



# Whole health AND **you.**

## 2023 New Year's Resolutions!

Highmark Wholecare members and employees share their goals for 2023.



# Shop Online

Tips for using your SNAP benefits to shop online.

- Your roadmap to a healthy year.
- Cozy comfort food and drink recipes.
- Try EnhanceFitness moves.
- Fashion tips for keeping warm this winter.

Did you know Highmark Wholecare is on social media?



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## We are a four-out-of-five-star plan.



Medicare rates Highmark Wholecare a high-quality, high-performing health plan in the state of Pennsylvania. Every year, Medicare evaluates plans based on a 5-Star Rating System. In 2022, Highmark Wholecare received 4 out of 5 stars.



# Check out important notices online.

## Highmark Wholecare cares about the health and well-being of our members.

We have guidelines in place to make sure you receive the quality care and service you deserve.

Our guidelines cover topics like:

- Your member rights and responsibilities
- Medical necessity
- Doctor appointment guidelines
- Second opinions
- Protecting your privacy

Go to [HighmarkWholecare.com/Medicare/member-newsletters](https://www.HighmarkWholecare.com/Medicare/member-newsletters) to view these and other important topics. You can also ask for a printed copy of the 2022 Important Member Notices by calling 1-800-685-5209 (TTY users, call 711).

# Need help? Call us!

## MEMBER SERVICES

1-800-685-5209 (TTY 711)

7 days a week,

October 1 through March 31:

8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Monday through Friday,

April 1 through September 30:

8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

## PHARMACY SERVICES

1-855-845-6212 (TTY 711)

Monday through Friday:

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

## 24 HOUR NURSELINE

24 hours a day, 365 days a year:

1-855-805-9420 (TTY 711)

## NUTRITION COUNSELING

1-844-277-8052 (TTY 711)

Monday through Friday:

8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

## TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS

1-877-797-0339 (TTY 711)

Monday through Friday:

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

## GOODNESS REWARDS

1-800-539-5722 (TTY 711)

## OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) BENEFIT

1-855-350-0074 (TTY 711)

Monday through Saturday:

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

[hmkcares.com/OTCStore](https://www.hmkcares.com/OTCStore)

## SILVERSNEAKERS® Tivity Health

1-888-423-4632 (TTY 711)

Monday through Friday:

8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

## Other useful numbers.

### PA QUIT NOW

*(for help quitting smoking)*

1-855-891-9989 (TTY 711)

### NATIONAL SUICIDE

PREVENTION LIFELINE

1-800-273-8255 (TTY 711), 24/7

### PA HELPLINE

*(if struggling with anxiety)*

1-855-284-2494 (TTY 711)

### 211 UNITED WAY

Dial 211 for help getting connected

### DEPARTMENT OF AGING

1-717-783-1550 (TTY 711)

## Let's get social!

### Like us on Facebook:

@HighmarkWholecarePlans

### Follow us on Instagram:

@highmarkwholecare

### Join us on Twitter:

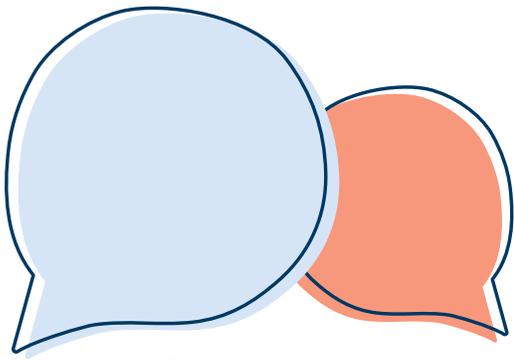
@ItsWholecare



## Get an account on our Member Portal!



1. Go to [HighmarkWholecare.com](https://www.HighmarkWholecare.com)
2. Click on "Member Portal"
3. Click on "Register Now"



# real talk

WITH

**Judy Sapos**

*Manager of Corporate Social Responsibility, Highmark Wholecare.*

## Learn about the benefits of volunteering.

Volunteering doesn't need to be a long-term commitment or take up a lot of your time. Any help you can provide, big or small, positively affects nonprofit organizations, people in need, and YOU!



Since the onset of COVID-19, nonprofit organizations have faced limited staff and resources. They rely heavily on volunteers to help them support people in their communities who need them the most.

By donating just a few hours of your time, you can directly impact these organizations and the people they serve.

There are several benefits of volunteering—not only for people in need, but for you as well. And the more you volunteer, the more benefits you’ll experience!

### **It boosts your physical and mental health.**

When you do good, you feel good! Research has shown that people who volunteer experience better overall health, higher self-esteem, reduced depression and stress, increased feelings of happiness, and greater life satisfaction.

### **It provides a sense of purpose and community.**

When you volunteer, you become part of something greater than yourself. And when you volunteer in your own community, you are helping to make it a better place. Doing good for others and the

community you live in provides a sense of accomplishment, pride, and identity.

### **It enhances your social life.**

Social isolation can increase your chance of developing depression. Volunteering keeps you in regular contact with others and gives you a chance to get to know people who share the same interests as you. If you are shy, volunteering can help you step out of your comfort zone and sharpen your social skills—making it easier for you to meet new people and form meaningful friendships!

### **It advances your career.**

Whether you’re looking to enter a new field or want to increase your skillset at your current job, volunteering helps you sharpen important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, organization, communication, and problem solving. It also allows you to try out a new career without making a long-term commitment. Adding volunteering experiences to your resume shows employers that you are caring, passionate, and take initiative to make society a better place.

# About Judy Sapos



Judy has more than 25 years of agency and corporate marketing and public relations experience, with expertise in corporate social responsibility, internal and external communications, and media relations. She manages Highmark Wholecare’s corporate social responsibility program, which gives back to the members and community. She also works with nonprofit partners and oversees Highmark Wholecare’s volunteer program.

Judy received a bachelor’s degree in journalism and marketing from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and recently obtained a Corporate Social Responsibility certificate from Boston College.

## WE'RE DOING GOOD IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

From January to September 2022, our team members spent more than **3,125 hours volunteering** at various nonprofit organizations in the communities we serve.

Over the summer, we held our first-ever **Do Good Days**, where our team members were encouraged to get out in the community and live our **Do Good** value by volunteering with an organization of their choice.

From participating in virtual activities, such as writing letters to those who may be suffering from mental health challenges, to in-person activities, like cleaning up parks and packaging food, our team members made an impact throughout Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Lancaster, Harrisburg, and beyond.





2023  
NEW YEAR'S

# Resolutions!

Check out some Highmark Wholecare members' and employees' resolutions and goals for 2023.

My New Year's resolution is to finally finish the renovations on the house. We have been working on it for over seven years, and it needs to be done!

**Mike Davis, 43, Pittsburgh, PA**  
*Highmark Wholecare Employee (Senior Business Solution Architect)*



I want to get 100–200 volunteer hours and use this program called RAVE that Highmark Wholecare has, which allows employees to redeem money for their favorite charities.

**Karan Singh, 34, Pittsburgh, PA**  
*Highmark Employee*  
*(Senior Business Consultant)*



I want to start pharmacy school in 2023 so I can have a greater impact on what I do now and anything that I do in the future, for the community and for health care as a whole.

**Jack Charles, Pittsburgh, PA**  
*Highmark Wholecare Employee*  
*(Senior Pharmacy Coordinator)*



I want to start doing more stand-up comedy. I push myself to try new things and explore talents God has given me. I look forward to doing many more stand-up routines for my church and community.

**Micah Rodgers, 59, Pittsburgh, PA**  
*Highmark Wholecare Member*



I want to finally quit smoking. I think going to the Pittsburgh Connection Center is truly going to help me quit because they have been so helpful there.

