



Diabetes Awareness Month

March 2024

LOOKING AHEAD...

Join the March Into Spring Challenge!

This month you are challenged to complete at least 500 minutes of cardio exercise.

Webinars

Learn nutrition tips and menu planning techniques to better manage blood glucose levels, secrets to a better night's sleep, communication styles and strategies to become more assertive, planning for retirement when you're under age 40, and how to save for financial goals.

Sleep is one of the keys to wellness.

Check out resources from Learn to Live to help you sleep better.

Are you grieving the loss of a loved one?

Access a Loss Toolkit from Learn to Live.

Wellness Corner

Do you struggle with snack attacks? Try these four tasty options with no added sugar.

This newsletter will continue to include timely information on health and wellness but will also feature news, tips, and updates on a variety of benefits topics. If you would like to see a particular topic covered, send us your ideas at benefits@rcab.org.

More than [37 million Americans have diabetes](#) (about 1 in 10) and approximately 90-95% of them have type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is a condition that occurs when the body has difficulty regulating sugar (also referred to as glucose) as energy. This long-term condition can lead to disorders of the circulatory, nervous, and immune systems. Diabetes is the [7th leading cause of death](#) in the United States. However, people with diabetes can live longer with proper treatment and healthy lifestyle modifications. A [recent study](#) found that life expectancy for those with type 2 diabetes can be increased by 3 years, or in some cases as many as 10 years, with proper treatment and lifestyle modifications. Successful management of type 2 diabetes requires more than blood sugar management. Diabetes management is also connected to weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol. While there is no one-size-fits-all treatment, making realistic lifestyle changes will help to improve health outcomes.

1. **Get 7-9 hours of sleep and go to bed before midnight.** Consistently sleeping fewer than six hours per night is associated with a higher BMI, which increases the risk for type 2 diabetes or makes it more difficult to manage the disease. When you don't get enough sleep, the hormone levels in your body can also become irregular. Inadequate sleep decreases insulin sensitivity and affects hormones, resulting in increased appetite and decreased satiety after eating. Sleep deprivation may also produce additional cortisol, your body's main stress hormone. When cortisol production increases in the body, blood sugar levels may also increase.
2. **Eat a balanced diet, high in fiber.** Fiber helps to lower cholesterol levels and improve blood sugar control for diabetes management as well as provide a sense of fullness from eating. Although it is recommended to get at least 25-30 grams of dietary fiber daily, studies have shown that the average [American adult gets 10-15 grams of fiber daily](#). To increase dietary fiber, choose whole fruit (with seeds and skin), select whole grains (like oatmeal), add seeds to your daily diet (such as chia seeds or hemp seeds), and work in vegetables by remembering to eat something green each day. When reading nutrition facts labels, choose products with at least 3-4 grams of fiber per serving size. And remember—drink at least 64-80 ounces of water daily! Fiber needs fluid in order to be processed through the body.
3. **Eat adequate lean protein.** Eating adequate protein helps to improve fullness after meals and regulates blood glucose. However, make sure you are selecting plant-based proteins and lean, low-fat sources of animal protein. The most common and serious long-term complication of type 2 diabetes is cardiovascular disease, which can lead to problems like heart attack, stroke, and even death. On average, people with type 2 diabetes have twice the risk of cardiovascular disease as people without diabetes. Therefore, limiting sources of saturated fat (from fatty meats, butter, and processed foods) can improve health outcomes for those with diabetes.



4. **Move your body.** Exercising regularly helps the body regulate blood glucose. Work with your doctor to determine what level of physical activity is appropriate for you and figure out how much time per day you can devote to exercise. The [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends exercising 150-300 minutes a week.
5. **Medical management.** If necessary, speak to your doctor about medications. Although some people can control their blood glucose levels with lifestyle modifications, others may need medication or insulin to manage it. Even if you are receiving medical interventions, you still need to modify your lifestyle. If you are struggling with where to start with lifestyle modifications, speak to your doctor about seeing a Registered Dietitian for medical nutrition therapy.
6. **Don't forget!** Employees and spouses enrolled in the RCAB Health Plan have access to **Omada**, a prediabetes weight management program. The best part is the program is valued at \$700 but costs nothing to participants who are eligible to join. Visit omadahealth.com/rcab and get started!

Sleep is a Key Ingredient to Wellness

Poor sleep hygiene can not only increase the risk of diabetes but also affect mental health. Research shows strong links between poor sleep and issues like anxiety, depression, concentration problems, and more. These issues, when combined with sleep deprivation, can lead to challenges with work, school, relationships, impulse control, and everyday functioning.

