



# Wellness Works

Fall 2016

Published by

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas

## Give Your Lungs a Breath of Fresh Air

Our lungs do lots of work for us, allowing us to take nearly 25,000 breaths each day. Lung disease is the third highest killer in the U.S.

Lung diseases, such as lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other illnesses can be avoided. Stopping smoking is one of the biggest steps people can take to avoid lung disease.



If you smoke, consider these tips:

- Try quitting on your own, or ask your doctor for help.
- Avoid social gatherings where people will be smoking.
- Don't give up if you give in to the urge to smoke; keep trying.
- Keep in mind that it's never too late to stop – quitting smoking will slow the damage to your lungs.

**Breathing easy:** Don't take your lungs for granted. Breathe new life into your health by keeping your lungs in tip top shape. Take a deep breath. It's never too late to quit.

Sources: The American Thoracic Society; National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## This Year Give the Gift of Health and Safety

Holidays mean spending time with friends and family, as well as gift exchanges. This holiday, you can also give the gift of health and safety with these easy tips:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- In cold weather, stay dry and dress warmly.
- Manage stress, relax and have a positive outlook.
- Travel safely by wearing your seat belt.
- Give yourself and your loved ones a great holiday gift: If you smoke, quit.
- Don't forget your flu shot. It is the best protection against flu.
- Never drink and drive.
- Stay active during the holidays and eat healthy.

Food is a key part of most people's holidays. To help protect you and your guests from food borne illness, always wash your hands, clean kitchen surfaces and practice safe food handling and storage.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



BlueCross BlueShield  
of Texas



THE TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM





## Don't Get Caught Without a Flu Shot

No one wants to face coming down with the flu. A flu shot can help you avoid the illness altogether. Flu shots can be helpful for most people, but is really important for the very young and elderly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests a yearly dose for those who are:

- Ages 6 months and older
- Pregnant
- Have a chronic health condition, such as asthma, diabetes, or heart, kidney or lung disease
- Have a weakened immune system
- Are child-care or health care workers
- Live with or care for someone at high risk of flu complications

Ask your doctor about a flu shot and get up-to-date information on immunizations and treatment.

Source: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Dental Care and Diabetes: Do a Double Check

About 23.6 million people in the U.S. have diabetes. This serious health problem can have a harmful impact on many parts of the body including the heart, nerves, eyes and kidneys. Diabetes can also impact oral health problems including gum disease, changes in taste, and inflammatory skin diseases that cause mouth lesions.

Diabetic dental patients need to use extra care and follow your dentist's advice. If you have this illness, consider these ideas:

- Have regular exams and screenings.
- Get care for dry mouth. This is a frequent problem that can lead to tooth decay.
- Keep blood sugar levels in check.
- Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss between teeth daily.
- Eat a healthy diet.

If your dentist doesn't know about your diabetes, now is the time to tell him or her. Your dentist can work with you to set up a care plan that meets your special needs. Be sure to:

- Tell your dentist about your illness.
- Give your dentist your health history.
- Give the dentist a list of all drugs and supplements you are taking.

Diabetes doesn't have to mean double trouble for your oral health. A proper diet, regular visits to the dentist and practicing good oral hygiene can help keep your smile bright.

Source: American Dental Association



## Make Diabetes Prevention Your Intention

You can do a lot to lower your chances of getting diabetes. Exercising regularly, reducing fat and calorie intake, losing a little weight, cutting out tobacco products, and lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels can enhance your health. To help lower your risk of diabetes make a plan to change behavior:

- Think about what might prevent you from reaching your goals.
- If you smoke, enroll in a smoking cessation program.
- Find family and friends who will support and encourage you.
- Decide how you will reward yourself when you do what you have planned.

Source: The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases