

ConnectiCare

HEALTH MATTERS

2022, Volume 1





Summer Bucket List: Eat Well!

It's easier than you may think to eat healthy and nutritious meals. You don't need to visit a specialty grocery to purchase superfoods and maintain a healthy diet. Many nutrition-packed foods are easily accessible at your local supermarket or even corner store.

The Return of Farmers Markets

There are many benefits to getting your food from a farmers market. You'll be able to enjoy fresh, in-season produce that is at the peak of its nutritional value. You're also supporting your local farmers and can learn more about what's grown in the area. Find a farmers market near you at [visitconnecticut.com/state/farmers-markets](https://www.visitconnecticut.com/state/farmers-markets).

Here are some healthy and affordable foods you can find at any grocery store, year-round. All foods, no matter how healthy, should be consumed in moderation. Always consult your doctor before making a major change to your diet.

Apples

Apples offer several health benefits, as they're rich in fiber and antioxidants. Because of this, they may help to promote weight

loss, they're good for your heart, and they help promote gut health. Eating apples also helps with dental hygiene. For the freshest and tastiest apples, check your local farmers markets and grocery stores in late summer and early fall.

Bananas

Bananas are high in the mineral potassium. Potassium helps to regulate blood pressure, and it's good for your heart. They're also easy to pack as a quick snack.

Eggs

Another corner store staple, eggs, are a great source of vitamins, minerals, protein, and good fats. Contrary to popular belief, most of the nutrients are in the yolk and not in the white portion. Try hard-boiling eggs instead of scrambling or frying them in butter and oil. Make a small batch and serve with whole grain toast and fruit for a quick and healthy breakfast.

Garlic

Garlic — not just useful for fighting vampires. A popular ingredient to add flavor to almost any dish, garlic packs a punch in its nutritional value. High in vitamins and nutrients, garlic can help boost your immune system, reduce blood pressure, and improve cholesterol.

Tomatoes

Tomatoes are a classic summer staple in the Northeast. They're packed with lycopene, a plant compound that gives them their red color. Lycopene has many health benefits. It's good for your heart, as it can help regulate blood pressure; and it can be beneficial for eye health. Tomatoes are also high in vitamin C, which has both an essential nutrient and an antioxidant, and potassium. At their peak in the middle to late summer, try different varieties, colors, and flavors this year.

WATER IS LIFE

Water is an essential nutrient. Men should aim to drink 100 fluid ounces, or five 20-ounce bottles of water, a day. Women should aim to drink 70 fluid ounces, or three and a half 20-ounce bottles of water, a day.

Watch out for dehydration — Some signs of dehydration include dizziness, dry mouth, and fatigue. A good way to tell if you're properly hydrated is by checking the color and quantity of your urine. If it's dark yellow, you may need more fluids. If it's pale yellow, that's a sign you're hydrated.

Keep it simple — Setting a reminder on your phone to drink water, or always keeping a glass or bottle nearby, can help you stay hydrated. Be sure to drink more when you're active and when it's hot or humid. You can also stay hydrated by eating water-rich foods like fruits and vegetables, eggs, and seafood.

Learn more at [cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/nutrition](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/nutrition).





If You're Not Immunized, You're Not Fully Protected Against COVID-19

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine, and booster(s) when you are eligible, is still the best way to protect yourself and those around you from severe COVID-19 illness. Children 5 and older are eligible for the Pfizer vaccine. Don't wait; speak to your doctor about your vaccine options and questions.

Remember, both doses of the vaccine (or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine), and a third dose or booster(s), are available at no cost to you.

Visit your city or state's COVID-19 vaccine websites for more information and to find a vaccine location.


Visit connecticare.com/covid19 for the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and your benefits.


YOUR PREVENTIVE CARE


To-Do List

Preventive care is one of the keys to unlocking your healthiest lifestyle. It includes routine health screenings and annual checkups that can help you identify potentially serious health conditions and get the necessary treatment.

For your health. For your family.
For the future:

 Ask your doctor about important screenings for common conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, as well as other important screenings, like those for certain cancers.

