

# Wellness News

August 2023

## This issue

Reducing Cancer Risk

Happiness Happens Day

Summer to Fall Transition Tips

Healthy Zucchini Muffins



**It takes effort to really notice and be thankful for the big and small things that make us happy” – Beverly Beuermann-King**



**Anthem members:** You can view and manage your benefits, access wellness tools and resources to improve your overall wellbeing. Simply scan this QR code with your smartphone’s camera to download the Sydney Health app.

*Tip: Anthem.com and Sydney Health use the same username and password!*



# Simple Steps to Reduce Cancer Risk

Cancer affects people of all different ages and backgrounds. Sometimes it can't be avoided, but you can still take action to protect your health. By making healthy choices and having regular preventive screenings, you're doing what you can to stay a step ahead of cancer.

## The power of preventive screenings

Cancer is most treatable when it's detected early, before symptoms appear. At this point, the cancer is usually still "local" and contained to one organ or part of the body. Preventive cancer screenings help detect cancer during the local stage, before it spreads to other parts of the body and becomes more difficult to treat successfully.



### Recommended cancer screenings

Discuss your individual risk factors with your doctor and ask which preventive cancer screenings may be right for you.

Common cancer screenings include:

- Breast cancer screening (*mammography*)
- Cervical cancer screening (*Pap tests and gynecological exams*)
- Colorectal cancer screening
- Prostate cancer screening (*prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test*)
- Lung cancer screening (*low-dose CT scan*)

## Take action to lower your cancer risk



### Eat healthy and move your body

Being overweight (having a body mass index of 25 to 29) or obese (body mass index of 30 or more) increases the risk of certain cancers, including uterine, breast, pancreatic, and colorectal. Living a healthy lifestyle through healthy eating and regular exercise can help lower your risk of developing cancer.



### Use sunscreen

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the U.S. Protect your skin from the sun by using a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, staying in the shade, and wearing clothing like a hat or long sleeves — especially if you plan to be outdoors in the middle of the day. Remember to also check your skin regularly for any changes or new moles and report them to your doctor.



### Stop smoking

Don't use tobacco and avoid cigarette smoke. Smoking is linked to at least 10 cancers, including lung, mouth, throat, larynx, pancreatic, and urinary bladder cancer. On top of that, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women. Even if you already have a smoking-related illness, you'll see health benefits from quitting.

### Anthem members:

Be confident that you're cancer free.

Find personalized cancer screening guidelines at  
[anthem.com/preventive-care](https://www.anthem.com/preventive-care).

# Happiness Happens Day

August 8, 2023



The Secret Society of Happy People, founded in 1998, was originally a 'secret' society to allow members to talk about everything that made them happy because they were genuinely happy people, but they did so secretly to avoid being brought down by negativity. In 2000, they declared the month of August Happiness Happens Month. Over the years, more people have talked about happiness — how to get happy, be happy, find happiness, spread happiness. With that, the popularity of the Society grew — so much so, they outgrew the need for secrecy! So, in 2019, the group became simply the Society of Happy People.

## Why we love Happiness Happens Day

- A. We want to be happy**

In a 2016 survey, when Americans were asked whether they would prefer to have a happy life or a life of achievement, 81% of people answered they would rather be happy! Being happy is important so we love having a day dedicated to making happiness happen.
- B. Happiness is contagious**

Studies of social networks have revealed that not only does your direct circle of friends impact how happy you are but people you know indirectly can, too, so we want happiness to extend well beyond our innermost circle.
- C. Happiness helps you live longer**

Medical studies have shown happy people are more likely to live longer due to having a stronger immune system, fewer aches and pains, and decreased stress, blood pressure, and heart rate.

## Five Amazing Ways to Choose Happiness

- 1 Gratitude**

Expressing gratitude leads to an overall optimistic attitude; it is consistently and strongly correlated to feelings of happiness.
- 2 Volunteer**

Giving of your time to help others has been shown to decrease feelings of depression and improve optimism and sense of worth.
- 3 Give**

We've all heard the phrase: it is better to give than to receive — yes, giving is another action that leads to happiness and benefits the giver as much, if not more, than the receiver.
- 4 Encourage**

Lifting others up brings about a reciprocal effect — put out positive thoughts and feelings and this is what you will likely receive in return.
- 5 Reminisce**

Spend some time looking at old photos, flipping through high school yearbooks, or reading old letters and you will find feelings of happiness overflowing as you stroll down memory lane.

