

# SimplyWell

Wellness tips and encouragement from Hally® health.

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Benefits and coverage may vary from plan to plan. Please review your plan documents or call the number on the back of your member ID card for specifics.

# Get your calcium this summer.

A healthy body needs healthy bones – and healthy bones need calcium. This summer and beyond, make sure you and your loved ones are getting enough of this vital nutrient.

## Why is calcium so important?

You need calcium to build and maintain strong bones. In fact, your bones, blood, heart, muscles and nerves all need calcium. When you eat (or drink) plenty of calcium, you give all these body parts enough of this important nutrient to stay healthy. But if you don't eat or drink enough of it, your body will take the calcium already in your bones and give it to these other parts of your body. Your bones can weaken when this calcium is taken away.

## How much is enough?

No matter how old – or young – you are, you need calcium. Check out this table to see the daily amounts recommended by the National Institutes of Health, and ask your doctor what's best for you based on your unique health.

Age	Male	Female
1 – 3 years	700 mg	700 mg
4 – 8 years	1,000 mg	1,000 mg
9 – 18 years	1,300 mg	1,300 mg
19 – 50 years	1,000 mg	1,000 mg
51 – 70 years	1,000 mg	1,000 mg
71+ years	1,200 mg	1,200 mg

mg = milligrams of calcium

## Get more calcium in your diet.

Your body doesn't produce calcium on its own, so you must get it through food, drinks and other sources. Check the nutritional labels of what you eat and drink – the amount of calcium is listed near the bottom – and seek these out:

- Dairy products like cheese, milk and yogurt. Pick low-fat or fat-free options.

- Broccoli, spinach, kale and other dark-green, leafy veggies.
- Calcium-fortified orange juice.
- Fortified plant-based milks, including almond, soy and rice milks.
- Canned sardines and salmon (with bones).
- Almonds, winter squash, edamame (young green soybeans) and more – ask your doctor for more recommendations. Yum!

## Helpful Tips

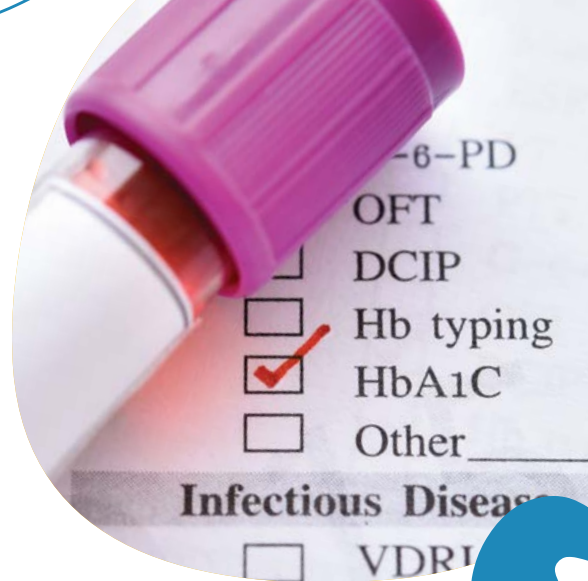
- Are you an oatmeal fan? Make it with milk instead of water.
- Top your baked potato with broccoli and low-fat cheese.
- Make your salads with calcium-rich greens rather than the usual boring lettuce.
- Blend up a delicious breakfast shake by mixing milk, yogurt, fruits and greens.
- Get your exercise – and do weight-bearing activities to keep your bones strong. Ask your doctor what's best.
- Also ask your doctor if should get a bone density test or might need calcium supplements.

No bones about it – healthy bodies need their calcium. Take action today to keep your skeleton smiling.

# Diabetes 101:

## Your Guide to A1C Tests

If you have diabetes or prediabetes, getting your regular A1C tests – and using the results to help guide your overall treatment and lifestyle plan – is key. Here's what you need to know about these important tests, based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



### The Basics

An A1C test (also called a hemoglobin A1C or an HbA1c test) is a simple blood test that measures what your average blood sugar levels have been over the past three months. It's the main test you and your care team will use to manage your diabetes (or prediabetes), to help you keep on track and stay healthy.

