



# WHOLE you

2023 | Q4 BULLETIN



## **Welcome!**

***Soon we will say goodbye to 2023 and hello to 2024. A whole new year is ahead of us. It's a pleasure to bring you a new 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 tooth health and high blood pressure. You'll also get some ideas for journaling and gift ideas for the holidays.

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](https://www.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.



# A Health Smile Means a Healthy You

## ***Taking care of your teeth does more than give you a great smile.***

It can keep you from getting bad breath, gum disease, and tooth decay. But did you know that taking care of your teeth can affect the health of your whole body? When your mouth isn't healthy, it can increase your risk for stroke and heart disease.

### **REMEMBER TO BRUSH YOUR TEETH TWICE A DAY, EVERY DAY.**

The good news — brushing your teeth is one of the best and easiest ways to keep your mouth healthy. Brush your teeth twice a day and get all sides of your teeth and your tongue. This will get rid of germs and leftover food. Use a toothbrush with soft bristles. Brush for two minutes each time, using gentle, circular strokes.

To keep your toothbrush clean, don't lay it on a sink counter or in a closed space where germs can grow. Keep it in a toothbrush holder or small jar or vase. Get a new toothbrush every three to four months. You should always replace your toothbrush after you have been sick.

Flossing is a crucial step, too. It helps clean between your teeth, where cavities usually start. Slide the floss between your teeth and gently move it between each tooth all the way to your gum line.

### **SEE YOUR DENTIST OFTEN**

Regular visits to your dentist will include an exam and cleaning to get rid of plaque that can build up in any spaces you miss with brushing and flossing. Your dentist will check for any tooth decay and gum disease, as well as signs of other health issues like vitamin deficiencies and even diabetes. They'll also make sure any dental work you've had is still holding up and doing its job.

### **HAVE A TOOTH-HEALTHY DIET.**

Certain foods and drinks are great for your teeth; others are not so great. Drinking water can wash away food and germs during the day. Foods that have lots of calcium and protein are also good choices — like carrots, almonds, and cheese. Chewy, sticky, or sugary foods and sweet drinks can damage the enamel surface of your teeth. They can cause decay, so avoid them when you can. When you do have these foods and drinks, make sure to rinse your mouth with water or brush your teeth afterward. If you chew gum, choose sugar free.



# Fight America's #1 Killer: High Blood Pressure

Sometimes you hear it called “the silent killer.” Sometimes you hear it called “hypertension.” Whatever it’s called, if you have high blood pressure, you may not feel it. But it can quietly harm your blood vessels and cause dangerous health problems. There is no cure for high blood pressure, but your doctor can give you medicine to help it, and you can also make changes in your life that lower your risk for the things high blood pressure can cause, including heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.



*Here are six things you can do to fight high blood pressure:*

**1 GET YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKED, AND LEARN WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN.**

If your doctor says you have high blood pressure, you can check it yourself on a regular basis. That way you know if any changes you make in your health habits are working.

**2 LOSE WEIGHT IF YOU NEED TO.**

Being overweight can increase your risk. Talk with your doctor about ways to get to a healthy weight.

**3 GET EXERCISE.**

Try for 30 minutes every day. It can be something as simple as a bicycle ride or a brisk walk. Talk to your doctor about developing an exercise program.

**4 DO NOT SMOKE.**

If you smoke and it’s hard to quit, your doctor can help you.

**5 LIMIT ALCOHOL.**

Men should have no more than two drinks per day, and women should have no more than one drink per day.

**6 SLEEP WELL.**

Getting enough sleep is important for your overall health. If you often get too little sleep, it can raise your risk for high blood pressure.

## Write On!

### *Try journaling.*



Sometimes, the busy season or gray skies can make us feel stressed or down. Journaling can be a great way to feel back in control, have a sense of gratitude, and put any problems or concerns in perspective. You can do this using any notebook, diary, or paper. It doesn't have to take long. Just 10 minutes can make a difference. If you struggle to know where to start, use the ideas below to help.

- Make a list of 10 things you are grateful for today.
- What was the happiest moment of your life? Write down where you were, what you did, and who was there. Write as many details as you can remember.
- How is your day or week going so far? Write down any good or bad things that happened, how you feel about them, and if you learned something new.
- How are you different from the person you were five years ago?

- Write a letter to your teenage self.
- List your goals for this week, month, or year. Do they match the goals of what you want to do with your life?
- What is on your bucket list? List the things you want to do in the next five years.
- What makes you unique?
- How do you trust yourself to make big decisions?
- What are some of the important lessons you have learned in your life?