**Leslie Springs, 57, Pittsburgh, PA**  
*Highmark Wholecare Member*



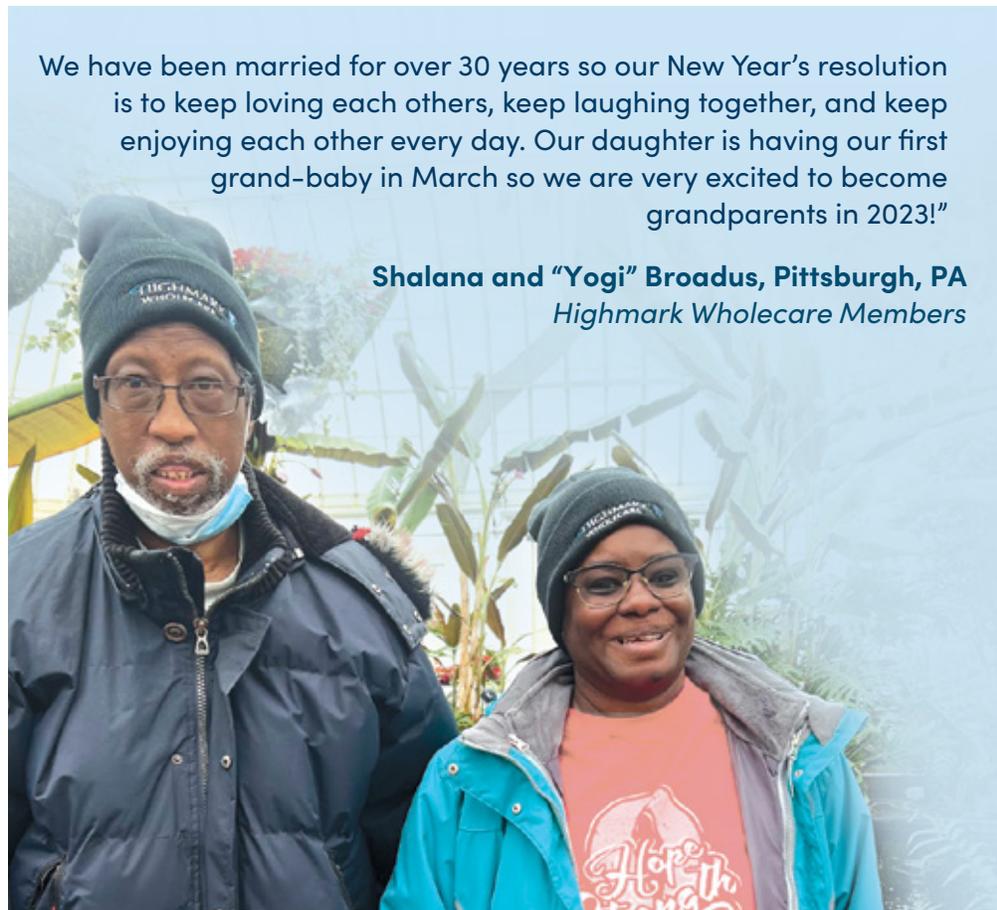
I want to travel more. I have been saving my money to go to Hawaii!

**Joanna Scott-Falls, 67, Pittsburgh, PA**  
*Highmark Wholecare Member*



We have been married for over 30 years so our New Year's resolution is to keep loving each other, keep laughing together, and keep enjoying each other every day. Our daughter is having our first grand-baby in March so we are very excited to become grandparents in 2023!"

**Shalana and "Yogi" Broadus, Pittsburgh, PA**  
*Highmark Wholecare Members*



# Follow the roadmap to health.



Every man, no matter his age, should have a wellness visit every year.

Start your year off right and call your doctor today to schedule your Annual Wellness Visit.



## AGE GROUPS

# 20s to 30s



### Regular Screenings

- **Annual Wellness Visit or Physical:** Every year.
- **Dental Exam & Cleaning:** Every 6 months.
- **Eye Exams:** Every year.
- **Blood Pressure Screening:** Every 2 years.
- **Cholesterol Test:** If you are 35 and older, every 5 years, or talk to your doctor if you have risk factors.



### At-Risk Screenings

- **Diabetes Screenings:** Every 3 years if you do not have diabetes, or as directed by your doctor.
- **STI Screening:** At least once a year, if you are sexually active with certain risk factors.
- **Skin Exams:** If you have fair skin, a family history of skin cancer, or other skin cancer risk factors, talk to your doctor.



### Shots

- **Flu Shot:** Every year.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster:** Stay up to date. If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.
- **HPV Vaccine:** If recommended by your doctor.
- **Tdap Booster (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis, a.k.a. whooping cough):** Every 10 years.
- **Pneumonia Vaccine:** If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.

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## AGE GROUPS

# 40s to 50s



### Regular Screenings

- **Annual Wellness Visit or Physical:** Every year.
- **Colorectal Cancer Screening:** If you are 50 or older, or if you are under 50 and have risk factors, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened.
- **Eye Exams:** Every year.
- **Blood Pressure Screening:** Every 2 years.
- **Diabetes Screenings:** Every 3 years if you do not have diabetes, or as directed by your doctor.
- **Dental Exam & Cleaning:** Every 6 months.
- **Cholesterol Test:** Every 5 years, or talk to your doctor if you have risk factors.

### Shots



- **Flu Shot:** Every year.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster:** Stay up to date. If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.
- **Tdap Booster (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, a.k.a. whooping cough):** Every 10 years.
- **Shingles or Herpes Zoster Vaccine:** If you are 50 or older, talk to your doctor.
- **Pneumonia Vaccine:** If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.



### At-Risk Screenings

- **Lung Cancer Screening:** If you are a smoker or have ever smoked in the past, talk to your doctor to see if a lung cancer screening is right for you.
- **STI Screening:** At least once a year, if you are sexually active with certain risk factors.
- **Skin Exams:** If you have fair skin, a family history of skin cancer, or other skin cancer risk factors, talk to your doctor.
- **Prostate Cancer Screening:** If you have a family history or symptoms, talk to your doctor.
- **Osteoporosis Screening:** If you have risk factors, such as low body weight, smoking, heavy alcohol use, having a fracture after age 50, or a family history, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened.





## Regular Screenings

- **Annual Wellness Visit and Blood Pressure Screening:** Every year.
- **Dental Exam & Cleaning:** Every 6 months.
- **Eye Exams:** Every year.
- **Colorectal Cancer Screening:** Until you are 76, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened.
- **Osteoporosis Screening:** If you have risk factors, such as low body weight, smoking, heavy alcohol use, having a fracture after age 50, or a family history, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened.
- **Cholesterol Test:** Every 3 to 5 years.
- **Diabetes Screenings:** Every 3 years if you do not have diabetes, or as directed by your doctor.



## At-Risk Screenings

- **Hearing Screening:** Every year, if you experience hearing loss.
- **Prostate Cancer Screening:** If you have a family history or symptoms, talk to your doctor.
- **Lung Cancer Screening:** If you are a smoker or have ever smoked in the past, talk to your doctor to see if a lung cancer screening is right for you.
- **Skin Exams:** If you have fair skin, a family history of skin cancer, or other skin cancer risk factors, talk to your doctor.



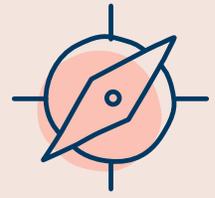
## Shots



- **Flu Shot:** Every year.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster:** Stay up to date. If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.
- **Tdap Booster (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, a.k.a. whooping cough):** Every 10 years.
- **Shingles or Herpes Zoster Vaccine:** Talk to your doctor.
- **Pneumonia Vaccine:** If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.



These are guidelines only, and your provider may make different recommendations. If you have chronic conditions, please talk about these with your doctor.



# How to navigate health through every age and stage.

Every woman, no matter her age, should have a wellness visit every year.

Start your year off right and call your doctor today to schedule your Annual Wellness Visit.



## AGE GROUPS

# 20s to 30s



### Regular Screenings

- **Annual Wellness Visit or Physical:** Every year.
- **Dental Exam & Cleaning:** Every 6 months.
- **Eye Exams:** Every year.
- **Blood Pressure Screening:** Every 2 years.
- **Cervical Cancer Screening:** Every 3 to 5 years, depending on the method of screening. Regular screenings are important, no matter the method.
- **Cholesterol Test:** Every 4 to 6 years.



### At-Risk Screenings

- **Mammogram:** If any changes are detected by you or your doctor, or if you have risk factors, talk to your doctor.
- **STI Screening:** At least once a year, if you are sexually active with certain risk factors.
- **Diabetes Screenings:** Every 3 years if you do not have diabetes, or as directed by your doctor.
- **Skin Exams:** If you have fair skin, a family history of skin cancer, or other skin cancer risk factors, talk to your doctor.



### Shots

- **Flu Shot:** Every year.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster:** Stay up to date. If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.
- **HPV Vaccine:** If recommended by your doctor.
- **Tdap Booster (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, a.k.a. whooping cough):** Every 10 years.
- **Pneumonia Vaccine:** If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.

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## AGE GROUPS

# 40s to 50s



### Regular Screenings

- **Annual Wellness Visit:** Every year.
- **Cervical Cancer Screening:** Every 3 to 5 years, depending on the method of screening. Regular screenings are important, no matter the method.
- **Eye Exams:** Every year.
- **Mammogram:** Beginning at age 40, talk to your doctor about screening mammograms. Talk to your doctor about a schedule for mammograms that is right for you.
- **Cancer Screening:** If you are 50 or older, or if you are under 50 and have risk factors, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened.
- **Blood Pressure Screening:** Every 2 years.
- **Diabetes Screenings:** Every 3 years if you do not have diabetes, or as directed by your doctor.
- **Dental Exam & Cleaning:** Every 6 months.
- **Cholesterol Test:** Every 4 to 6 years.



### At-Risk Screenings

- **Lung Cancer Screening:** If you are a smoker or have ever smoked in the past, talk to your doctor to see if a lung cancer screening is right for you.
- **STI Screening:** At least once a year, if you are sexually active with certain risk factors.
- **Skin Exams:** If you have fair skin, a family history of skin cancer, or other cancer risk factors, talk to your doctor.
- **Osteoporosis Screening:** If you have risk factors, such as low body weight, smoking, heavy alcohol use, having a fracture after age 50, or a family history, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened.



### Shots

- **Flu Shot:** Every year.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster:** Stay up to date. If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.
- **Tdap Booster (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, a.k.a. whooping cough):** Every 10 years.
- **Shingles or Herpes Zoster Vaccine:** If you are 50 or older, talk to your doctor.
- **Pneumonia Vaccine:** If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.

## AGE GROUPS

# 60s and Older



### Regular Screenings

- **Annual Wellness Visit:** Every year.
- **Cholesterol Test:** Every 4 to 6 years.
- **Cervical Cancer Screening:** Every 3 to 5 years, depending on the method of screening. Regular screenings are important, no matter the method.
- **Mammogram:** Talk to your doctor about a schedule for mammograms that is right for you.
- **Osteoporosis Screening:** If you have risk factors, such as low body weight, smoking, heavy alcohol use, having a fracture after age 50, or a family history, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened.
- **Colorectal Cancer Screening:** Until you are 76, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened.
- **Eye Exams:** Every year.
- **Blood Pressure Screening:** Every 2 years.
- **Diabetes Screenings:** Every 3 years if you do not have diabetes, or as directed by your doctor.
- **Dental Exam & Cleaning:** Every 6 months.



### At-Risk Screenings

- **Hearing Screening:** Every year, if you experience hearing loss.
- **Skin Exams:** If you have fair skin, a family history of skin cancer, or other skin cancer risk factors, talk to your doctor.
- **Lung Cancer Screening:** If you are a smoker or have ever smoked in the past, talk to your doctor to see if a lung cancer screening is right for you.



### Shots

- **Flu Shot:** Every year.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster:** Stay up to date. If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.
- **Tdap Booster (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, a.k.a. whooping cough):** Every 10 years.
- **Shingles or Herpes Zoster Vaccine:** Talk to your doctor.
- **Pneumonia Vaccine:** If you have chronic medical conditions, talk to your doctor.



These are guidelines only, and your provider may make different recommendations. If you have chronic conditions, please talk about these with your doctor.

# Use your Over-the-Counter (OTC) Benefit on products to start your year off right!

With our Over-the-Counter (OTC) Benefit, you have access to hundreds of retail wellness products when you use your quarterly OTC allowance. Take advantage of it; it's at no cost to you!



If your goal for 2023 is to quit smoking, you can use your OTC allowance to purchase:



922-99918  
Nicotine patch  
Step 1: 21 mg  
7 ct.



922-99917  
Nicotine patch  
Step 2: 14 mg  
7 ct.



922-99919  
Nicotine patch  
Step 3: 7 mg  
7 ct.



922-99914  
Nicotine gum: 4 mg  
40 ct.

If your goal for 2023 is to lose weight, you can use your OTC allowance to purchase:



**922-01072**  
Stainless steel digital scale  
*maximum capacity 550 lbs.*



**922-10521**  
Premium stainless steel food scale



If your goal for 2023 is to improve your cardiovascular health, you can use your OTC allowance to purchase:



**922-90327**  
Healthmate cuff digital blood pressure monitor cuff  
*circumference: 9 in. - 13 in.*



**922-10447**  
Pulse oximeter

If your goal for 2023 is to manage your diabetes, you can use your OTC allowance to purchase:



**922-910609**  
Cotton diabetic socks black  
*small/medium*



**922-10223**  
Gold Bond diabetic foot cream  
*3.4 oz.*

# There are **3** EASY WAYS to order.

- **Order online.**  
[hmkcares.com/OTCStore](http://hmkcares.com/OTCStore)
- **Order by mail.** Complete the order form found in the OTC Catalog, or download one on the website and send it in the postage paid envelope to: Fieldtex Products, 2921 Brighton Henrietta TL Road, Rochester, NY 14623
- **Order by phone.**  
1-855-350-0074 (TTY 711)  
**Monday through Saturday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.;**  
**Sunday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

If your goal for 2023 is to manage pain, you can use your OTC allowance to purchase:



**922-10465**  
Tiger Balm pain relieving patch, *5 ct.*



**922-10636**  
Tiger Balm arthritis rub, *4 oz.*



**922-90601**  
Arthritis pain relief tablets  
*650 mg, 24 ct.*



**922-10801**  
AccuRelief complete 3-in-1 pain relief device

Fieldtex is a separate company that administers the OTC, Home Safety, and Air Quality Equipment benefits for Highmark Wholecare.

# Winter bills can be high!

In seconds, we'll connect you to resources that can help.

The Wholecare Resource Center connects you to:



Food



Utility bill assistance



Clothing



Housing



Education programs

AND  
**more!**

We even tell you which programs you may qualify for and how many benefits you could receive!

## Get started today!

### Get connected.

- Find local programs, resources, and support
- See which programs you may qualify for
- Apply to programs
- Bookmark programs
- Get program alerts

Call 1-800-685-5209 (TTY 711)

OR

Visit [hmkcares.com/WRC](https://hmkcares.com/WRC)

Enter your zip code.



## Meet Highmark Wholecare member, Peggy Burton.

### Peggy Burton, 63

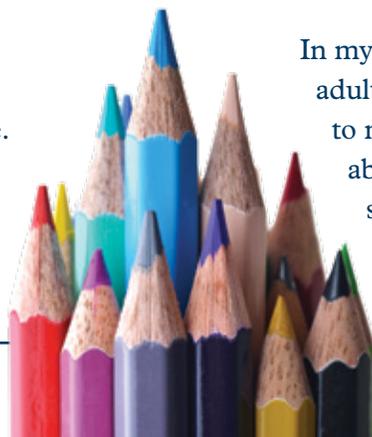
I grew up in North Philadelphia and now live in Germantown. I went to nursing school and was a licensed practical nurse (LPN) from 1980 to 2002. I loved caring for the elderly because they had so many stories to tell. Sometimes it felt like they were helping me more than I was helping them.

I got married right out of high school to a man who was physically violent toward my children and me. This led me down a path where I began to dabble in drugs to escape the pain. From there, my addiction spiraled. One day sticks out in my mind that helped me turn it all around: I had thought about stealing morphine from one of my cancer patients, and I felt terrible. This was not the type of person who I wanted to be. In the process of using, I had lost the love of my children.

I decided to turn my life around. I went through rehab and got clean and have been clean ever since. I was able to rebuild my relationship with my children and grandchildren, and I married a new man, who I spent 21 loving years with until he died of cancer in 2010.

My health started to decline, though; I have COPD. My Highmark Wholecare case manager, Angie Burns, has been an angel and a life saver. She makes sure I keep up with appointments and helped me get a humidifier, vacuum, hypoallergenic pillowcases, and sheets. I have been working with her for two years and hope to work with her for many more. She also helped me get connected to a bariatric doctor, who has helped me lose 29 pounds since March 2022.

In my free time, I really enjoy doing adult coloring books. It is very calming to me and helps with my anxiety. My absolute favorite thing to do is to spend time with my grandchildren.





# Meet

**Michael Davis,**  
Highmark Wholecare Senior  
Business Solution Architect.

## About Michael.

My wife and I have called Crafton, PA, home for the past 15 years. We have three rescue dogs: Cooper, Beatrix, and Cindy. We love to be outside and enjoy camping, water and snow skiing, sailing, golfing, and hiking. We are also passionate about traveling abroad and most recently celebrated our 40th birthdays at Machu Pichu in Peru.

## What Michael likes about biking.

It is a great form of exercise that gets you outside. It can be a group activity, or you can go out alone and enjoy the time lost in your own thoughts.

## Why Michael rides his bike to and from work.

The physical health benefits of being on a bike have been well-documented, but the mental health benefits should not be understated or ignored. My ride into the office

allows me time to mentally prepare for the day ahead, and the activity gets me going.

And the ride home helps me put the workday away, so when I get home, I can focus on my family and friends.

## What Michael does at Highmark Wholecare.

I am a Senior Business Solution Architect focused on member experience in our IT department. I help implement many of the systems our members interact with, focusing on making sure they have the best experience with Highmark Wholecare possible.

## Why Michael loves working at Highmark Wholecare.

Highmark Wholecare is one of the few companies I have worked where the team members truly



live up to the mission of caring for every member. Between all of the volunteer activities, delivering value-based projects, or just in the day-to-day business of running the company, everyone is truly working toward delivering the best care possible for our members.



# Stay warm with these cozy drinks you can make at home.

These recipes are quick, easy, healthy, and budget-friendly to keep you warm this winter.

## Healthier Hot Cocoa

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup light coconut milk (from the can)
- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened almond milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- Pinch of kosher salt

### DIRECTIONS

#### Step 1:

Add all ingredients to a small pot and place over medium low heat. Whisk vigorously to combine and to get rid of any lumps of cocoa. Do NOT let the hot chocolate boil or you risk burning the almond milk, which can turn the flavor into something you do not want. Simply warm in the pot until steamy, about 3-5 minutes.

#### Step 2:

Once hot chocolate is hot, remove from heat and pour into two mugs. Top with whipped cream, dairy-free whipped cream, marshmallows, or vegan marshmallows. Chocolate shavings or a dusting of cocoa powder on top are fun, too! Enjoy!