You should get an A1C test at least twice a year if you have diabetes. If you change medications or have other health conditions, you'll probably need to get the test more often – ask your doctor what's best for your situation. If you have prediabetes, get an A1C test as often as your doctor recommends – you'll usually need one annually or every other year.

You'll get the test at either your doctor's office or at a lab, and you don't need to do anything special to prepare for it.

### Getting Results – and Setting Goals

Test results tell you your A1C level, which is given as a percentage. People with an A1C between 5.7% and 6.4% have prediabetes, while those with diabetes have an A1C level above 6.4%. Higher percentages mean a higher risk of health complications. A1C levels change over time – based on, among other things, how well you're managing your diabetes or prediabetes. It's important to know what your levels are and to keep them from rising.

This is where goal-setting comes in. Talk with your doctor and care team about your unique health conditions, and ask them to help you set a goal (or goals) for your A1C level. For most people with diabetes, the goal is to reach – and stay at – an A1C level of 7% or less. With your personal goal in hand, you have the power to stay on track and keep your blood sugar in check.

### And don't forget....

Getting your A1C test is key – but it's just one part of successfully managing your diabetes or prediabetes. It does not replace the daily blood sugar testing you do at home. Your daily tests are needed to manage your blood sugar as it goes up and down throughout the day. And both tests should be part of a much wider treatment and lifestyle plan that includes things such as exercise, what you eat and drink, and much more. Ask your doctor and care team for help creating – and sticking to – this overall plan. With their help, and tools such as your A1C tests, you'll be well on your way to living your healthiest life.

**For tips, resources and more to help you manage your diabetes, visit [hally.com](http://hally.com) and search "diabetes."**

For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific tests and screenings, please see your health plan documents or call the number on the back of your member ID card.





hally<sup>®</sup>

Let's cook  
something  
delish!

# Hawaiian Shaved Brussels Sprouts

## Ingredients

Serving size: 1/2 cup  
6 servings

16 oz fresh Brussels sprouts

1 Tbsp canola oil

1 Tbsp brown sugar

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp black pepper

1 (8 oz) can pineapple bits in juice, drained well

1 Tbsp chopped macadamia nuts

## Directions

1. Cut off the bottom of the Brussels sprouts' cores, then cut the sprouts into very thin slices with a knife or slice them in a food processor.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat the oil until it's hot. Sauté the Brussels sprouts for 5 to 7 minutes, or until they begin to brown, stirring occasionally. For crispier Brussels sprouts, sauté a couple minutes longer.
3. Stir in the brown sugar, salt, pepper and pineapple. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with the macadamia nuts and serve.

Find more delicious recipes at [hally.com/category/food-cooking](https://hally.com/category/food-cooking). Yum!

Nutrition facts: Calories: 90, Total fat: 4 g, Saturated fat: 0 g, Cholesterol: 0 mg, Sodium: 210 mg, Total Carbohydrate: 14 g, Fiber: 3 g, Total Sugars: 9 g, Protein: 3 g | Diabetes Food Hub®

*Photo may include foods and ingredients that aren't a part of this recipe or included in the nutrition analysis.*



Get to know your benefits.

## Air Ambulance Transport

We're proud to administer health benefits offered to individuals and families throughout the communities we serve. It's our goal to give you benefits and perks that truly make a difference, keep you healthy and help save you money.

Did you know that most of the plans we administer offer coverage for air ambulance transportation? It's part of the Ambulance / Emergency Transportation benefit. Some people – not realizing their plan covers these services – buy costly supplemental insurance from another company. Knowing what your plan covers can save you the money and hassle of buying this unneeded extra insurance – and it can give you peace of mind should an emergency arise.

Benefits and coverage vary by plan, but there are many easy ways to learn what your specific plan covers. The easiest? Simply give us a call at the number on the back of your member ID card – we can answer any questions you have and provide you with the information you need. You can also ask us to send your plan documents by mail.

Additionally, you may have already received, via hard copy or online, a coverage booklet that describes what benefits are available to you, what might not be covered on your plan and – in some cases – what approvals might be needed before you receive coverage for certain services and supplies. Last but not least, you can also view information about your benefits and coverage by logging into your account on [hally.com](http://hally.com).

