

# SimplyWell

Wellness tips and encouragement from Hally® health.

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## Hally health

# Get moving – to better health!

Are you getting the recommended amount of exercise every week? If not, is it really a big deal? Yes! Not only can regular physical activity make you feel better – it can also lower your risk for many diseases and even early death. Here's what you need to know, from the American Heart Association® and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



### Better Health, Body and Mind

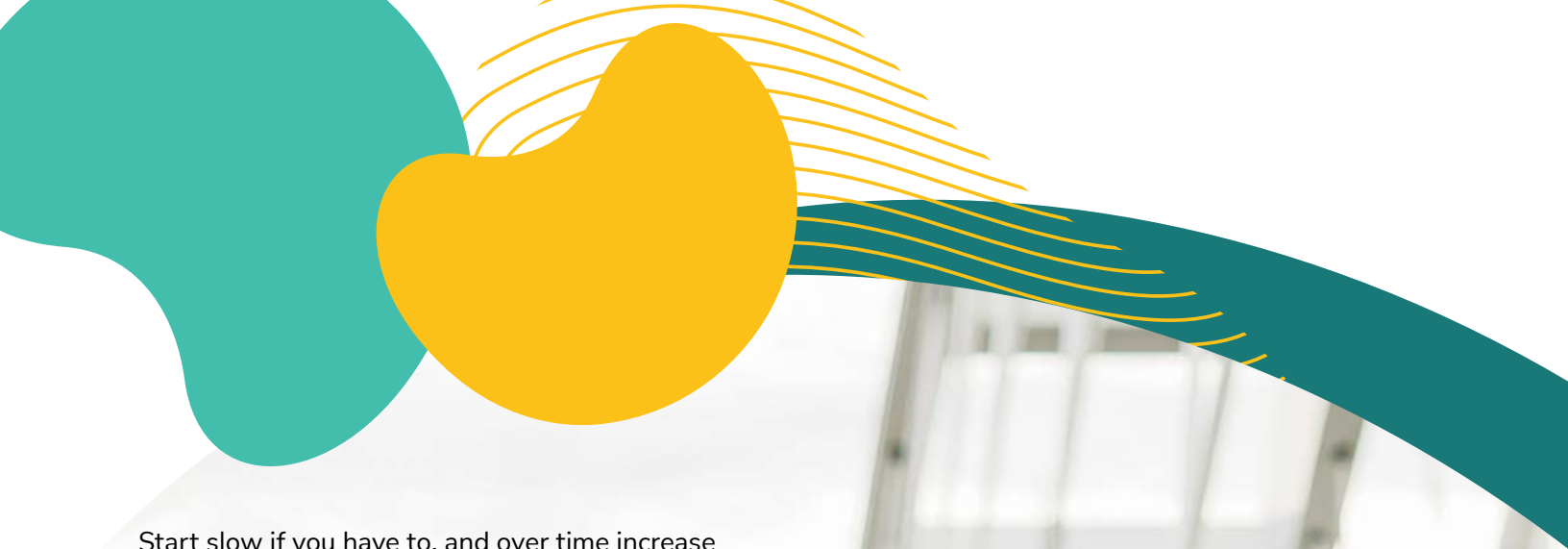
Exercising can have many benefits – here are just a few!

- Lower risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and certain cancers.
- Healthier bones, improved balance and less risk of injuries from falls.
- Improved thinking, memory and focus.
- Better sleep.
- Fewer feelings of anxiety and depression.

### What to Aim For

So how much physical activity should you shoot for? And what types? Always ask your doctor what's best for your age, health and condition, but here are some general recommendations.

| Adults  | Kids  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get at least <b>150 minutes (2.5 hours) per week</b> of <b>moderate-intensity</b> aerobic activity OR <b>75 minutes per week</b> of <b>vigorous</b> aerobic activity.</li><li>• <b>Moderate-intensity</b> aerobic activity includes things like brisk walking, dancing, gardening, doubles tennis and bicycling at a medium speed.</li><li>• <b>Vigorous</b> aerobic activities include running, swimming laps, high-intensity dancing, singles tennis, jump rope and bicycling at a speedy clip.</li><li>• At least <b>two days a week</b>, add <b>muscle-strengthening</b> exercises – think resistance or weights.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Age 3 to 5:</b> Get up and moving plenty of times throughout the day.</li><li>• <b>Age 6 to 17:</b> Get <b>60 minutes (one hour) per day</b> of <b>moderate-to-vigorous</b> physical activity – think running, jumping, playing sports, etc. This should include <b>vigorous</b> activity at least <b>three days each week</b>.</li><li>• At least <b>three days a week</b>, add <b>muscle-strengthening</b> exercises – like pushups, situps, monkey bars, etc.</li></ul> |



Start slow if you have to, and over time increase the length and intensity of your workouts. Try to include aerobic exercise, muscle-strengthening activities and stretching.

### Some final tips?

- Pick something you enjoy doing and set goals to keep yourself motivated.
- Find a friend or loved one to exercise with.
- Change things up.
- Stay positive – and stay focused on the big picture: sticking to regular exercise can lead to a healthier life.

So begin today – and start moving your way to the healthiest you.





# Get your flu shot.

Every year, the flu spreads throughout our communities and makes a lot of people sick – but you have the power to help protect yourself and those around you. How? By getting your yearly flu vaccine. Read on to discover the many benefits of this safe and effective shot, via information from the CDC.

### Protection, Prevention and More

Why should you and your loved ones get the flu vaccine? Consider this:

- **It can keep you from getting the flu.** Why be sick if you don't have to? Each year, the vaccine prevents millions of illnesses and visits to the doctor.
- **Even if you do get the flu (because the shot doesn't prevent 100% of cases), the vaccine can help lower the severity of your illness.** In other words, you have a better chance of avoiding serious sickness.
- **It can help keep you out of the hospital.**
- **Flu vaccines are especially important for people with chronic health issues.** If you have heart disease, the shot can help lower your risk of certain cardiac events. For people with diabetes or chronic lung diseases (like COPD), the vaccine can help prevent worsening of these issues.
- **For children, flu vaccines can be lifesaving.** A recent study showed that vaccination lowered children's risk of severe, life-threatening influenza by 75%.
- **Getting the shot during pregnancy helps protect you while you're pregnant and afterward – and your baby in their first months of life.**
- **When you get vaccinated, you're not only protecting yourself – but also those around you.** By helping limit the spread of flu to others, you're helping protect your family, neighbors and those most vulnerable in your community, including babies, young children, older adults and those with chronic health issues.



Remember that you need a **new flu shot every year**. It's a simple, but powerful, step you can take to help protect your own health and that of your loved ones. Every year, millions of people get sick, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized and tens of thousands die because of the flu. It doesn't have to be this bad – get your shot, make sure your loved ones get theirs, and spread awareness to your friends and neighbors about this lifesaving vaccine.

**Learn all about the flu – and discover even more reasons why the vaccine is so important – by visiting [cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu).**

*For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific vaccines and healthcare appointments, please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.*

# Take action against chronic kidney disease.

Your kidneys are key to good health. They filter all the blood in your body, removing wastes and toxins. They also help control blood pressure, create blood cells and keep bones healthy. That's why it's so important to know about chronic kidney disease, a harmful condition that affects more than 1 in 7 U.S. adults. Here's vital information from the CDC.

## What is CKD?

When someone has chronic kidney disease (CKD), their kidneys are damaged and can no longer filter blood as well as they should. Waste and extra fluid remain in the body (since they aren't filtered out), which can lead to issues such as heart disease and stroke. People with CKD may also get more infections; have a low red-blood-cell count; experience high levels of phosphorus and potassium, and low levels of calcium, in their blood; and more.

CKD has different stages of seriousness – and it usually gets worse over time, especially if left untreated. Without treatment, it can lead to kidney failure and early heart disease. If the kidneys stop working completely, either dialysis or a kidney transplant is needed for survival. Along with other kidney diseases, CKD is a leading cause of death in the U.S.

## Who's at risk?

The risk factors for developing CKD include having diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity or a family history of CKD. If you have any of these risk factors, talk to your doctor about getting tested for CKD. Testing is very important – because the disease in its early stage shows no outward signs or symptoms. In fact, although 37 million Americans have CKD, most do not know it.

## You can take action.

If you're at risk for CKD, you can take steps to improve your odds of preventing it. And if you already have the disease, there are actions you can take to treat it and help it from getting worse. Follow these tips:

- Control the risk factors for CKD as best as you can.
- If you're at risk for CKD, get tested for it – every year.
- Keep your blood pressure below 140/90 mm Hg (or whatever target your doctor gives you).

- Maintain control of your blood sugar levels, especially if you have diabetes.
- Exercise – this can also help you control your blood pressure and blood sugar.
- If you're overweight, talk with your doctor about a plan to help you lose weight.
- Don't smoke. Ask your doctor for help quitting if needed.
- If you're diagnosed with CKD, get with your doctor to start treatment right away – the earlier you begin treatment, the better.
- Meet with a dietitian to create a kidney-healthy meal plan. Keep your doctor involved as well.
- Make sure you include a kidney doctor (nephrologist) on your care team. You can ask your primary care doctor to refer you to one.
- Take all your medications as instructed – and ask your doctor(s) about blood pressure medicines called angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors and angiotensin II receptor blockers. These drugs can help your blood pressure and may protect your kidneys.

We value your well-being and treat you as a partner in helping you improve your overall health and wellness. With the steps above, you have the power to take action against chronic kidney disease. Get started today – you got this.

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

# Smart Antibiotic Use

We value your well-being and treat you as a partner in helping you improve your overall health and wellness. Part of this is helping you decide what types of medicines you might need and when, depending on what you're facing. And often, it's just as important to know what medications you shouldn't use in certain situations. This is key for antibiotics, which are not the best treatment for many common health issues. Here's what you need to know, from the CDC.



## Antibiotics aren't always the answer.

Many people use antibiotics when they shouldn't – and this can lead to unintended harm. Ask your doctor for more information, but in general:

- **Do NOT use antibiotics to treat illnesses caused by viruses.** That's because antibiotics can't fight viruses and won't make you feel better. So, don't use them when you're sick with a virus, such as those that cause:
  - Colds and runny noses.
  - The flu.
  - Most cases of chest colds/bronchitis.
  - Most sore throats (except strep throat).
- **Antibiotics CAN help treat illnesses and infections caused by bacteria.** These include:
  - Strep throat.
  - Whooping cough.
  - UTIs (urinary tract infections).

**However, antibiotics are also NOT needed for certain infections caused by bacteria**, including many sinus and some ear infections.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions – or if you're wondering whether a certain type of sickness or infection should be treated with antibiotics or not. When you use antibiotics when you shouldn't, not only will they not help you feel better, but you might still get the drug's side effects.

Plus, overuse of antibiotics can lead to something called **antibiotic resistance**, where medicines that used to work against germs become less effective. The big take-home message? Antibiotics are good for some health issues and bad for others – and your doctor can help you know when you truly need them.

## Final Thoughts

Last, we'd be remiss if we didn't mention one of the best ways to prevent illnesses even before they start: practicing good hygiene. To help you and your loved ones stay healthy:

- Wash your hands – thoroughly and often.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Get recommended vaccines, like the flu shot.

Being sick isn't fun – but smart choices can help your health. Practice good hygiene and, if you become ill, always take the correct type of medicines your body truly needs.

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

# What to Know About Back Pain

Back pain can be, well, quite the pain. But there's help out there for you or your loved ones facing this common issue. Here's some basic – but helpful – information from the National Institutes of Health about diagnosis, treatment, prevention and more. Even with back pain, you can live your best life.

## Diagnosis

Your doctor, and perhaps some specialty doctors they connect you with, will be the experts in figuring out what's causing your back pain. They'll probably ask you some questions about when the pain started, where it hurts most, if you've noticed that anything makes it better or worse, and if chronic pain is common in your family. They might ask about any other medical issues you have and if you had a past injury. They'll collect this information and then likely give you a physical exam testing your movement, reflexes, muscles and more. In some cases, they might also have you get X-rays, bone scans or blood tests. All of this will help your doctor determine the cause of – and best treatment for – your pain.