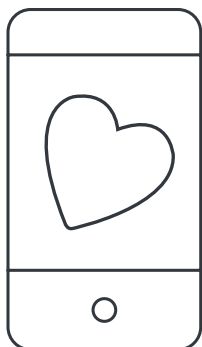
 If you're 50 or over, ask your doctor about the shingles and pneumonia vaccines. Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information on screenings and be sure to go for your annual checkup.

 Visit connecticare.com/live-well/preventive-care to access online tools and programs that make it easier for you to take care of yourself and the people you love most.

Work with your primary care provider (PCP) to discuss other yearly appointments you may need such as a visit to a dermatologist (for a skin check) or a gynecologist (for routine women's health checkups). Your PCP can help coordinate your care to make sure you are scheduling the right services and appointments.

We're Here for You in So Many Ways

Have questions about your health plan or benefits? We're here to help you find the answers you need. You can get in touch with us by:



Checking out our website.

You can find information on your plan, find a doctor, and more on connecticare.com. Our website is updated regularly with important announcements and new plan information. Browse our different sections or use the search function to find updates.

Sending us a message.

Did you know that you can send us messages through our secure member portal? Sign in to our member portal at connecticare.com/sign-in and get personalized support.

Visiting us in person at a ConnectiCare Center location.

You can get help understanding and using your plan from one of our friendly associates. We share information to help you make decisions about doctors, coverage, staying well, and more. Learn more and find a location near you at connecticare.com/about/care-centers.

Calling us at the number on your member ID card.

A representative will be happy to help.

Sun, Sun, Sun, Here We Come

We love the sun. It makes us feel good, and our bodies benefit from it in many ways. But we also know that too much of it can damage our skin and even cause skin cancer.

Here are some sun safety tips for your next outing:

- **Cover up:** Sun exposure is a major risk factor for skin cancer. To protect your skin, try to avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest. If you are in the sun during these hours, seek shade and cover up with long sleeves, dark colors, and a wide-brimmed hat.
- **Use sunscreen:** A broad-spectrum sunscreen can protect against UVA and UVB rays with an SPF of at least 30. Reapply every 2 hours — more often if you're swimming or sweating.
- **Get checked:** Be sure to get an annual skin checkup with a dermatologist and talk to your doctor about any skin changes you notice.
- **Know your body:** Keep track of any suspicious or fast-growing moles or marks. If you notice a mole with irregular borders, changes in color, itching or burning, speak to your doctor.



Leave Allergy Season Behind

Summer can trigger uncomfortable allergy symptoms like headaches, sneezing, watery eyes, sinus congestion, cough, a runny nose, and fatigue. Your body is working harder to fight off foreign invaders like ragweed, mold, dust mites, and smog. Here's how you can help ward them off and enjoy the outdoors.

Reduce your exposure. Track your symptoms by taking note of the weather, time of day, and location when your allergies act up and avoid going outside during these times. When you return from being outside, change your clothes and shower to rinse off pollen from your skin and hair, and do your laundry inside as pollen can stick to clothing hanging outside to dry.

Be aware of the weather. Check your local TV or radio station, newspaper, or the internet for pollen counts. Avoid outdoor activity and close your doors and windows in the early morning or at night when pollen counts can be the highest. Start taking allergy medications before your symptoms start if high pollen counts are forecasted.

Keep your indoor environment clean. Run an air conditioner with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter and get your cooling system cleaned regularly, use a dehumidifier to keep air dry, and wipe down windowsills and all hard surfaces.

Use over-the-counter remedies to ease symptoms. Discuss oral antihistamines, decongestants, and nasal steroid sprays with your health care provider. You may also try non-medication remedies like rinsing your sinuses with a saline solution or sterile water using a neti pot or squeeze bottle to clear mucus and allergens. If you are currently on an allergy medication regimen, keep up with it during the summer months.

Don't give up. Talk to your doctor about other options and testing if your symptoms are not getting better.





Protect the Window to Your Soul — and Your Health

They say eyes are the window to the soul. But did you know they are also the window to your health? Your diet and exercise habits, chronic health conditions, and more can affect your vision. Protect your eyes with these four healthy habits:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Manage chronic conditions that can impact vision.
- Don't smoke.

Your plan may include routine vision benefits like routine eye exams and medically necessary contact lenses and eyeglasses. Check your summary of benefits or call the Member Services number on your member ID card for more information.



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