Be in the know, and discover what your plan offers and includes. We're proud to be your partner and ally in health.







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## Pharmacy Corner:

# Have you tried mail order yet?

We all know how important medications are – but few of us enjoy that trip to the pharmacy to pick them up. What if we told you that your drugs could be delivered right to your door, in 90-day supplies? Our mail-order benefit does exactly this – and it might save you money too!\* But perhaps best of all? It can also deliver a win for your health, helping you stick to your meds.

### What is “adherence” – and why is it so important?

You may have heard your doctor or pharmacist use the term “medication adherence.” This simply means taking your drugs correctly. It includes:

- Taking the correct amount (dose) every time.
- Never missing a dose.
- Following all directions on the label (unless your doctor advises differently).

Taking the wrong amount – or even missing one dose – can harm your health. And your medications simply can't work as they're expected (to keep you healthy) if you don't use them correctly or as often as you should.

### Mail order can help.

There are many reasons people might miss a dose or run out of a medication. For many of us, we might simply forget to refill our prescription – and with 30-day refills, time flies quicker than we think. Others don't have a car or easy transportation to the pharmacy. Health conditions and age can also make it difficult to drive. Finally, some people might struggle to afford the high costs of their medication.

Mail-order programs can help solve some of these issues:

- Your medications are delivered right to your door – so you don't need to drive anywhere.
- You can get 90-day supplies, so you only need to remember refills four times a year.
- On most of our plans, ordering 90-day mail-order supplies also saves you money.\*







## Get started today.

If your plan includes a mail-order benefit, it's easy to sign up. The benefit is managed by our partner, OptumRx®, and you can sign up in two ways:

- Call OptumRx toll-free at **(800) 763-0044**.
- Sign up online at **optumRx.com**.

If you need help signing up – or if you're not sure whether your plan includes the mail-order benefit – simply give us a call at the number on the back of your member ID card. We're always glad to help!

\*Medication benefits and costs vary from plan to plan. Please review your plan documents or call the number on the back of your member ID card for information about your plan and its specifics regarding mail order.

In addition to OptumRx, you may have other mail-order pharmacies available in your plan's network, including AllianceRx from Walgreens®. Give us a call at the number on the back of your member ID card for more information.

# Act early – schedule your child’s school physical.

We know – it’s only the beginning of June and it seems like the last school year just ended. But now’s the best time to think ahead and schedule your child’s school physical for the upcoming year.

Summer is a busy time for doctors, so we always recommend you call them to schedule as early as possible. Due to the time of year, there may be a delay in getting an appointment – so we suggest calling right away, but also being patient if your doctor cannot fit your child in immediately.

Your child’s regular physical exams are a great way to detect any health problems in their earliest stages when they’re easiest to treat. These exams also give you a chance to talk to your child’s doctor about body mass index (BMI) and to learn about nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight.

It’s also important to ask the doctor if your child is up to date on their needed vaccines. To help keep track of the shots your child needs, visit [cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules). The “Parent-Friendly Schedules” are usually the easiest to view and understand, and your doctor can help with any questions you may have.

Finally, if your child takes any medications, make sure you know the school’s medication policies so you can discuss them with the doctor during the physical. Make sure prescriptions are up to date and you have a supply for when classes begin. The new school year will be here before you know it – ace this important first test and get your child’s physical set up before summer slips away.

For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific vaccines, exams and more, please see your health plan documents or call the number on the back of your member ID card.





# Protect yourself against cervical cancer.

Every year in the U.S., about 12,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer. It's a harmful disease – but also one that can be caught early, and even prevented in some cases, by taking certain steps. Here's what you need to know, from the experts at the National Cancer Institute and CDC.



## The Basics

Cervical cancer affects the cervix – the lower, narrow end of the uterus. At its earliest stages, it may not cause any noticeable symptoms. As the disease advances, it can cause abnormal bleeding or discharge from the vagina.

All women, and especially those over 30, are at risk for cervical cancer. The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the main cause of the disease. HPV is passed from one person to another during sex, and most sexually active people have the virus at some point in their lives. However, only some women will get cervical cancer from it.