These are just a few ideas of things you can write about and think about. The more you write, the easier it will get, and the more ideas will come your way. Just remember, you're important and it's important to spend time reflecting on your life and what matters to you.

## *It's Movember — time to talk about prostate cancer.*

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer found in men in America. Each year, about one in nine men will find out they have prostate cancer.

Your risk of getting prostate cancer grows with age. But it doesn't just happen to older men. Black men are more likely to get prostate cancer. Men who have a brother or father with prostate cancer are also more likely to get the disease.

A prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test is a way doctors can test for prostate cancer and find it early. If you're 50 or older, talk to your doctor about getting the test. If you are Black or have a close family member with prostate cancer, do it at age 45.

Good food choices might lower your risk for prostate cancer. Talk with your doctor about your diet and work with them to find healthier food choices.

- 1. Choose low-fat meats.** Avoid fatty meats like beef, bacon, and sausage. When you can, choose lower-fat meats like chicken or fish. You can also choose veggie burgers.
- 2. Eat lots of broccoli.** Choose vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, turnips, and kale. These have vitamins C, E, and K, and can help curb cancer.
- 3. Enjoy omega-3s.** Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids can lower your risk of prostate cancer. These include salmon, tuna, mackerel, flaxseed, chia seeds, and dark leafy greens.
- 4. Here's to tomatoes.** Tomatoes can help fight prostate cancer and other forms of cancer. Put tomato slices on your sandwich or in your salad. You can also



drink tomato juice when you're thirsty, or add salsa on top of your favorite foods. Have pasta with tomato-based sauce or a bowl of tomato soup.

- 5. Have a cup of green tea.** The leaves that are used to make green tea can also help reduce prostate cancer risk. Green tea can also do other good things, like lower stress and blood pressure and protect against heart disease. When you drink tea, make sure to keep the sugar at a minimum.

# Snowman Soup, Anyone?

*If a winter day is feeling cold and gray, use this fun recipe to warm things up.*

## INGREDIENTS

- Milk — dairy or whatever kind you like
- Sugar
- Chocolate chips
- Large marshmallows — not the mini kind
- Gel icing in a tube
- Whipped cream



## DIRECTIONS

- 1** Make hot chocolate. Pour the milk into a mug without filling it all the way to the top. Add a small spoonful of sugar and a small handful of chocolate chips to the milk. Stir to dissolve the sugar. Microwave the milk for one minute. Stir, then microwave again for one minute. Stir until the chocolate chips have melted.
- 2** Draw a snowman face on the marshmallows. Use the gel icing to draw a snowman face on each of your marshmallows. Simple black dots can form the coal eyes and mouth, and you can use orange to make a carrot nose.
- 3** Top the hot chocolate with whipped cream, drop in two or three snowman marshmallows; and enjoy.

***Wishing you a winter season  
that's merry and bright.***

## *You don't have to spend a lot of money to show someone you care.*

In fact, some of the most thoughtful and meaningful gifts can be things you create. They're often much nicer than something you just grab at the mall. Here are some ideas.

- **Share memories.** If you and a loved one have done lots of fun things together, write down some of your best memories, or make a little box filled with mementos of those times, like ticket stubs and pictures. You could



even attach a note to each item that says how you got it or why you saved it.

- **Make a game.** Create a winter bingo game. On four cards or more, draw a block of 25 squares. In each square, write or draw something that makes winter special. Make sure each card has the pictures or words in a different order. You could also create a family “guess who” game, making cards with fun facts or sayings from each family member.
- **Make hand warmers or heating pads.** Get two pieces of fabric. Put them on top of each other and cut them together into a simple shape, like a circle or square. You can make them small for handwarmers, or large for a heating pad. Choose which side will be the outside of each fabric. Then flip each fabric so the outside is now on the inside. Sew the pieces together about a quarter inch from the outside edge. Leave a two-inch opening. Flip the fabric right side out again. Using a funnel, fill the pouch with dry, uncooked rice, and sew the opening shut. To heat them, microwave for about one minute.
- **Make a happiness jar.** Pick a jar. It can be a pretty mason jar or any used jar — just wash off the label. Cut small strips of paper and write encouraging notes on each piece. It could be things you like about that person, good thoughts, or any ideas you think the person would like. Put the notes in the jar then decorate the jar with ribbon.
- **Give your time.** Are you good at organizing? Cleaning? Cooking? Or would your loved one just want you to come over and read to them or go for a walk? Make a coupon and give them the gift of something you're good at.