## Treatment

There are many types of treatment your doctor may recommend. This might include certain types of physical therapy, exercises, medications, or a combination of these and more. If all other treatment options don't work, your doctor might even recommend surgery – although this is not the path for everyone.

Additionally, your doctor might tell you to follow certain everyday practices like using cold packs or hot packs; limiting certain types of physical activities that cause pain or make it worse; using proper form when lifting, pushing or pulling things; and making sure you're eating healthy, getting enough sleep and exercising (in ways that don't worsen pain). Be open and honest with your doctor about what's working and what's not – it's common to change or adjust treatments until you find what works best.

## Helpful Tips

Living with back pain can be difficult. Here are some simple tips that might help.

- Don't sit for long periods of time. Get up and move around – and switch positions often.
- During long drives, use support behind your back. Stop frequently to get out of the vehicle to stand and walk.
- Don't sleep on your stomach. Try to sleep on your side, with a small pillow between your knees. If you sleep on your back, place a pillow under your knees.
- Pick shoes that are comfy and have a low heel.
- Don't carry too much weight. Take multiple trips to carry things if needed.





## Prevention

Is it possible to prevent back pain? These things could help.

- Exercise regularly to keep your back muscles strong.
- Eat a healthy diet with plenty of calcium and vitamin D – these help keep your spine strong!

- Maintain a healthy weight – this can prevent extra stress or strain on your back.
- When lifting things, don't use your back. Lift with your leg and stomach muscles.
- And it may sound silly, but always sit up straight. Your grade school teacher was right!

Talk with your doctor for even more advice. Together, you can take action against back pain.

*For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific exams, X-rays, scans, tests, treatments and healthcare appointments, please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.*



The logo for 'hally' is displayed in white lowercase letters within a yellow circular background. The letter 'y' has a simple smiley face drawn on it. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the upper right of the 'y'.

hally®

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of several mushrooms on a grill. Each mushroom cap is filled with a mixture of ingredients, including a seared scallop, green leafy vegetables, and a red sauce. The mushrooms are arranged on a metal grill grate. The image is partially overlaid with decorative shapes: a yellow circle in the top left, a teal shape in the top right, and a large blue shape in the bottom right containing the text.

Let's cook  
something  
delish!

# Spinach-Ricotta Stuffed Portobello Caps

4 Servings

## Ingredients

- 8 portobello mushroom caps, wiped clean with a damp cloth
- 2 T. water
- 1 (5-ounce) package fresh baby spinach
- ½ c. part-skim ricotta cheese
- ⅓ c. chopped fresh basil, divided use
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 c. reduced-sodium marinara sauce, divided use
- ¾ c. shredded Italian-blend cheese

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Coat both sides of mushroom caps with cooking spray and place, stem side down, on a foil-lined baking sheet. Bake 10 minutes, turn, and bake five minutes or until tender.
3. Meanwhile, add water to a large skillet and place over medium-high heat. Add spinach and cook, stirring carefully, one to two minutes, or until wilted. Remove from heat and stir in the ricotta cheese and ¼ cup of the basil. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Spoon half of the marinara sauce on top of the mushroom caps (1 T. per mushroom). Top with equal amounts of the spinach mixture, spoon remaining marinara sauce over all and sprinkle with the Italian-blend cheese. Bake 10 minutes or until heated through and cheese is melted. Sprinkle with the remaining basil.

Calories: 190, Total Fat: 11 g, Saturated Fat: 5 g, Cholesterol: 25 mg, Sodium: 360 mg, Total Carbohydrate: 14 g, Fiber: 2 g, Total Sugars: 6g, Protein: 14 g

Source: cancer.org

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

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

# Osteoporosis – and Your Dentist

Osteoporosis is a disease that makes bones weak and more likely to fracture or break. So what does it have to do with your dentist? It all centers on some common osteoporosis medications and a relatively rare jaw condition. Read on to learn more, from the experts at the Pharmacist's Letter (a TRC Healthcare brand).

