



WHOLE you

2023 | Q3 BULLETIN



Welcome!

Welcome to another edition of Whole You, a newsletter from Arkansas Total Care.

In this issue, Arkansas Total Care is bringing you plenty of useful articles. You'll learn about diabetes and being ready for flu season. You'll also get some ideas for healthy school lunches. Plus, read about gaming and stress and treating bug bites.

Don't forget about your Medicaid redetermination. It's the eligibility process you must go through to keep your Medicaid coverage. You will get a notice from the state about the steps you need to take to renew your coverage. You can also renew your eligibility online at access.arkansas.gov. You may also visit your DHS county office.

Arkansas Total Care hopes you enjoy our latest edition of Whole You and that it helps you take care of your whole health.



Are You at Risk for Diabetes?

Diabetes and prediabetes are serious health conditions. Let's take a look at your risks and what to do if you think you might have one of these conditions.



ABOUT PREDIABETES: More than one out of three adults in the U.S. have prediabetes. Prediabetes means your blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes. Prediabetes is a warning that you are at an increased risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Symptoms aren't always obvious. 90% of people with prediabetes don't know they have it. The good news is that a simple blood sugar test can tell you. Get the test if you have any of these risk factors:

- Being overweight
- Being 45 years or older
- Having a parent or sibling with Type 2 diabetes
- Physically active less than three times a week
- Having gestational diabetes during pregnancy
- Giving birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds
- Having polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, and some Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans are at particularly high risk for Type 2 diabetes.

If you have any of these risk factors, call your doctor to set up a prediabetes test.

ABOUT DIABETES: Diabetes affects the way your body turns food into energy. When you eat, your body breaks down the food into sugar and sends it into your blood. That tells your pancreas to release insulin, which lets the sugar into your cells so they can use it for energy. With diabetes, your body either does not make enough insulin or has trouble using it. That means too much sugar stays in your blood, which can cause problems like heart disease, blindness, kidney disease, and more. While there is no cure for diabetes, losing weight, eating healthy, and exercising can help. It is also important to take any medicine your doctor orders and keep all your doctor's appointments.

Preventing Diabetes

Here are some things you can do to avoid diabetes, as well as ways you can take care of yourself if you know you have it.

1 KNOW THE SIGNS.

Some signs of diabetes are being unusually thirsty, gaining or losing weight, noticing changes in your vision, or having to urinate often. If you think you have any of these symptoms, call your doctor for a checkup.

2 EAT HEALTHY.

Healthy, high-protein foods like salmon, sardines, pumpkin seeds, peanuts, and almonds can help your blood sugar, while things like bread, sweet cereals, and pasta can send your blood sugar levels up.

3 DRINK SMART.

If you have a lot of sweet, caffeinated drinks during the day, try switching just one of them with water. Then try switching two. If you put cream or whole milk in your coffee and cereal, start mixing it with 1% milk so you can slowly switch to 1% and then skim. Also, whole fruits are always better than fruit juice.

4 MOVE.

Exercise helps keep your blood glucose and blood pressure healthy — all good for weight loss and lowering your diabetes risk. Talk to your doctor before starting any new exercise plan.

5 WATCH YOUR WEIGHT.

If you are overweight, you can reduce your risk for diabetes by losing just 5% of your body weight. Make a plan with your doctor to help lower your diabetes risk.

Make an appointment today to talk with your doctor about your risk for diabetes.



It's that time of year.

Fall means seasonal flu is on its way. With it can come millions of sick people and tens of thousands of deaths. Some of the people most at risk for the flu are those 65 and older, pregnant people, and people with medical problems like asthma, diabetes, heart or lung disease, HIV, hepatitis, and cancer. Here are some steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- Get your flu shot. Everyone six months of age and older should get a flu vaccine.
- If you cough or sneeze, always cover your mouth. Try to cough into your sleeve or use a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer with alcohol in it.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- If you or someone else is sick, keep your distance. If you are sick, stay home from work, school, or errands.
- Keep things around you clean — especially places you touch a lot, like doorknobs and counters.

At work and at school:

- At your work and your child's school or childcare, ask about their plan for when there is a flu outbreak, and ask if they offer flu vaccines on-site.
- Make sure they keep up with cleaning things that get touched a lot, like doorknobs, keyboards, and phones.
- Make sure they have a good supply of tissues, soap, paper towels, hand sanitizers, and wipes.
- Ask how sick students and staff are kept away from others and about the absence policy for sick students and staff.
- If you start to feel sick at work, go home as soon as you can.