# Summer to Fall Transition Tips to Find Joy in the Season to Come

## Embrace fall food

The great thing about cooking is if you make it a point to shop seasonally, your local farmers' market can serve as a natural calendar, offering a delicious way to keep track of the days. While summer might be the season to get outside and pick berries, there's still a wide variety of vegetables to enjoy come fall.

## Have something to look forward to

By envisioning things, and taking the necessary steps to make them happen, you're not only ensuring a smooth trip, event, or visit, but mentally gearing yourself up for the fun and joy to come. This doesn't always have to be large-scale. It's a habit that can easily be practiced by making plans with a friend or solo in the days or weeks to come.

## Set aside intentional downtime

Fall can feel like one big ramp-up to the end-of-year craziness. It takes intention to ensure you're not always going full speed. So, as you plan out all that you have to look forward to this fall, be sure that you're penciling in a few weeknights or weekends that you're taking all for yourself. After all, those books won't read themselves.

## Rethink your morning and evening routine

We're often sold the idea that a life of constant activity will provide constant excitement and inspiration, but this can be a recipe for burnout. A good routine is a great way to stay grounded. While we might've been laxer about our bedtimes and wake-up calls during the summer months, fall is a great time to get back to practicing the habits that help us feel our best.

## Switch up your movement

With the good weather, summer is the perfect time to take your workout outdoors. It's when we say goodbye to our in-studio classes and swim, hike, and run with reckless abandon. During fall, with the

temps starting to cool, we may be headed back inside, and during these months we may seek slower pace of movement like yoga, pilates, or daily walks. So, take stock of your energy and remember that you don't need to overdo it! Any way you get your body moving that makes you feel empowered, strong, and centered is perfect.

## Carve out moments for creativity

Along with prioritizing downtime and taking the weekends off, it's important to make space for the activities that fill you with a little childlike wonder and joy. While we often think of being creative as more of an attribute than a practice, cultivating creativity is something you should nourish a little every day. So even if you don't think of yourself as an artist, if painting fills your cup, make sure it's on your weekly schedule! Or, if writing poetry helps you understand your experiences a little better, carry a journal with you for easy jotting on the go.

## Look inward

If there's a single consistency on this list of summer to fall transition tips, it's that learning to look forward to a new season means shifting how we think. Each season calls us to engage in new activities and nurture ourselves in different ways. While self-care during the summer may have meant submerging oneself in a body of water, in the fall, self-love may be knitting or spending time solo—comforted by the company of our own thoughts.

Summer is a season of saying yes to plans and gathering with loved ones we may not have seen during other times of the year. But as we slow down in the fall, we can take stock of our lives, question our direction, and come into alignment with what we really want for ourselves for the rest of the year. And that makes the transition all the more gratifying.

# Healthy Zucchini Muffins

*These zucchini muffins are naturally sweetened and made with whole wheat flour! They're fluffy, moist and delicious, and can help you use up that zucchini from your garden.*

**Servings Per Recipe:** 12

## Ingredients:

- ¾ cup roughly chopped raw walnuts or pecans (optional)
- ⅓ cup melted coconut oil or extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup honey or maple syrup
- 2 eggs
- ⅔ cup buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 ¾ cups whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 ½ cups grated zucchini (you'll need 1 small-to-medium zucchini, about 7 ounces—working in handfuls, gently squeeze out excess moisture from the grated zucchini over the sink)



## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease your muffin tin with butter or cooking spray
2. Toast the nuts (if using): Once the oven has finished preheating, pour the chopped nuts onto a small, rimmed baking sheet. Bake until the nuts are fragrant and toasted, about 4 to 5 minutes, stirring halfway.
3. In a medium mixing bowl, combine the coconut oil and honey. Beat them with a whisk until they are combined. Add the eggs and beat well. Add the buttermilk and vanilla. Whisk to combine and set the bowl aside. (If your coconut oil solidifies on contact with cold ingredients, simply let the bowl rest in a warm place for a few minutes, like on top of your stove, or warm it for about 30 seconds in the microwave.)
4. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, salt and nutmeg. Using a big spoon, stir to combine.
5. Pour the liquid mixture into the dry and stir just until combined (a few lumps are ok!). Add the zucchini (be sure to squeeze excess moisture out of the zucchini first) and toasted nuts, if using. Gently fold the zucchini and nuts into the batter, being careful not to over-stir.
6. Divide the batter evenly between the 12 muffin cups. Bake muffins for 16 to 19 minutes, or until the muffins are golden on top and a toothpick inserted into a muffin comes out clean.
7. Place the muffin tin on a cooling rack to cool. If you have leftover muffins, store them, covered, at room temperature for two days, or in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. Freeze leftover muffins for up to 3 months.