Source: <https://www.ambitiouskitchen.com/healthy-hot-chocolate/>



## Gingerbread Latte

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups milk of choice
- 2 shots espresso\*
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 2 tablespoons granulated sweetener of choice
- 1/4 cup whipped cream (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

#### Step 1:

In a small saucepan, add all your ingredients, except for the whipped cream. On medium heat, bring to a simmer. Once it begins to simmer, reduce to low and stir regularly. After two minutes, remove from the heat.

#### Step 2:

Pour into two cups and top with whipped cream.

\* If you don't have an espresso machine or coffee machine, use instant coffee. Combine 1/4 cup boiling water with 2 teaspoons of instant or decaf coffee. Reduce the milk to 1 3/4 cups.



Source: Homemade Gingerbread Latte (40 calories!)- The Big Man's World @ (thebigmansworld.com)

# Easy, comforting recipes to try this winter.

Kick-start your year with these healthy recipes that will leave you with those warm and fuzzy feels on a cold winter day.

## FEATURED MEMBER RECIPE

Enjoy this featured recipe from Highmark Wholecare member Jamie Feyes (Monroeville, Pa., 47)!

**“It is inexpensive and everyone at my church loves it!”**



### Spinach Dip

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 packet Knorr vegetable mix
- 1 cup Hellmann’s mayonnaise
- 16 ounces sour cream
- 10-ounce box frozen spinach/ thawed and drained well

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
2. Serve with pumpernickel round loaf of bread, tortilla chips, carrot/celery sticks or crackers.

Source: myplate.gov

## Cheeseburger Meatloaf

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds of ground beef
- 3/4 cup breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoon of pepper
- 3 cups of low-fat shredded cheddar cheese
- Ketchup, mustard or mayo (whatever you prefer on your burger)

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix beef, breadcrumbs, onion, eggs, salt, and pepper.
3. Flatten your meat into a rectangle shape.
4. Spread shredded cheese on center of meat.
5. Roll your meat like a jelly roll to form a pinwheel.
6. Pinch both ends to close.
7. Place in baking dish and cook for 1 hour.
8. If adding ketchup, mustard or mayo, coat meat at end with your topping of choice, heat oven to 400°F and cook for 10 more minutes.



## French Onion Soup Casserole

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 5 medium onions, sliced
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 3 thyme sprigs
- 2 parsley sprigs
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 (16-oz.) baguette, sliced
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 cups reduced-sodium beef broth
- 1/2 cup sherry
- 8 ounces provolone cheese, shredded
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves

### DIRECTIONS

1. Melt butter in pan. Add onions, salt, pepper, thyme and parsley sprigs, and bay leaves. Cook, stirring often, until onions are golden brown, for about 1 hour.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Put baguette slices on a baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven until lightly toasted (for about 12 minutes) and put aside.
3. Remove any thyme and parsley sprigs and bay leaves from onion mixture. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Add broth and sherry; bring to a boil over high. Boil, stirring constantly, until slightly thickened, for 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Layer half of the toasted baguette slices in baking dish. Spoon onion mixture evenly over bread. Top evenly with remaining baguette slices. Sprinkle with cheese; cover with aluminum foil. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes. Increase heat to broil. Remove foil; broil until cheese is bubbly, for about 3 minutes. Sprinkle with thyme leaves.

# NUTRITION COUNSELING PROGRAM

## One-on-one

Nutrition counseling sessions can be done telephonically or via our virtual telehealth system with your computer, smart tablet, or phone with one of our registered dietitians.

-  Pre-Diabetes
-  Overweight/Obesity
-  Kidney Disease
-  Pregnancy
-  Counseling
-  Cholesterol
-  Hypertension

You may be eligible for up to  
**14 Sessions Per Year**

Benefits vary by plan

**CALL US**  
TO LEARN MORE

**844-277-8052 (TTY 711)**

Option #2

Monday through Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

[hmkcares.com/ILS](http://hmkcares.com/ILS)

# STAY MINDFUL

## During The Holidays

*Did you know, on average, Americans gain 1-2 pounds during the holiday season? You may wonder what all contributes to this weight gain. First, we tend to eat out more due to special gatherings and events and sleep less. Most of the time the scale will recognize the gain as more water than fat. Consuming more starchy foods, such as sweets and breads, and consuming more salt than usual leads to water retention and feeling bloated.*

*Luckily, the extra pounds can be avoided by practicing mindful eating and incorporating a few simple strategies:*

- Listen to your body and know when to stop:** *Before going back for seconds, wait a few minutes to see if you really are hungry.*
- If you have an event, do not skip meals:** *Start your day with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and/or a protein.*
- Don't rush to eat!** *Enjoy the special meal.*
- Remember the "My Plate" method** *Fill half your plate with vegetables and/or a salad and smaller portions of the unhealthy foods.*
- Do not forget to get good quality sleep** *Cutting back on sleep makes it hard to manage blood sugar.*
- Get your body moving!** *Exercise is the best plan of attack during the holidays. Try taking a walk after a holiday meal!*

*The most important thing to remember about the holiday is connecting with family and friends. Always be mindful of weight gain. By not taking care of weight gained over years, medical problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer can occur.*



**Denise Li, MS, RDN, LDN**  
ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist (ACSM EP-C)

# *YOUR* Oral Health & Aging

*Many of the foods and drinks that doctors recommend for a healthy body also are good for your teeth and gums.*



Oral health problems increase for people as they age.



That's your No. 1 reason to keep up with your routine dental exams and oral health care at home.

Older Americans with the most dental problems tend to be those who are poor, lack insurance, or are members of racial and ethnic minorities. Dental health problems can increase if you're disabled, homebound, or living in a nursing home, according to the CDC.

The top dental problems for senior citizens:

- **Cavities.** One in five adults aged 65 or older have untreated tooth decay.
- **Gum disease.** About 2 in 3 adults aged 65 years or older have gum disease.
- **Tooth loss.** Nearly 1 in 5 of adults aged 65 or older have lost all of their teeth. Missing

teeth or dentures can deter you from eating healthfully. Why? People without teeth or with dentures often prefer easily chewed foods instead of fresh fruits and vegetables, which can require more chewing.

- **Oral cancer.** Cancers of the mouth are primarily diagnosed in older adults.

To help you keep your oral health as you age:

- Drink fluoridated water. Brush with fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush your teeth twice a day. Floss daily.
- See your dentist even if you wear dentures.
- Avoid all tobacco products.

- Limit alcoholic drinks, which can be sugary.
- If you have diabetes, try to keep it under control. This will decrease the risks for other complications, including gum disease.
- Change medicines that cause dry mouth, or drink more water.
- See your doctor or a dentist if you have sudden changes in taste and smell.

If you're a caregiver, help older individuals brush and floss their teeth. The American Dental Association recommends brushing at least twice a day, and flossing daily. 🦷

# Got dentures?

Keep up with your oral health.

Important tips for taking care of your dentures from Kristin Withers, RDH, PHDHP, member of Highmark Wholecare's Public Health Dental Hygienist Practitioner team.

## Visiting your dentist.

Tell your dentist about any concerns you may have with your mouth. Even if you have full dentures, it's still important to see a dentist once a year for an exam and oral cancer screening. Your dentist can check to ensure that your dentures are still fitting properly.

## Taking care at home.

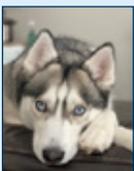
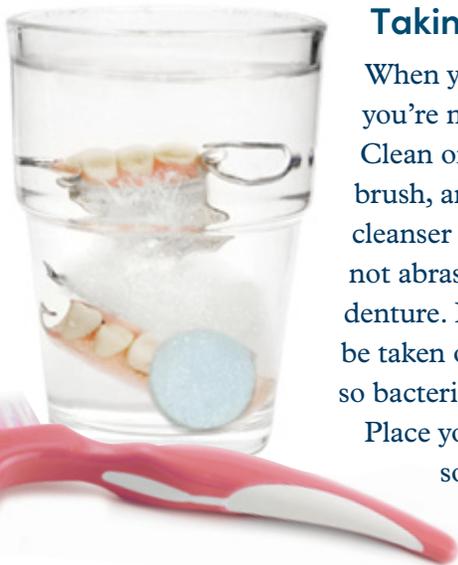
When you don't brush correctly, you're more likely to get root cavities. Clean only with a special denture brush, and use only denture-specific cleanser tablets, gels, or pastes that are not abrasive enough to scratch your denture. Full and partial dentures must be taken out during the day or at night, so bacteria do not collect in your mouth.

Place your denture in a cup of water so that it will not dry out.

## Got dry mouth?

Xerostomia, or dry mouth, can wreak havoc on our mouths. Most times, this is caused from a side effect of medications or radiation or chemotherapy for cancer.

It's important to discuss your concerns about dry mouth with your dentist. There are prescription toothpastes and fluoride gels that can be applied to help protect the teeth from decay. Also, only use a mouthwash that is zero alcohol or doesn't have the "burning" effect.



