

# Wellness News

October 2023

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**“Autumn leaves don't fall, they fly. They take their time and wander on this their only chance to soar.”**

– Delia Owens



**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!*



# Take time to take care of yourself

## Your well-woman exam is important

With all you do for others, it's easy to overlook the importance of routine healthcare for yourself. But your annual well-woman visit is a valuable opportunity to help prevent future health problems and live your best life now.

### 4 reasons to schedule your well-woman visit today

- 1. Find health problems early:** Many conditions that affect women do not show symptoms, especially in their early stages. Your annual physical exam, breast exam, pelvic exam, and Pap smear can help detect a condition earlier and make it easier to treat.
- 2. Receive reliable medical information:** Rather than searching online for advice, turn to a trusted medical source. During your annual wellness visit, you should feel comfortable discussing anything with your doctor. This includes painful sex, incontinence, or irregular periods.
- 3. Prevent diseases and conditions:** Results from your exam might show you are at a high risk for developing diabetes, obesity, heart disease, osteoporosis, or other conditions. Your doctor can create a plan to lower your risk. Your appointment also is an opportunity to receive vaccines, including the flu and human papillomavirus (HPV).
- 4. Plan for the future:** Your doctor can help you plan to conceive a child, prepare for menopause, or choose the contraceptive that's right for you.

# How to make the most of your appointment

- ✓ Bring a list of all prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements you take.
- ✓ Write down issues you want to discuss with the doctor, such as birth control options; sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); preparing to get pregnant; signs of an unhealthy relationship; anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues; and menopause.
- ✓ Consider having a friend or family member with you to keep track of what the doctor says.
- ✓ Tell your doctor if any close family members have experienced new health problems. Your family's health history is an important part of your personal health record.
- ✓ If you receive a diagnosis for a condition, make sure you understand what it is and how you and your doctor plan to address it.

## Preventive care vs. diagnostic care

Knowing the difference between these types of care can save you money.



**Preventive care** can be scheduled when you're feeling well to help keep your health on track. Annual physicals, such as a well-woman visit, and screenings or vaccines are considered preventive. This type of care is covered by your health plan.



**Diagnostic care** is used to determine the cause of symptoms you're experiencing. This type of care may include appointments with your doctor and tests to diagnose an issue so it can be treated. This care will have copays or other costs, as covered by your plan.



Preventive Health Guidelines

Anthem members: Visit **Preventive Health Guidelines** to stay on top of your recommended screenings and vaccinations based on your age and gender.



Sydney Health

Log into **Sydney**, select **MENU** on the bottom navigation bar, then select **MyHealth Dashboard**, then **Featured Programs** then **Preventive Health Guidelines** and much more!

# Emotional Wellness Month



**Did you know your emotional well-being has powerful effects on your overall health?** Mental and emotional stress can translate into negative physical reactions, a weakened immune system, and poor health.

**“Emotional wellness”** refers to our ability to process feelings in a healthy, positive way and manage the stress of everyday life. If you feel stressed or overwhelmed, try a soothing activity like meditation or yoga to slow down and clear your mind.

Use this as an opportunity to take charge of your emotional wellness, find the soothing activities that work for you, and, **most of all, breathe!**



**Anthem Members:** Please utilize the **Emotional Wellbeing Resources** which offers digital tools you and your covered family members may need to develop resilience, reduce stress and practice mindfulness. Take advantage of this free and confidential resource for ages 13+.

**Sydney Health** app select MENU, then MyHealth Dashboard, Featured Programs to find programs, tools and resources available to you.

## Simple Breathing Exercise

You can perform this simple breathing exercise as often as needed. It can be done standing up, sitting, or lying down. If you find this exercise difficult or believe it's making you anxious or panicky, stop for now. Try it again in a day or so and build up the time gradually.

1. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. Keep your shoulders relaxed. Your abdomen should expand, and your chest should rise very little.
2. Exhale slowly through your mouth. As you blow out, purse your lips slightly but keep your jaw relaxed. You may hear a soft “whooshing” sound as you exhale.
3. Repeat this breathing exercise. Do it for several minutes until you start to feel better.<sup>8</sup>

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Sometimes people with a [panic disorder](#) initially feel increased anxiety or panic while doing this exercise. This may be due to anxiety caused by focusing on your breathing, or you may be unable to do the exercise correctly without some practice.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/abdominal-breathing-2584115>

<sup>8</sup> Cleveland Clinic. [Diaphragmatic breathing](#).

# Healthy Choices

Be your own advocate in every aspect of your life.

~ Star Jones



## Protect your health with regular mammograms

### What is a mammogram?

Mammograms are X-rays of your breast. Doctors can check those X-rays for signs of breast cancer, sometimes [up to three years before there are any symptoms](#). As with other cancers, it's best to find it early, when there are more treatment options.

### How often should I have mammograms?

It's important to have regular mammograms, even if you don't have any family history of breast cancer, feel healthy, or have had clear mammograms in the past. In fact, [nearly 90% of women diagnosed with breast cancer don't have a family history of it](#). Additionally, the chance of developing it increases as you age.

You should talk to your doctor about what's right for you, but most women should begin having mammograms every [one to two years starting at age 40](#). Once you turn 50, you should have a mammogram every year. Between mammograms, you should also perform [breast self-exams](#) to feel for lumps or changes about once a month. They're easy to do in just a few minutes at home.

