



October

Member Newsletter



Strengthen Your Support Network

World Mental Health Day is October 10

On this day and year-round, make efforts to reach out to others—forging social connections is fundamental for good mental health!

Having a strong social support system is vital for reaching optimal health and well-being. As your needs for support change over time, here's how to continually replenish and strengthen your network:

Cast a wide net. Stay open to opportunities to develop various levels of support, including from neighbors, parents at your child's school, colleagues, and other acquaintances. Not all connections will develop into deep, lifelong friendships, but they are still valuable in providing a degree of camaraderie and emotional aid.

Make it a two-way street. Building a support system requires that you give support as well as receive it. Be a good listener.

Join social meetup groups and professional organizations. Whether in-person or online, aim to build connections slowly with other participants. Don't give up on the group too early—it takes time to forge alliances.

Volunteer. Working side-by-side with another person to help those in need or make the world a better place can be a profoundly rewarding shared experience. It's a great chance to build your social circle for YOUR betterment!

Take classes or workshops in a new area of interest.

Learning something outside your comfort zone and conquering any fears, whether it's Salsa steps, painting, or computer programming skills, is a great confidence booster! Plus, sharing the experience of overcoming challenges with another participant may turn into a meaningful bond that extends beyond the learning environment.

Don't forget animal bonds! A pet can give you boundless comfort and affection while also opening you up to align closely with fellow pet lovers/owners, or those who help rescue or rehabilitate animals.

Struggling with loneliness and stress?

Talk to your health practitioner for a referral to a qualified counselor. Or contact a professional counselor yourself who can provide coping strategies to feel better.



Breast Cancer: What You Should Know

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and a good time to remember that breast cancer can strike anyone, of any gender and any age, whether or not there's a family history of the disease. Follow these measures to keep healthy—it can even save a life!

Know the risks. Your doctor can help determine your personal risks. Be sure to let your physician know if a family member has or had breast cancer. Inform your physician if these family members or you have been found to carry genes related to breast cancer.

Be alert to changes. Tell your doctor about any changes you may see or feel in your breasts—including a lump, pain, discoloration, or anything else that concerns you.

Get screened. Ask your doctor about getting a mammogram, which helps detect cancer in its earliest, most treatable stage.

Adopt healthy lifestyle changes. There are no sure ways to prevent breast cancer, but making certain lifestyle changes may reduce your risk. Exercise regularly, eat a variety of nutritious foods, maintain a healthy weight, avoid or limit alcohol, and stop smoking.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month: More to Keep in Mind

Mammograms are the best way to find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat and before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms. Most health insurance plans cover mammograms. However, for those who may have low incomes or are uninsured or underinsured, the CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program offers free or low-cost mammograms. [Find out if you qualify.](#)



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To **download our app**, scan the QR code to the left or visit the app store on your mobile device and search "Health Advocate."

Become a Better Healthcare Consumer

Keeping track of your healthcare costs can take effort... but the payoff can be worth it! Following these tips could mean more money in your pocket and help you get healthier, too.

Know what your health plan covers. Is chiropractic care covered? How about rehab? Knowing this information ahead of time can help you avoid surprise medical bills.

Understand your out-of-pocket costs. This includes copays for doctor visits and hospitalizations, deductibles, and coinsurance.

Choose in-network providers. Make sure that any doctors, hospitals, labs and other providers you use are in your health plan's network before you make an appointment.

Have a high-deductible health plan? Sign up for a Health Savings Account (HSA). HSAs let you contribute pre-tax earnings to a federally insured savings account. The funds can be used for current qualified medical expenses or saved for the future.

Get regular preventive care. Annual physicals, mammograms and other screenings can find issues early, which could mean fewer doctor visits and lower healthcare costs in the future.

Save the ER for true medical emergencies. Urgent care centers can treat issues like sprains, cuts, fevers and other non-life-threatening conditions at a fraction of the cost.

Ask your doctor about generic drugs. You could save up to 80% on your medications.

Enroll in your health plan's mail-order pharmacy service. Ordering a 90-day supply of maintenance medications can be a real money-saver.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Lifestyle choices like eating healthier, exercising and quitting tobacco can help you avoid costly medical conditions down the road.



For more help, talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a qualified counselor.

Master Your Spending

Visit HealthAdvocate.com/members to log onto your member website and access the EAP+Work/Life homepage. [Click on Webinar.](#)

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

About 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men report having experienced severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.¹ Verbal threats, ridiculing, and other controlling behavior often turn into other forms of abuse. It's important to talk to someone about how to protect yourself as soon as possible.

Call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800.799.SAFE (7233) or 800.787.3224 (TTD).** Available 24/7/365. Completely confidential.

[1] www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html

Global Diversity Month

This month, take the opportunity to pay tribute to the diverse beliefs, customs and lifestyles around the globe, and the importance of inclusion in enriching our lives. Some ideas: Engage in a joint community service project, host a potluck where everyone brings a dish from a different cuisine, attend a cultural event, or support a cause you believe in.