**Kristin Withers** is on the PHDHP (Public Health Dental Hygienist Practitioner) team at Highmark Wholecare. She was born and raised in Pittsburgh and continued her college education at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Dental Medicine. She and her husband have two children and a 5-year-old Siberian husky, Kiya.

# SHOP ONLINE!

SNAP EBT now allows you to buy eligible food items normally covered by SNAP online at your favorite grocery provider.



Shop safely and conveniently from the comfort of your own home.

**amazon** (Delivery only)

1. Go to [amazon.com/snap](https://amazon.com/snap).
2. Click on "Add your SNAP EBT Card."
3. Create an account and log in.
4. Add your EBT card number.

\*Since you also have Medicaid, you can also get Amazon Prime for 50% off (\$5.99 a month). This gives you access to free shipping, exclusive discounts, deals, and award-winning movies and TV shows. You can join by going to [amazon.com/qualify](https://amazon.com/qualify).

**Walmart** (Pick-up only)

1. Order groceries at [walmart.com/grocery](https://walmart.com/grocery) or on the Walmart Grocery mobile app.
2. During checkout, select "EBT Card" as payment method.
3. Swipe your EBT card with the Walmart associate when you arrive at the pick-up location.



(Pick-up or delivery)

1. Order groceries online at [giantfoodstores.com](https://giantfoodstores.com), [gianteagle.com](https://gianteagle.com), [martinsfoods.com](https://martinsfoods.com), [foodtown.com](https://foodtown.com), [pricechopper.com](https://pricechopper.com), [priceritemarketplace.com/sm/planning/rsid/1000](https://priceritemarketplace.com/sm/planning/rsid/1000), [shoprite.com](https://shoprite.com), [sprouts.com](https://sprouts.com), [TheFreshGrocer.com](https://thefreshgrocer.com), [topsmarkets.com](https://topsmarkets.com), [wegmans.com](https://wegmans.com), or [weismarkets.com](https://weismarkets.com). You can also use the mobile app of any of the stores listed.
2. During checkout, select "Pay Online," then click the "Place Order" button.
3. Select "EBT SNAP Card" as the payment method to complete checkout.
4. If you choose to pick up your order, the store's friendly staff will bring your order to your car when you arrive at the store.



(Pick-up or delivery)

1. Go to [instacart.com/aldi](https://www.instacart.com/aldi).
2. Enter in ZIP code and click "Shop at Aldi."
3. Create an account if you do not have an account.
4. After you are done shopping, click on "Go to Checkout."
5. For payment, go to "EBT SNAP card" and click on "Add EBT SNAP Card."
6. Place your order.



1. Go to [bjs.com/](https://www.bjs.com/)
2. Add SNAP-eligible items to your cart.
3. Enter your SNAP EBT information at checkout.
4. Pay for EBT-eligible items with your remaining EBT balance. You'll see your EBT account balance, as well as the amount of eligible items in your cart. Your EBT balance must be greater than the amount of an individual item for EBT to be used for payment.

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** helps Pennsylvanians buy food. You may have heard this program referred to as "food stamps." SNAP is a public benefit you can use to buy nutritious foods.

**Learn if you qualify and apply for SNAP.**

There is a quick and easy two-page application for Pennsylvanians 60 or older and/or with disabilities and no earned income. Go to [compass.state.pa.us](https://compass.state.pa.us) to apply for or renew your SNAP benefits.



(Scan And Go)

1. Download the Scan And Go - Sam's Club mobile application.
2. Add SNAP-eligible items to your cart.
3. Enter your SNAP EBT information at checkout.

**QUESTIONS?** To learn what you can and can't buy with your SNAP benefits, call the Department of Human Services Helpline at **1-800-692-7462** (711 or **1-800-451-5886** for individuals with hearing impairments). Or, visit your County Assistance Office.



# Lifeline

# Be there

At Lifeline, we help you be there for the moments that matter. At home or on the go, we have the right medical alert system to match your lifestyle. With access to the help you need at the press of a button, you have the peace of mind to focus more on living your life.

**With the #1 medical alert service, you can:**

- Feel assured knowing you have 24/7 access to Trained Care Specialists
- Be self-confident with technology designed to help you maintain your lifestyle
- Have the freedom to live how you want with advanced fall detection and mobile system options available\*

You may already be eligible for a Lifeline system with your current benefits plan. Please call **1-800-685-5209** (TTY: 711) and follow the options for Care Management to find out more.

\*Mobile coverage inside and outside the home provided where adequate wireless network coverage is available. Recharging of the mobile pendant is done by the subscriber as needed, when connected to the charger. No. 1 claim based on the number of subscribers. Automatic fall detection does not detect 100% of falls. If able, users should always press their button when they need help.



Philips Lifeline is a separate company that administers emergency response systems for Highmark Wholecare.

Through your SilverSneakers benefit, you can get memberships to thousands of fitness locations, like the Vintage Senior Services Center.

To get started, call **1-888-423-4632 (TTY 711)** to sign up! You can also visit [hmkcares.com/SilverSneakers](http://hmkcares.com/SilverSneakers)

**Vintage Senior Services Center**

421 North Highland Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

To find out more about Vintage, call: **412-361-5003** or visit: [www.vintageseniorservices.org](http://www.vintageseniorservices.org)

Vintage offers an array of group exercise classes, such as: EnhanceFitness, SilverSneakers, Soul Line Dance, T'ai Chi, Yoga, and Chair Exercise.

Common area for members to relax and socialize with a bite to eat from the volunteer-run café.



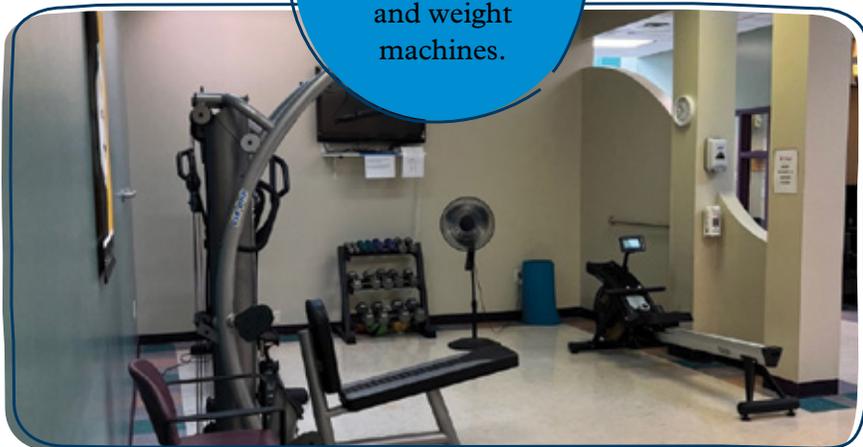
A station to stay healthy and check blood pressure.



Fitness center with free weights, cardio equipment, and weight machines.



Technology Room for free computer classes and one-on-one tech coaching for members.



SilverSneakers is a registered trademark of Tivity, Inc. Tivity, Inc. is a separate company that administers the SilverSneakers Fitness Program.

Let's get physical!

# Try something new this year with these EnhanceFitness moves.

EnhanceFitness is a low-impact class designed for all fitness levels.

It is filled with cardio, balance exercises, weight training and flexibility, and ends with a 10-minute meditation to relax and calm the mind. Here are a few moves that you can do from home!

## Warm-up



1. Begin with feet hip-width apart and shoulders relaxed at your side. Lift hands over head to the ceiling and use your breath to inhale through your nose.
2. Exhale through your mouth as you bring your hands back down to your side. As you lift hands and lower, shift hips from left to right to warm up the lower body. **Repeat.**

### INSTRUCTOR BIO:

**Stephanie Martin** started her fitness career at the University of Pittsburgh with a Master of Science degree in Exercise Physiology. She also attended Point Park University and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance. With over 20 years of experience as a certified fitness professional, her true passion is helping others overcome sedentary behavior and bring physical activity into their day-to-day lives. She coaches clients to help them achieve their fitness goals without injury. She works with adults of all ages, genders, body types, and fitness levels.

# Squat



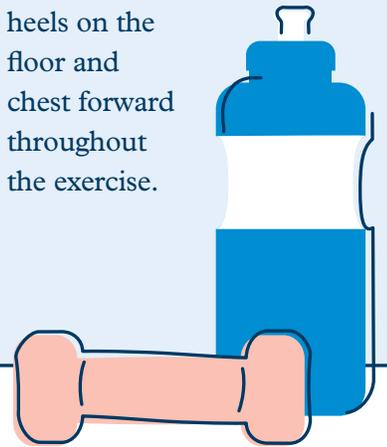
1. Stand tall with feet shoulder-width apart with your toes facing forward or slightly outwards.



2. Engage your core and bend at the hips and bend your knees. Hold arms out in front of you, with or without light dumbbells. Sit backward as if you were to sit on a chair. As you sit back, keep your chest up and look forward. Keep your knees in line with your toes.



3. Stand back up, putting equal weight on both legs, keeping heels on the floor and chest forward throughout the exercise.