Employees and spouses enrolled in the RCAB Health Plan should check out Learn to Live's cognitive behavioral therapy programs and 24/7 live clinician coaching for issues such as insomnia, anxiety, depression, and more. The insomnia program helps participants uncover barriers that get in the way of a good night's rest and learn powerful strategies, such as scheduled worry time and present awareness. Visit learntolive.com/partners and enter the code **RCAB**.

Learn to Live's webinar for March, **Unmasking the Secrets to a Better Night's Sleep**, is a "must see" for those who would like to discover practical ways to sleep better. Access the registration link in the webinar section on the next page. Following each Learn to Live sleep webinar session, 20 attendees will be chosen at random to receive swag from Learn to Live!

Have you checked out Employee Assistance Program resources on ComPsych, accessible 24/7? Access an informational flyer by clicking [HERE](#).

Call: 1-888-327-9573

Online: guidanceresources.com

Web ID: SYMETRA



Webinars

Employees and spouses enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans and registered in the Blue Cross *ahealthyme* program can earn a total of \$50 into their HealthEquity HRA or HSA if they attend three wellness webinars per Plan Year. Please self-report your viewing to benefits@rcab.org. Click on dates/times below to register.

Employees eligible to participate in the RCAB 401(k) Retirement Savings Plan can access Voya Financial Webinars

Retirement Planning Under 40

[Tuesday, March 12: 10 am and 2 pm](#)

[Tuesday, March 26: 12 pm and 3 pm](#)

Save for Other Financial Goals

[Tuesday, March 26 at 10 am and 2 pm](#)

Diabetes and Your Diet

Wellness Concepts

[Wednesday, March 20: 4 pm](#)

Diabetes, particularly type 2 diabetes and prediabetes, affects millions of Americans and can be managed or potentially prevented through lifestyle changes. A Registered Dietitian will share nutrition information and menu planning techniques to learn how to better manage blood glucose levels.

LEARN TO LIVE

Use access code **RCAB** to view the webinar.

Unmasking the Secrets to a Better Night's Sleep

[Wednesday, March 6: 1 pm](#)

[Friday, March 15: 12 pm](#)

[Tuesday, March 19: 4 pm](#)

Setting Boundaries for Well-Being: The Art of Assertiveness

Do you struggle with knowing how to be assertive in your interaction with others? The Learn to Live Clinical Team explains four communication styles and shares strategies to become more assertive.

[Wednesday, March 27th: 1 pm](#)

In Case You Missed It...



HEADS UP!

You can still view recorded webinars from last month below. After viewing these webinars, please self-report your viewing to benefits@rcab.org. You can access webinars for 60 days following their live recording date.

[Cholesterol Counts: Reducing Cholesterol through Good Nutrition](#)

[Building Stronger Connections for a Healthier Life](#)

[Why Do I Care So Much About What They Think?](#)



March Into Spring

Cycling, running, dancing, and hiking. Cardio fitness options are endless. This month you are challenged to complete at least 500 minutes of cardio exercise. The goal is to raise your heart rate for 20 minutes or more at a time. Watch as you increase your stamina and fitness! Cardio will help strengthen your heart and boost your mood. This month participants can log activity on both the mobile app and website.

Eligible employees receive an email to join the Challenge.

Earn \$50 into your HealthEquity HRA or HSA!



Snacks Without the Guilt



Pumpkin spice popcorn

Toss 3 cups of air-popped popcorn with 1 tsp olive oil, 1 Tbsp shelled pumpkin seeds and ¼ tsp pumpkin spice.



Banana bread-style oatmeal cup

Mash ½ banana in a bowl. Add ¼ cup prepared oatmeal and ¼ tsp ground cinnamon. Mix well. Top with 1 Tbsp toasted walnuts.



Fruit and cheese plate

Slice 1 small pear or apple. Serve on a plate with 1 low-fat string cheese or 1 oz of low-fat cheese, cut into cubes.



Mojito snack bowl

Place ½ cup cubed pineapple and ½ cup cubed cucumber in a bowl. Toss with 1 tsp lime juice and ½ tsp chopped fresh mint leaves.

Lenten Reflection

During this season of reflection and preparation of Easter, it's important to remember that the season is not just about practicing self-control, fasting, or giving up our luxuries. This Lenten season, let us give to others through acts of kindness, sharing our talents, lending our time, and giving alms to those in need. Take some time this month to reflect on what you are grateful for, the strengthening of your faith, and the promise of a wonderful year ahead.