein: 11g
Sodium: 836mg	