# Overhead Press



1. Stand with your feet about hip-width apart, or wider for more support. Stand tall with your shoulders back and down and engage your core by pulling your belly button towards your spine.



2. If you choose to use weights, grab a set of light dumbbells or other household items such as food cans or water bottles. Bend your elbows and bring your hands in front, with palms facing each other. Inhale, press hands up, and straighten arms. Exhale as you bring your hands back down to shoulders.

# New year, new diabetes plan!

Starting off the new year can be challenging. Use the tips below to start on the right track!

## Make an appointment to talk with your doctor about your diabetes plan.

Calendars fill up fast, both your doctor's and yours!

Schedule time with your doctor to discuss your goals and develop a plan to reach them!



## Schedule an eye exam.

Did you know diabetes is the leading cause of blindness? Early detection is important, and an eye exam that looks at your retina should be part of your diabetes plan each year. Eye doctors can use a special camera that takes a picture of your retina or use drops with a magnifying tool to examine your retina. Whichever option you are comfortable with is the right choice.



## Keep a footcare routine.

Diabetes can cause damage to the nerves in your feet, causing you to not feel as well. If not checked daily, cuts and sores can go unnoticed, resulting in infections, wounds, and possibly amputations! Check your feet daily, without socks on—do not forget to get in between your toes!

Call your doctor if anything does not look right or is taking longer to heal.

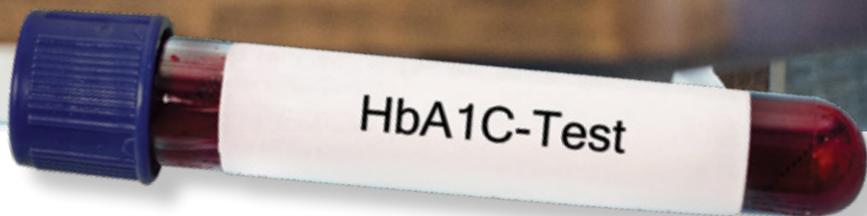


*Nicole Kohler is a Diabetes Care and Education Specialist who works*

*as a Clinical Design Specialist with Highmark Wholecare. She has been supporting people with diabetes for nearly ten years and believes everyone with diabetes can reach their goals and lead happy, healthy lives.*

## Review your medications.

Your pharmacist is an excellent resource to answer questions you may have on diabetes medication. They may have tools and resources available to help you understand your medications and reach your goals.



### When was the last time you had your A1C checked?

A1C is an average measure of your blood sugar over time—three months, actually! The American Diabetes Association recommends people with diabetes to have their A1C checked at least twice a year, or every six months. Some people may need to have it checked more often if there is a change in your medication or overall health.

Need help  
finding a  
provider?

Use the Find a Doctor  
tool on our website:

**[Highmarkwholecare.com](https://www.highmarkwholecare.com)**.



# Check out our events!

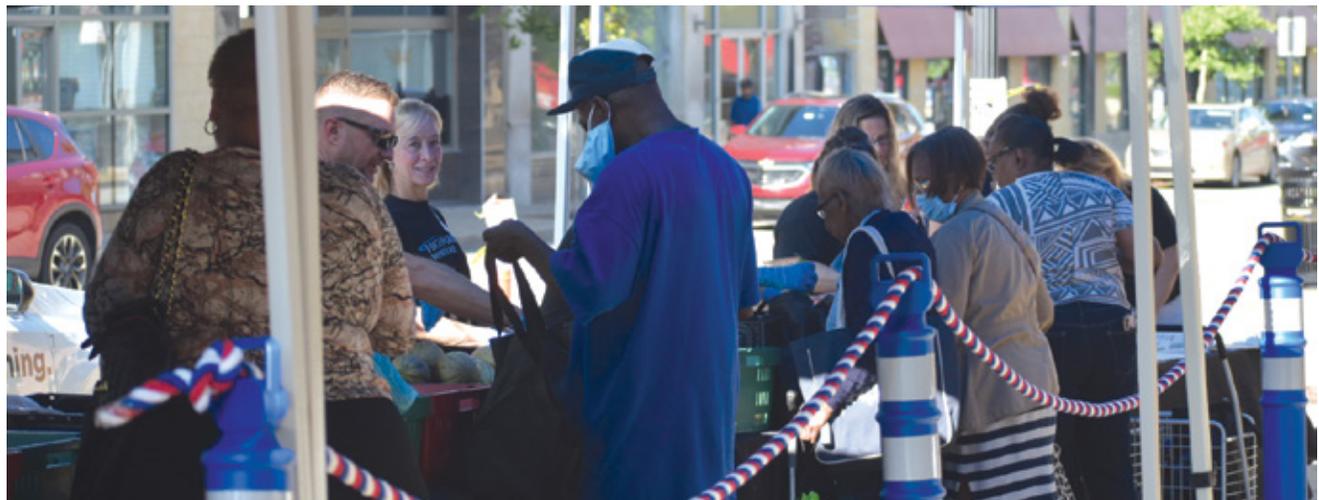
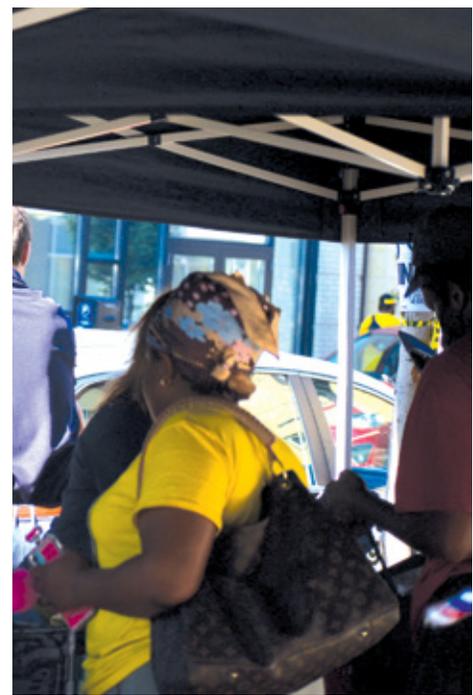
Join us for future events.

Follow us on social media to learn about events happening near you!





# Get connected at our Connection Centers!



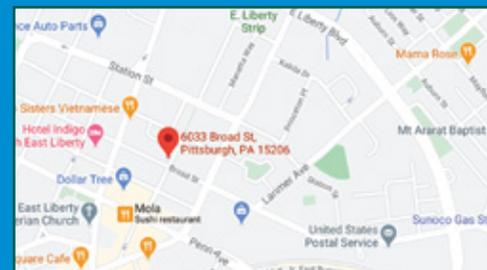


Follow us on social media to learn about future events!

## Stop by our Connection Centers!

### PITTSBURGH

(Right near the Target in East Liberty)



6033 Broad Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

PittsburghConnectionCenter@  
HighmarkWholesale.com

Hours: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

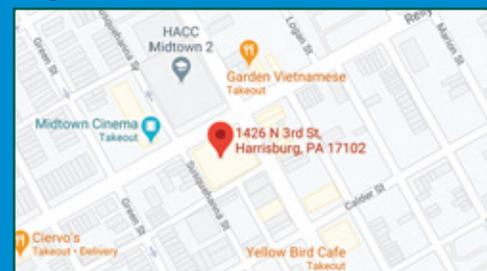
General Line: 412-690-7400 (TTY 711)

Concierge: 412-690-7402

Michael Callaghan, Supervisor:  
412-690-7478

### HARRISBURG

(Right near the Midtown Cinema)



1426 N 3rd Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17102

HarrisburgConnectionCenter@  
HighmarkWholesale.com

Hours: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

General Line: 717-510-7600 (TTY 711)

Concierge: 717-510-7601

Kevin Keefer, Supervisor:  
717-510-7602





**This winter, check out these  
FREE things to do in Pennsylvania.**

## **Western PA**

**West End Overlook Park**  
**Marlow St.,**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15205**

Pittsburgh's skyline is a sight to see during any season, but it looks remarkably beautiful in the winter during a deep freeze. Brave the cold and head out to the West End Overlook for one of the best views of the city!

**The Frick Pittsburgh**  
**7227 Reynolds St.,**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15208**

Visit the beautiful gilded-age buildings and gardens right here in Pittsburgh. You can tour the grounds of The Frick Art Museum, Car and Carriage Museum, and Greenhouse at no charge.



## Pittsburgh Banjo Club at Elks Lodge

400 Cedar Ave.,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Looking for live music and a unique experience? Visit the Allegheny Elks Lodge in the North Side on Wednesdays from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. for the Pittsburgh Banjo Club's weekly practice.



Museum year-round, walk the cobblestone streets, or visit the theater where you can view a short film about the company's history.

## Peddler's Village

100 Peddlers Village,  
Lahaska, PA 18931

Stroll through this storybook village to see colonial-style buildings and award-winning gardens where guests can enjoy year-round events, festivals, and specially themed months.

## Wagner Free Institute of Science

1700 W Montgomery Ave.,  
Philadelphia, PA 19121

Founded in 1855, this natural history museum is in its original Victorian setting. It is home to over 100,000 natural history specimens, such as fossils, shells, minerals, and more.