## The Main Takeaway

Before we dive into the details, if you remember one thing from this article, have it be this: **If you're about to start taking certain osteoporosis drugs, see your dentist before you do.**

## The Reason

Why see your dentist? A small number of people who take common osteoporosis medications (bisphosphonates (alendronate, ibandronate, risedronate)/IV bisphosphonates (zoledronic acid, ibandronate)) experience a health issue called **osteonecrosis of the jaw**. Blood stops flowing to parts of the jaw, which can lead to the death of bone tissue – and the eventual breakdown and collapse of the jaw. This is **rare** – in fact, there's only about one case of osteonecrosis for every 10,000 to 100,000 people on bisphosphonates – but it's important to be aware of.

## How Your Dentist Can Help

A large percentage of those who've gotten jaw osteonecrosis while taking bisphosphonates are people with bone cancer (rather than osteoporosis) who are being treated with especially large doses of the drugs. But another large percentage are people with certain dental issues. In particular, those who've had **recent tooth extractions (or other dental surgeries that impact the bone)** seem to be at higher risk of osteonecrosis when taking the medications, along with – more rarely – people with **gum inflammation** or **certain denture issues**.

This is where your dentist comes in. Before you start taking medications (bisphosphonates) for osteoporosis, it's important you visit your dentist for a checkup. Specifically tell them the medicines you're going to take, so they can give you the best advice and do the most thorough exam.

If you have any decaying teeth, you'll probably need to get these removed – and then heal for four to five weeks – before beginning your medication. For those with dentures, you might need to get them fitted more properly. Your dentist will look for other issues too.

However, only certain dental problems put you at a higher risk. It's safe to still have cavities fixed, get crowns, have root canals and more – because these usually don't impact the bone. If you have questions, ask your dentist. And at the end of your checkup, make sure they give you their recommendation on whether it's safe to start taking bisphosphonates, and if you can begin them right away or should wait a certain amount of time.

And your dental health shouldn't be a "one-and-done" thing. After your checkup, keep protecting your teeth by brushing, flossing and seeing your dentist regularly. And always report any pain, swelling or mouth ulcers right away.

## Final Thoughts

Osteoporosis is serious – and breaking bones can lead to other problems as well. Bisphosphonates are medicines that can help. So, just make sure with your doctor and dentist that you're OK to take these drugs. The risk for side effects like jaw osteonecrosis are usually low – especially compared to the risk of a fall for people with osteoporosis – so your doctor and dentist will help you come to the best decision for your unique circumstances, helping you protect both your bones and your mouth to live your healthiest life.

*For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific exams, procedures, treatments and healthcare appointments, please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.*



# Have you tried Mediterranean-style eating?



When you have diabetes – or are at risk for it – eating healthy is key. What you eat at meals and snacks can help you control your blood sugar levels and stay in best health. Your choices have the power to make a real difference. Here’s some helpful guidance from the CDC.

## First Things First

There’s no such thing as a “diabetes diet” – in other words, no “one-size-fits-all” food plan that works for everyone. And in general, healthy eating for people with diabetes looks a lot like healthy eating for anyone – for example, picking foods lower in added sugars and saturated fat. However, even though there’s no one single “diet” for people with diabetes, many have found certain food plans helpful in controlling their blood sugar and managing their condition. One such plan – called **Mediterranean-style eating** – has been shown to improve A1C levels, cholesterol and heart health.

## What is Mediterranean-style eating?

Named after the traditional dietary habits of people living along the Mediterranean Sea, this food plan includes:

- Eating plenty of veggies, fruits, whole grains, beans and nuts.
- Using extra-virgin olive oil (rather than butter or other oils).
- Limiting red meat, dairy, added sugars, salt (sodium) and highly processed foods.

Note that Mediterranean-style eating often features foods like pasta, bread and rice – which can raise your blood sugar. So pick healthier options – like whole-grain or vegetable noodles and rice – and keep your portion sizes of these carbs small.