### What should I expect when I get a mammogram?

A mammogram only takes about [10 to 15 minutes](#). During the [screening](#), a technician will take pictures of your breasts with an X-ray machine. It's a safe, simple procedure. They will send the images to a radiologist (a doctor who specializes in reviewing X-rays), so they won't be able to tell you anything about your results during your visit. Radiologists will typically report results to you and your doctor within a few weeks.

## National Mammography Day: October 20, 2023

Show your support for National Mammography Day; promote early detection and screening for breast cancer.

**Schedule a mammogram:** it is recommended that women ages 40 and over should get a yearly mammogram.

**Spread the word:** share mammography facts, stories, and resources with your friends and family. The more people know, the better.

**Donate to a breast cancer charity:** consider donating to a breast cancer charity or organization in honor of National Mammography Day

**Attend an event:** check with local hospitals, medical centers, and other health organizations. You could attend a free screening event, health talk, or other educational event.

**Wear pink:** show your support by wearing something pink **Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>** and spread the word!

# Summer's Last Call!

Recipe adapted from *The Great American Eat Right Cookbook*.

## Tomato and Basil Frittata

Prep time: 15 minutes | Total time: 30 minutes | Servings: 4

### Ingredients:

- 8 eggs
- 1 cup halved grape tomatoes
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh basil
- 1/3 cup feta cheese
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



### Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a bowl, beat the eggs. Gently add tomatoes, basil, and feta and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Coat a 10- or 11-inch nonstick, ovenproof skillet with cooking spray and place over medium heat.
4. Pour in egg mixture and cook without stirring for 30 to 45 seconds, or until the eggs are set on the bottom.
5. Continue cooking, using a spatula to lift the edges of the frittata toward the center of the skillet, while gently tilting the pan so the uncooked eggs run underneath the bottom of the frittata.
6. Cook for 15 to 20 seconds, repeating the process several times until the egg on top is still wet, but not runny. Don't worry if the frittata looks a little lumpy.
7. Transfer to the oven and bake for 3 to 7 minutes, or until the top is just set. Do not overcook.
8. Remove from the oven and let sit for 1 minute.
9. Carefully run a spatula around the skillet edge to loosen the frittata and slide out or invert onto a serving plate.

You did it!



## Health Benefits of Walking

Walking: You do it as you go from your car to your office. You do it when you take a stroll around the block with your dog. You even do it when moving from your couch to the fridge for a snack.

It's something that we do consistently throughout the day without thinking — and people who walk regularly swear by the health and psychological benefits of their daily jaunt.

[Research](#) shows that walking at a brisk pace for about 30 minutes a day leads to long-term health benefits, including a reduced risk for [heart disease](#).

- Reduces risk of heart disease
- Reduces stress
- Helps you lose weight
- Reduces blood sugar
- Improves your immune system
- Protects your joints
- Reduces cravings
- Reduces risk of cancer
- Improves sleep

To learn more about the benefits of walking and how to get started on a routine that works for you, continue reading [this](#) Cleveland Clinic article.

### Did you Know?

150 minutes of walking in a week can add 3.4 years to a person's lifespan



# Protect yourself against breast cancer

Understanding your risk for breast cancer — and the steps you can take to reduce it — is an important part of taking care of yourself and staying strong for the ones you love.

## What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is cancer that starts in one or both breasts. It can affect women of any race, age, or ethnicity.

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**1 in 8**  
**women**  
will develop breast cancer  
in her lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

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Breast cancer is the  
**2nd most**  
**common**  
type of cancer among adult women  
in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

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## Lowering your risk

There's no sure way to prevent breast cancer. Some factors that can put you at a higher risk are out of your control — like getting older and having a family history of breast cancer. You can reduce your risk by staying healthy in the following ways:

-  Maintain a healthy weight
-  Exercise regularly
-  Drink alcohol in moderation, or not at all



Talk to your doctor about scheduling a mammogram. To find a doctor near you, use the Sydney<sup>SM</sup> Health app or go to [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com).

## Breast cancer screenings

Mammograms and breast self-exams are both useful tools for early breast cancer detection. Learn how they work together to protect your breast health.

### Mammograms

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast. Mammograms are the best way for doctors to find breast cancer early, when it's easier to treat — sometimes up to three years before symptoms show.<sup>2</sup>

Most women should begin having mammograms every one to two years starting at age 40, and then every year once they turn 50. You should talk to your doctor about the right schedule for you, since they might recommend screening earlier and more frequently if you have certain risk factors.

### Breast self-exams

In between mammograms, performing breast self-exams about once a month is a good way to check for anything out of the ordinary. Simply look and feel for changes to your breasts in front of a mirror. These symptoms don't mean you have breast cancer, but if you notice any of the following, you should talk to your doctor:

- A new lump in the breast or armpit
- Swelling, redness, soreness, or a rash
- Any nipple discharge other than breast milk
- Change in breast size or shape
- Dimples, puckers, or bulges on the skin of your breast

<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society: *How Common is Breast Cancer?* (accessed July 2022): [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).  
<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *What is a Mammogram?* (accessed July 2022): [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Breastcancer.org: *Breast Self-Exam (BSE)* (accessed July 2022): [breastcancer.org](https://www.breastcancer.org).  
Cancer.org: *Don't Lower My Risk of Breast Cancer?* (accessed July 2022): [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).

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