Lunches They'll Love



It's back-to-school season, and getting everyone ready and out the door to start the day can be a huge task. With these five tips, the lunches you pack can help encourage your kids to adopt healthy eating habits and try new foods:

1 DINNER FOR LUNCH.

Boost their protein and cut sodium. Instead of sandwiches with deli meat, use leftover meat from last night's dinner. Make a few tortilla roll-ups ahead of time with shredded chicken or ground turkey, cheese, lettuce, and even a little hummus. Cut them into small slices to make them bite-sized and fun to eat.

2 ADD SOME CRUNCH.

Pair cheese with crispy treats like apples, celery, and unsalted nuts. Celery topped with meat or cheese is easy to eat and healthy.

3 SKIP THE CHIPS.

Low-salt popcorn, veggie straws, or whole-grain crackers are better choices than the standard bag of chips. Check the labels — don't buy brands that are high in sodium or added sugar.

4 DIP IN.

Make easy, healthy veggie dip in bulk with Greek yogurt and dill, or use smashed avocado or hummus. Slice veggies into round chip shapes for easy dipping.

5 GIVE THEM A FRUIT BOOST.

Fruits help fight off sickness. Give them a bright berry fruit salad, make a fun fruit kabob, or pack yogurt, fruit, and granola in separate containers so they can build a parfait. You can also pack cottage cheese and peaches for them to snack on, or bananas and apple slices with almond butter.

Gaming and Stress Relief

Can you play stress away?

Have you ever sat down to play a video game to unwind? You're not alone, especially since the pandemic. A 2021 study showed a 71% increase in playing time, and 58% of people said playing video games made them feel better. Some game makers are even creating games just to help people feel calm. For example, think of those games that feature cute animals or cartoons or pretty jewels. Experts say games that help us get into a "flow" state can help us relieve stress. Depending on how you like to play, some of the harder games can help stress levels.

To relieve stress, look for games that let you do these three things:

1 Make in-game choices for yourself

2 Make you feel good by meeting goals

3 Help you play with others

While video games seem to do more good than bad for us, experts warn that too much of anything isn't good. Games with fighting, shooting, or very hard tasks won't help your stress levels. Some people use video games so they don't have to deal with other problems. That is not a good long-term solution.

For children, the rules are different, and they need clear limits. The American Academy of Pediatrics says no more than 30 to 60 minutes per day of video games on school days, and two hours or less when they're not in school. Also, make sure you see which games they're playing so they're not seeing inappropriate or violent content.



Check out our coloring page below for some fun stress relief. If you need more help relieving stress, you can get mental health services. **Call our Member Services team at 1-866-282-6280 (TTY: 711) or visit our website at [ArkansasTotalCare.com](https://www.arkansasTotalCare.com) to find a provider who can help you.**

Color Yourself Healthy

Need a break from your busy day?

Take a few minutes to channel your inner artist. Color this image. We can't wait to see what you do. If you'd like, share it online with the hashtag #ColorMeStressFree



Bug Bite Remedies

Taking the sting out of bug bites

As you enjoy the last days of summer, remember, there are still bugs out there. And while most bites are harmless, some bugs can spread diseases. The best thing to do is keep bites from happening in the first place. You can do this by using bug spray or cream with at least 20% DEET on skin and clothing, as some bugs can bite through your clothes.

You can also use 0.5% permethrin to treat clothing and gear like boots, pants, socks, and tents. Don't use this right on your skin. Instead, put it on your clothing and let it dry for at least two hours. The package will give you complete instructions. When you're out at night or hiking through woods, cover your skin as much as you can with long-sleeved shirts, pants, socks, and shoes rather than sandals. Also, if you have a young child in a stroller, put mosquito netting over the stroller.

If you do get bitten, here's what to do:

- If it hurts, like a bee sting, take acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Follow the directions on the label.
- If it itches, put an ice pack on it, or use an anti-itch cream like hydrocortisone. You can also take an antihistamine tablet (get these from your local drugstore).
- If it's swollen, put an ice pack on it.
- If you get a rash, fever, or body aches, this can be serious. You need to call your doctor, urgent care, or dermatologist right away and let them know about your recent bug bite.