Women who become sexually active at a young age, and those with many sexual partners, have an increased risk of cervical cancer. So do those who've given birth to many children, use birth control pills for five or more years, smoke cigarettes or have a weakened immune system. But it's worth repeating – all women are at risk for the disease.

## What is screening – and why is it so important?

Screening is looking for a disease before you have any symptoms. It's a key way to catching cancers early, when they're most treatable. Sometimes screening can even prevent a disease, by finding the earliest warning signs. For cervical cancer, two main tests are used for screening.

- A **Pap test** – or Pap smear – collects cells from your cervix to check for cancer or signs that cancer might develop in the future.
- An **HPV test** looks for the virus, HPV. It doesn't tell you if you have cancer, but it can tell you if you have certain forms of the virus that put you at higher risk for cancer, now or in the future.



What test to get depends on your age and other factors. **Ask your doctor what screening plan is best for you – they'll recommend you get a Pap test, HPV test or both tests together.** For most women, the CDC recommends:

- If you're **age 21 to 29**, you should get a Pap test regularly, or as directed by your doctor. If your test is normal, your doctor might say it's OK to wait three years until your next one.
- Women **age 30 to 65** can usually choose to have a Pap test, an HPV test or both together – but make sure to get your doctor's advice. If your results are normal, your doctor might say it's OK to wait up to five years for your next test.
- If you're **above 65**, ask your doctor what's best for you.

These screenings are important, even if you think you're healthy or at a lower risk. And even if you're past childbearing age or not having sex anymore, you still need to keep getting these tests regularly.

### Take action today.

It's a fact – studies show that cervical cancer screenings have helped decrease the number of deaths from the disease over the past 70 years. This testing truly saves lives. Talk to your doctor today and set up your next regular screening.

For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific screenings and other tests, please see your health plan documents or call the number on the back of your member ID card.





## Mental Health Meds – Tips for Best Use

Medications can be a great tool for dealing with depression, anxiety and other mental health issues. But they only work if you take them correctly. Here's important information for best use of these helpful medications.



## The Basics of “Adherence”

The term “medication adherence” simply means taking your drugs correctly. This includes taking the right amount every time, not missing doses, following all the directions on the label and never stopping your drugs without first talking to your doctor.

### Give it time.

Some medicines that treat mental health issues take a while to start working – in fact, some will take weeks or even months before you start to notice the positive changes. Unfortunately, many people stop taking the medications after the first few days or after a couple weeks. They think the drugs don’t work – but they just didn’t give them enough time. Whenever you begin a new medication, ask your doctor how long it’ll be until you should start noticing changes. And don’t stop taking the drug just because you’re not feeling better right away.

### Be in the know about side effects.

Medications can have side effects, and many people stop taking their drugs if they experience any. However, some side effects are short-lived and will go away once your body gets used to the medication. And others are simply uncomfortable – rather than harmful – and the benefits of the drug can outweigh these discomforts. With side effects, the most important thing is talking with your doctor – they’ll know which side effects are likely temporary, which are simply uncomfortable and which ones you should be worried about.

### Know how and when to take your meds.

Some people don’t think their medications work, but in reality they’re taking them wrong. Labels and directions can be confusing, and if you don’t take the right amounts, at the right times, the drugs might not help you. Instead of giving up, simply ask your doctor or pharmacist for help. They can teach you – in plain language, unlike those confusing labels – exactly how and when to take your medications.



### Get help with costs.

Prescription drugs can definitely be expensive. If you’re having trouble affording your medications, talk to your doctor about ways you might be able to save money on your prescriptions. They often know of programs and possible sources of financial aid. You can also call the company that makes your medication and ask if they offer discounts or aid.

### Last – But Not Least

- Don’t stop taking a medication because you start feeling better – in fact, that’s probably a sign the drug is working and you should keep taking it.
- Talk to your doctor about what you should do if you ever miss a dose. (We all forget sometimes!)
- If you have trouble remembering to take your meds, use pill boxes, alarms and notes to trigger your memory.
- Never stop (or start) using a medication without talking to your doctor.