## Central PA

### Hershey's Chocolate Ride-in Tour

101 Chocolate World Wy.,  
Hershey, PA 17033

Learn about the chocolate-making process by taking the famous Hershey's Chocolate tour ride and end the visit with a free chocolate tasting!



### Old Cumberland County Courthouse

1 Courthouse Sq.,  
Carlisle, PA 17013

When it's not being used for functions, check out the original courtroom in one of Pennsylvania's oldest courthouses still in use.

### Tours and Tastings at Midstate Distillery

1817 N Cameron St.,  
Harrisburg, PA 17103

On Saturday afternoons, you can visit the first distillery in Harrisburg since prohibition. End the tour with a free tasting!



## Beaver County Airport - Air Heritage Museum

35 Piper St. #1043,  
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Check out the museum to learn about the history of flight through images and admire examples of civilian, commercial, and military aircraft artifacts from WWII.



## Independence Hall

520 Chestnut St.,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Head over to Independence Hall to learn about the Declaration of Independence. While you're there, stop for a tour of Congress Hall where George Washington was inaugurated as the first president of the United States.

## Curtis Institute of Music

1726 Locust St.,  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

This famed and historical music conservatory offers free admission to concerts by talented young musicians. Their student recital series is held on most Mondays at 7 p.m., as well as Wednesday and Friday evenings at 8 p.m.

## Eastern PA

### Byers' Choice Christmas Museum and Gift Emporium

4355 County Line Rd.,  
Chalfont, PA 18914

Take a day trip back in time to Victorian London and explore the Christmas



# Stay WARM, look COOL.

Fashion tips for keeping warm this winter.



## Dress in layers.

Wear three layers. Your base layer may be a turtleneck and leggings; your middle layer might be a material like fleece; and your outer layer should be a winter coat to protect you against the wind, rain, and snow.

## Get the right fit.

Clothes that fit right prevent wind chill. Skip baggy and oversized clothes and opt for clothes that fit you just right.

## Wear long coats.

Short jackets may be trendy, but keeping your entire torso covered is key to staying warm.



## Consider wool.

Wool can keep you warm and dry all day long. If you find wool too itchy, consider investing in merino. Thrift stores are a great place to find wool sweaters.

## Skip cotton.

Cotton is a fantastic material, but it holds a lot of water, which makes it not that great for winter. If you have wool pants, opt for those instead of jeans.

## Have fun with accessories.

If you wear the same winter coat every day, switch things up by changing out your hat, gloves, and scarves. Belts can also give your coat a new life.

## Tread smartly.

Choose a shoe with a good tread to avoid slipping on ice. Wear shoes with thick wool socks to avoid frostbite.

# How to build a classic winter wardrobe capsule.

Warm layers for winter without the bulk.

## TOPS



Tank top



Base layer  
long-sleeves



Wool blend  
sweaters



Thin vest

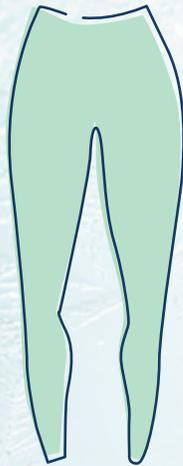


Down jacket

## BOTTOMS



Thin wool  
blend socks



Base layer  
leggings



Jean with  
stretch



Lined boots or  
shoes

## ACCESSORIES



Lined beanie



Scarf



Thin gloves



# BEWARE

## of durable medical equipment fraud schemes.

Durable Medical Equipment (DME) are items that are medically necessary for ongoing care. Some examples of DME may include wheelchairs, crutches, or hospital beds and may be covered by your insurance. Fraud, waste, and abuse can occur when these items are issued for use but are not necessary for ongoing care.

### Examples of fraud, waste, and abuse may include:

- Billing for DME items or services that were never provided
- Billing for DME services or upkeep of the item that was never performed
- Billing for DME items that are not needed for ongoing care
- Billing for a higher priced item than what was provided
- Knowingly providing defective equipment
- Providing fake documentation to obtain DME items

### Here's what you can do.

Report potential fraud to Highmark Wholecare's Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Team if you suspect something is not right by calling 412-255-4340 (TTY 711) or 844-718-6400 (TTY 711) or visiting <https://highmarkwholecare.com/fraud-and-abuse>.

### Examples of problems to report may include:

- If you receive DME items or services that you never requested
- If you receive an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) for items that you do not need, did not receive, or previously returned
- If you are offered "free" items or supplies but your insurance is billed
- If you see an EOB for services for someone who has passed away
- If someone requests your Medicare Insurance Number or other personal health information in exchange for free services, money, or other gifts
- If you receive documentation for DME from a doctor that you have never seen

References: CMS.gov: Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Reference List; CMS.gov: Medicare Fraud & Abuse: Prevent, Detect, Report; USfraudattorneys.com: Durable Medical Equipment Fraud; Smpresource.org: Durable Medical Equipment Fraud

# Our goal for

# 2023

is to provide you with the **BEST**  
health care possible!

## WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE:

- ✓ The care that you need quickly.
- ✓ Providers who are respectful and courteous.
- ✓ Care coordination and clear expectations.
- ✓ A customer service team that treats you with respect and kindness and gets you answers to your questions, fast.
- ✓ A health plan that cares not only about your health but cares about you as a whole person.
- ✓ Rewards for completing healthy activities, free transportation to your appointments, and an Over-the-Counter (OTC) Benefit to shop hundreds of products.
- ✓ Reminders about getting your flu shot and advice to quit smoking.

# Have you heard about 988?

You may be familiar with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255), but have you heard about **988**?

**988** is the new, three-digit dialing code you can call or text for **help with mental health-related distress**. You can reach out for thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are **worried about a loved one who may need crisis support**.

The existing number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) **will not go away**. You can use either number, but 988 may be easier to remember.

The Lifeline is **free** and **confidential**. It is also available **24/7**. You can either call for help in multiple languages or text for English only. The Lifeline currently serves TTY users either through their preferred relay service or by dialing 711, then 1-800-273-8255. Also, the Lifeline is available through **chat** by visiting <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat>.

Remember, **there is hope**. The Lifeline works. For more information, please visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988>.

# Sick? Why antibiotics may not always be needed.

Antibiotics aren't always needed when you get sick. Unnecessary antibiotic use can lead to antibiotic resistance, making it even more difficult to treat infection and causing more side effects.

**Here are some facts to help you talk with your doctor to make the best decisions for you.**

## **If you have any of these conditions, antibiotics are not needed.**

- COVID-19, the flu, or the common cold
- Many sinus and ear infections, which often get better on their own

## **The following are common side effects of antibiotic use.**

- Rash
- Dizziness
- Nausea and abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Yeast infection

## **There are some serious side effects, too.**

- *Clostridioides difficile* (C. diff), which causes severe diarrhea that can lead to colon damage and even death
- Severe and life-threatening allergic reactions, such as wheezing, hives, shortness of breath, and anaphylaxis (which also includes feeling like your throat is closing or choking, or your voice is changing)

## **If you are sick, here's what you can do to feel better.**

- Do NOT call and ask your provider for an antibiotic prescription. If you are sick, your doctor will determine if you have an infection that should be treated with antibiotics.
- DO call and ask your provider about ways to relieve symptoms caused by a virus.
  - If your doctor prescribes antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.
  - Talk with a health care professional immediately if you develop any side effects.
  - Do your best to stay healthy and keep others healthy.
    - Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
    - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze.
    - Stay home when you are sick.
    - Be fully vaccinated, including against flu and COVID-19.



## HEART DISEASE AND ANXIETY DISORDERS:

# What's the difference, and how are they related?

You're having chest pain and your heart is racing. An ambulance is called, and you are taken to a hospital emergency room. Was it a heart attack or anxiety?

Heart attacks and anxiety disorders can share similar, if not identical, symptoms. Anyone suffering from sudden and severe chest pain should go to the ER. A physician will test the patient's blood for specific heart muscle enzymes. If none are found, it's usually not a heart attack.

### What are the signs and symptoms of a heart attack?

Chest pain or discomfort are the most obvious signs and symptoms of a heart attack, but there are symptoms that are not so obvious. These include upper back or

neck pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea/vomiting, dizziness, and shortness of breath.

### What are anxiety disorders?

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common mental illnesses in the United States, affecting 40 million adults in the U.S., or 18.1% of the population every year. Common symptoms shared by any anxiety disorder may include the following.

- Excessive worry/fear
- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Sleep disturbance

- Difficulty concentrating
- Physiological symptoms such as sweating, racing heart, chest pains, difficulty breathing, tingling or numb hands, dizziness, and feeling weak
- Thoughts you may be dying

### How are heart disease and anxiety related?

Studies suggest that the high levels of cortisol from long-term stress and anxiety can increase blood cholesterol, triglycerides, blood sugar, and high blood pressure. These are common risk factors for heart disease. This stress can



also cause changes that promote the buildup of plaque deposits in the arteries.