In addition to helping you control your blood sugar and A1C levels, Mediterranean-style eating can also help:

- **Boost your heart health.** By eating less salt and saturated fat, you’re lowering your risk of heart disease, stroke, and heightened blood pressure and cholesterol.
- **Reduce inflammation.** Foods like leafy green veggies, fruits, olive oil and fish with healthy fats can help reduce inflammation, strengthen your immune system and more.
- **Control your weight.** By focusing on foods high in fiber and low in salt and saturated fat, Mediterranean-style eating can help you manage your weight.

Talk to your doctor and diabetes care team today about Mediterranean-style eating and if it may be right for you. They can give you additional information, personalized tips and perhaps even some yummy recipes. Living your healthiest life has never tasted so good!

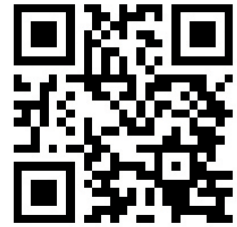
*For more information, tips and resources on diabetes management, visit [hally.com](http://hally.com) and search “diabetes.”*



# Right Care, Right Place

## Know where to go for care.

When you need a healthcare service, where should you go? Should you call your primary care provider? Visit the hospital or urgent care clinic? It all depends, based on what your illness, injury or need is; how severe it is; how soon you need care; your location; and more. Use this guide to help – and cut it out and put it on your fridge for easy reference.



| Where to Go                 | When to Go  | Typical Costs               | Appointment Needed?   |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Primary Care Provider (PCP) | Non-emergency care. Physicals and wellness checks, vaccines, routine care and illness. Available in person and (often) by phone/video.  | \$-\$\$                     | Yes. Available during usual business hours. Same-day often available. |
| Virtual Visits*             | Non-emergency care. Illness, injury, behavioral health and more. Available from home or anywhere, by phone or video through hally.com.* | \$<br>Free with some plans. | No. Available 24/7, 365. Wait Time: ~15 mins.                         |
| Urgent Care Clinic          | Non-emergency care. Illnesses and injuries that need care right away. Available in person.  | \$-\$\$                     | No. Available for extended hours. Often open seven days a week.       |
| Emergency Department        | Emergency care. Immediate treatment for serious or life-threatening illnesses, injuries and issues.                                     | \$\$\$\$                    | No. Available 24/7, 365. Potentially longer wait times.               |

For coverage information – or if you have any questions – call the number on the back of your health plan ID card. **And remember, always call 911 right away if you have a life-threatening medical or mental health emergency.**

### Have you tried out virtual visits?\*

Getting expert, trusted help for your physical, emotional and behavioral health needs has never been easier. Many plans offer **virtual visits**, which let you connect with board certified doctors and psychiatrists, as well as licensed therapists, by phone or secure video 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – all through your phone, tablet or computer.

**Physical Health Needs** – Get help for your allergies, insect bites, rashes, cold and flu

symptoms, ear problems, pink eye, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and many other common conditions.

**Emotional and Behavioral Health Needs** – Get help for anxiety, stress, depression, grief, PTSD, trauma, bipolar disorder, addictions and substance issues, and more.

Easily set up a virtual visit online from **hally.com**.\* Simply log in and get started today.

*\*Virtual visits aren't available on all plans. Also, some plans feature virtual visits through a source other than hally.com. To see if virtual visits are available on your plan (and to see if they're offered through hally.com), please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.*

*For more information about virtual visits, or help getting started, call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.*

*Virtual care isn't meant to treat all medical conditions – please remember to always visit the emergency department or call 911 for emergencies.*

*You'll need to have an online member account (for your health plan) before you're able to access virtual visits. If you haven't already created an account, visit [login.hally.com](https://login.hally.com).*

*For more specific details and information about coverage and costs for virtual offerings, please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.*



Cut here!



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HEALTH AND WELLNESS OR  
PREVENTION INFORMATION

## 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 plan participants. 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 three to four times a year. As always, our goal is to represent our plan participants' diverse geographic, cultural and medical backgrounds.

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