# Closing Gaps in Care:

## Important Screening Reminders

It's hard to believe, but we're almost halfway through 2022. Before we know it, the bustle of late summer, school kicking off and then the holiday season will usher us into yet another new year. As time starts to slip away, it's important that you and your loved ones stay up to date with all your key health screenings, exams and preventive services. If you haven't already, make sure you call your doctor and schedule all of these that you're due for:

### Women and Men

- Colorectal cancer screening.
- Blood pressure reading.
- Medication review.

### Women Only

- Breast cancer screening.
- Cervical cancer screening.

These preventive services are key to identifying any issues early, when they're easiest to treat. And remember, to help keep you healthy throughout the year, most of the health plans we administer offer care coordination and health coaching services for no extra cost. Simply call the number on the back of your member ID card to find out more and get started today!

### Individuals With Diabetes

- A1C test.
- Nephropathy (kidney disease) screening.
- Diabetic retinal eye exams.

For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific screenings, tests, exams and other services, please see your health plan documents or call the number on the back of your member ID card.





# What To Know About Alcohol Use Disorder



Drinking alcohol is common – but this doesn’t mean it’s harmless or safe. When exactly does drinking become a “problem,” addiction or disorder? It’s not always easy to tell. But we hope this article can help you better understand when you or a loved one might need to reach out to your doctor for help.

## Alcohol Use Disorder

“Alcohol use disorder” is the term doctors use for alcohol addiction. It can be mild, severe or somewhere in between. People with this disorder have at least two of the following problems – and the more they have, the more severe their addiction usually is.

- Drink more – or longer – than you planned to.
- Want to cut back, but can’t.
- Spend a lot of time focused on alcohol.
- Have strong cravings for alcohol.
- Often skip work, school or family commitments.
- Quit, or cut back on, activities you used to enjoy.
- Keep drinking even if it leads to relationship problems.
- Drink even in situations known to be dangerous, like when driving.
- Keep drinking even when you know it causes physical or mental health issues.
- Need larger amounts to get the same effect.
- Get withdrawal symptoms if you stop drinking, like:
  - Racing heart.
  - Sweating.
  - Hand-trembling.
  - Insomnia.
  - Nausea / vomiting.
  - Hallucinations.
  - Restlessness.
  - Anxiety.
  - Seizures.



If you're wondering if you (or a loved one) might be drinking too much, also consider these questions:

- Do you (or they) drink more than first planned?
- Do you (or they) need to drink greater amounts to get the desired effect?
- Do you (or they) feel sick when trying to cut back on alcohol?
- Have you (or they) lost a job or been in legal trouble because of alcohol?

Many people face issues with alcohol and it's nothing to be embarrassed about. But it is something to find help for. Alcohol use disorder can harm your physical health, mental well-being, personal relationships, professional aspirations and more. It's a serious issue, but one you can fix.



## Get the help you need.

If you or a loved one is dealing with alcohol issues, talking to your doctor is the most important first step. Be open and honest about what you're dealing with. They'll know how to help. Depending on many factors – including your own wishes, your unique health and the seriousness of your alcohol issues – your doctor will work with you to come up with the best plan for treatment. This might include support groups, counseling, medication and other helpful tools. Your doctor can help you set goals – and be at your side to guide you as you strive to reach them.

Countless people have received the help they need and freed themselves from the grasp of alcohol addiction. They've found not only renewed health – but also renewed hope, optimism and strengthened relationships with the people and things that matter most in their lives. A new journey can start today.

### References:

Aronson, M., "Patient Education: Alcohol Use – When is drinking a problem? (Beyond the Basics)," UpToDate®, 2021.  
Saitz, R., "Alcohol Use Disorder: Psychosocial Treatment," UpToDate®, 2021.



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## Want to Make a Difference?

We are looking for members who are comfortable sharing their perspectives and feedback on how we, as a health plan, can improve for the greater good of our membership. If you are interested in learning more, please email [Gregg.Mottola@healthalliance.org](mailto:Gregg.Mottola@healthalliance.org). Meetings are typically held on a quarterly basis, so you would be asked to share your perspective 3-4 times a year. As always, our goal is to represent our membership's diverse geographic, cultural and medical backgrounds.

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