Even minor stress can trigger heart problems, like poor blood flow to the heart muscle. Long-term stress can affect how the blood clots. This makes the blood stickier and increases the risk of stroke. Therefore, it's important to keep stress and anxiety levels low.

For those who already have heart disease, the physical symptoms of anxiety can be especially damaging.

- **Rapid heart rate (tachycardia):** In serious cases, this can interfere with normal heart

function and increase the risk of sudden cardiac arrest.

- **Increased blood pressure:** If chronic, this can lead to coronary disease, weakening of the heart muscle, and heart failure.
- **Decreased heart rate variability:** This may result in higher incidence of death after an acute heart attack.

There are many ways to treat anxiety, and people should work with their doctor to choose the treatment that is best for them. If you have heart disease, take your medication as directed by your doctor, even if you are feeling well.



**Justina Egan, MSW, LCSW,** has worked in the mental health field for over 20 years.

Justina has been employed at Highmark Wholecare for five years as a Medical Case Manager in the Behavioral Health Department.



**Kimberly Dawson, RN, BSN,** is a registered nurse who started her career as

a nurse in the cardiac ICU. For the past four years, Kimberly has been working as a Medical Case Manager on the Medicare CM team at Highmark Wholecare.

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# Why Seasonal Affective Disorder is more than the cold weather blues.

Learn from Jennifer Anderson, M.S.Ed, LPC.

The days get shorter, the breeze gets cooler, and the sun shines a little less bright. You find yourself feeling the cold weather blues, but is it something more? It could be! According to Mental Health America, Seasonal Affective Disorder impacts about **5% of the United States population** each year.

## What is Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)?

It is a type of depression that begins and ends during the same time each year, following a set seasonal pattern. The most common form of SAD begins each year in the fall and resolves in spring. However, SAD can be aligned with any seasonal changes.

## What causes Seasonal Affective Disorder?

Mental Health America identifies biological factors, such as the reduced exposure to sunlight affecting an individual's serotonin level, the brain chemical that affects mood. Lower levels of serotonin are linked to depression. Additionally, melatonin, which is a hormone that regulates sleep, is produced at increased levels in darkness. Because of the increase in darkness during winter, melatonin levels can increase, resulting in changes in sleeping patterns and an increase in sleep, which is associated with seasonal depression.



Where you live may also be a factor. The further you live from the equator, the greater your risk for SAD, as it is believed that the additional darkness and areas that are cloudier are a factor in SAD.

**SAD can include any of these symptoms, which can vary from mild to severe.**

- Feeling sad or down most of the day, nearly every day
- No longer being interested in things that you once enjoyed
- Feeling sluggish, tired, or having low energy
- Excessive sleeping
- Overeating, weight gain, or craving carbohydrates
- Anxiety
- Mood changes
- Difficulty with concentrating
- Feeling worthless, guilty, or hopeless
- Thoughts of not wanting to live, hurting yourself, or suicide\*

If you feel you are experiencing SAD, you are not alone, and treatment is available! Talking to your doctor about what you're experiencing is a very important step, as medication can be used to treat depression in situations where appropriate. Medication used alongside of talk therapy has proven to be helpful in treating Seasonal Affective Disorder.

**There are also things you can do at home to help alleviate mild symptoms related to Seasonal Affective Disorder.**

- Exercise
- Get as much natural light as possible by going outside or sitting next to a window
- Be more active in early daytime to expose yourself to as much light as possible
- Eat healthy foods
- Stay away from alcohol and other drugs

**\*If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, report to your local emergency room or call the National Suicide Prevention Line at 1-800-273-8255 (1-800-273-TALK) or by dialing 988. You can also text "Hello" to 741741 to reach the Crisis Text Line.**

**Help is available.  
You matter.**



**Jennifer Anderson, M.S.Ed, LPC**, is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Behavioral Health Case Manager for Highmark Wholecare.



*I have a 4-year-old grandchild. He waited almost 3 years to start talking. When he finally said, "I love you," I heard it loud and clear. I cannot think of a better sound or a better reason to have purchased hearing aids.*

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TruHearing is a separate company that administers the hearing aid benefit(s) for Highmark Wholecare.

# Get crafty with these easy DIY projects.

Make a family tree photo.



## What you need:

- Pencil
- Watercolor paper
- Paint and paint brush
- Glue
- Mini clothes pins

## Steps.

1. Draw a tree shape on your watercolor paper and paint the tree.
2. Once dry, glue mini clothes pins to branches of the tree.
3. Clip your family photos with the clothes pins.

**Pro tip:** You can buy an inexpensive frame from the dollar store and frame your tree to elevate the look.

Enjoy the glow of a mason jar luminary.

## Items needed.

- Glass gems
- Hot glue gun
- Mason jars
- Tea lights or battery-operated candles

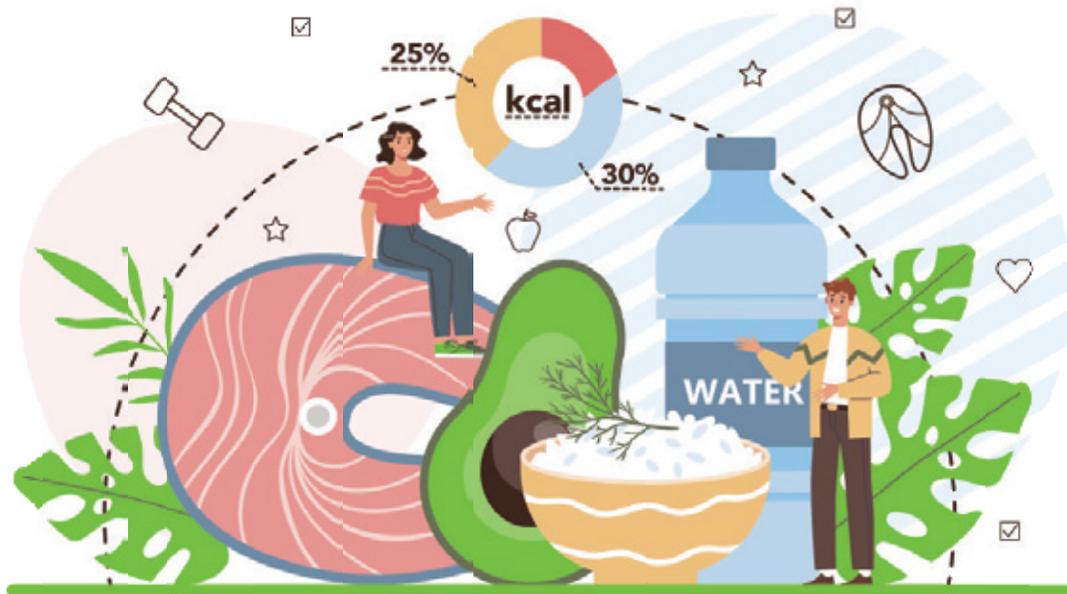


## Steps.

1. Glue gems to the mason jar so entire mason jar is covered.
2. Add tea lights or battery operated candles.



# Take the First Steps to a Healthier You



## Check your risk for Type-2 diabetes

You could qualify for a lifestyle change program and earn a Fitbit® activity tracker.\*

Highmark Wholecare has teamed up with Solera to bring you a wellness program focused on helping you get healthier and reducing your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes—at **no additional cost!**

**All it takes is a few minutes to take a quiz and see if you qualify.**

 fitbit

**Get a FREE Fitbit activity tracker\***



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[www.gosolera.com/highmarkwholecare](http://www.gosolera.com/highmarkwholecare) or call **1-866-671-9027** (TTY: 711)

\*For participants who complete four weeks of activity meeting Diabetes Prevention Program guidelines. Applies to select Fitbit models; limited to one per person. Solera Health reserves the right to substitute an alternate tracker.

Solera is a separate company that administers a diabetes prevention program for Highmark Wholecare.

# The Fun Zone!

## New Year's Crossword Puzzle

1. Social gathering of guests
- 2A. Salutation
- 2D. A chart with days weeks and months
- 3A. Counting numbers in reverse order
- 3D. Pieces of colored paper
4. First month of the year
5. 12:00 a.m.
6. A promise to yourself, typically made before the New Year
7. Popular location in New York to celebrate







# What is the CMS Medicare Survey?

You may receive a survey from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in the spring. This survey is your opportunity to let the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services know how Highmark Wholecare is doing.

They will ask you questions about things such as our customer service, doctors, specialists, pharmacy, and more. We hope that you will fill out this survey because we value your opinion. Several measures from this survey have been included in the Star Ratings for the CMS Quality Bonus program. The higher a plan's ratings are, the larger the bonus which can be invested into additional programs to assist our members.

If there is anything that we can do to help improve your experience, give us a call at **1-800-685-5209** (TTY 711).



## Your opinion matters!

If Medicare sends you a survey in the spring, please fill it out. The survey is your chance to help your friends at Highmark Wholecare keep providing you with the best care possible.



Health benefits or health benefit administration may be provided by or through Highmark Wholecare, coverage by Gateway Health Plan, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association ("Highmark Wholecare").