FOR OUR MEMBERS

Fall 2012
Issue No. 10

BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama

Be Healthy

Get Healthy • Live Healthy

Dr. O in the Know

Suggestions for being all you can be!
Anne Marie Oberheu MD, Associate Medical Director

Autumn is the time to take stock and harvest what has been sown during the previous seasons. New behaviors have been established and evaluation of those results should be rewarding! If you are considering a change, this is a great time to do it. Weather is perfect for exercise, healthy food choices are easy, and energy is expended by cheering for our favorite teams!

Be proactive and establish positive physical and emotional health strategies. Take a walk around the block and absorb the color changes while being present in the moment.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. If you are due for a breast cancer screening, schedule one with your physician. There are many risk factors linked to breast cancer. Some risk factors cannot be controlled, like gender, aging and family history. Studies suggest some lifestyle-related factors may increase the risk for breast cancer, such as being overweight or lacking physical activity.

The good news is that breast cancer death rates are decreasing, due mostly to early detection and improved treatment. Reduce your risk by getting screened and taking these steps:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stay physically active.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Don't use tobacco.

As always, we at Blue Cross care about what matters most!

Breast Cancer: Focus on Early Detection

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Research shows that early detection improves the survival rate of breast cancer patients. Detect breast cancer early by taking the necessary precautions: perform a monthly breast self-examination, get regular clinical exams, and have mammograms as indicated by your age and risk factors.

According to the American Cancer Society, women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam (CBE) by a health professional every three years. Starting at age 40, women should have a CBE and mammogram every year and continue to do so for as long as they are in good health. During this exam, ask your healthcare provider about the benefits and limitations of CBE.

Breast self-examination (BSE) is an option for women beginning in their 20s. Talk with your provider about the benefits and limitations of BSE as well as instructions on how to perform a BSE. Any changes found in the breast during a BSE should be reported to your healthcare provider immediately. These changes may include: a lump, swelling, dimpling or puckering of the skin, pain in one spot that does not go away, or changes in the size or shape of the breast.

By teaming up with your healthcare provider and knowing your body, you can detect problems sooner and increase your chance of living a full, healthy life.

Source: www.cancer.org

Be Healthy *Recipe*

Quinoa Pilaf with Cranberries and Pecans

Serving size: 12 servings.

Nutritional information per serving:

227 calories	7 grams monounsaturated fat	Calories from fat: 43
5 grams protein	2.9 grams polyunsaturated fat	Omega-3 fatty acids = 0.2 grams
27 grams carbohydrate	0 mg cholesterol	Omega-6 fatty acids = 2.7 grams
11 grams fat	3.3 grams fiber	
1.1 grams saturated fat	58 mg sodium	

Quinoa Pilaf Ingredients:
2 cups dry whole-grain quinoa
4 cups water
2/3 cup dried cranberries
4 to 6 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
2/3 cup toasted pecan pieces

Citrus Vinaigrette Ingredients:
4 tablespoons lemon juice
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

First, add quinoa and water to rice cooker and cook until quinoa is soft and water has been absorbed. If you don't have a rice cooker, bring 4 cups of water to a boil in 4-quart saucepan. Add quinoa and bring back to boil. Cover saucepan and cook over medium heat for 12 minutes or until quinoa has absorbed all the water. Next, add quinoa to large serving bowl and let cool about 15 minutes. Stir dried cranberries, red onion, celery, and pecans into quinoa. Last, in a small bowl, combine citrus vinaigrette ingredients with a whisk. Drizzle over quinoa mixture and toss to blend ingredients. Cover and refrigerate pilaf until ready to serve.

Source: WebMD®

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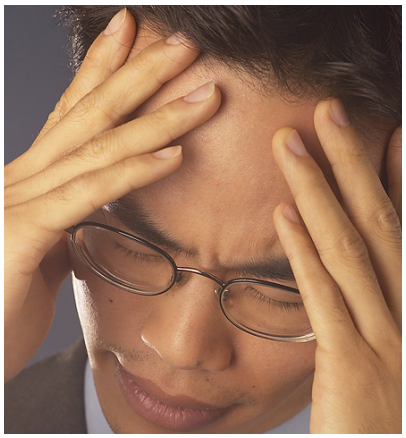
Tame Stress to Improve Health

When experienced over a long period of time, stress can damage your health. Chronic stress has been linked to many health conditions. It can impact your sleeping habits, mood and overall quality of life. While events and situations that trigger stress may be unavoidable, you do not have to let stress control you. By learning ways to manage stress-causing situations effectively, you can not only improve your health but your life.



Use these tips to help relax and manage stress:

- Exercise, take a brisk walk or try yoga.
- Use progressive relaxation.
- Keep a journal or diary.
- Take deep breaths from the diaphragm ("belly breathing").
- Make a list of chores and errands – putting them on paper can relieve anxiety you may feel about the number of tasks on your to-do list.
- Practice healthy eating habits.
- Try meditating, visualizing or retreating to a quiet area.
- Get a massage.
- Use positive "self talk."
- Take time to learn and/or develop a hobby.
- Foster friendships and a social support network – it is important to have someone to talk to.
- Slow down and simplify your life.
- Try counseling sessions, especially those that focus on changing your way of thinking.

Did you know?

Almost every system in your body can be damaged by stress? Here are some examples:

Immune System
Chronic stress causes the body to release cortisol, which causes increased risk for viral and bacterial infections, cancer, and autoimmune diseases.

Diabetes
During times of stress, loss of insulin may contribute to diabetes.

Hypertension
Stress can lead to high blood pressure and an increase in cardiovascular disease.

Cholesterol
Elevated cholesterol has been linked to stress.

Appetite Changes
Stress can cause overeating or loss of appetite.

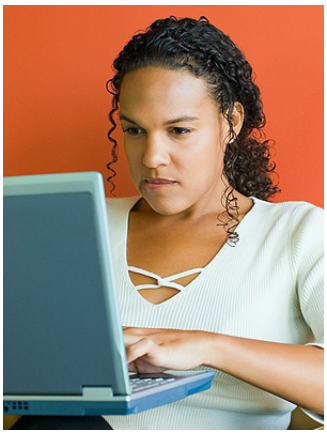
Anxiety & Depression
High levels of cortisol can cause anxiety and depression.

The Be Healthy newsletter is provided for general informational purposes to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama customers. Information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider regarding your healthcare needs. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking medical advice because of something you have read in this newsletter. Remember to check your benefits booklet for coverage information and limitations.

A N N O U N C I N G

My Health Assistant — A New Tool for You!

Do you find it difficult to manage a healthy lifestyle? Changing habits and sticking with it can be a challenge. Sometimes we just need a little help, especially when it comes to making a change that could improve your health. With **My Health Assistant**, help is only a click away. This interactive online program helps you set and reach goals, including managing stress, losing weight, eating healthy, exercising and quitting tobacco. **My Health Assistant** guides you as you progress from one goal to another. With the program you'll have access to:



- Materials and interactive tools to help you set and reach goals;
- Resources to help you learn more about your health;
- Action plans and strategy suggestions; and
- Trackers to keep you progressing toward your goal.

If you're ready to make a change, start today! Sign in to **BeHealthy.com** and select "**My Health Assistant**" under *Health Tools* to begin.

Get Healthy • Live Healthy
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Visit **www.behealthy.com** for tools and information for a healthy lifestyle.

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Recipes featured in this newsletter are provided by Alere Healthy Living Kitchen, an independent company.