

Laughter IS the Best Medicine

Q: What happens when you are too harsh on cranberries?

A: They turn into blueberries

To learn how blueberries could contribute to lower blood pressure click on the link below:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/blueberries-may-help-lower-blood-pressure>

Get Your Flu/COVID Vaccines....

The flu and COVID season is upon us. This doesn't mean you have to run and hide.

One of the best things you can do to **protect yourself** is to get vaccinated.

Click on the link below or call 1.855.200.6822 for information regarding flu vaccination clinics, how to schedule your flu vaccine at your local Premise Health Clinic and where to get your COVID booster.

<https://benefits.mt.gov/Medical/vaccines>

You can also request a flu vaccine at our next in clinic appointment.

Thanksgiving and Holiday Recipes that will make your stomach & heart happy!

Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Cranberries & Walnuts

Brussels sprouts are packed with potassium & fiber which help balance sodium levels in the body then add the benefits of cranberries and walnuts for a dish that is sure to please and support healthy blood pressures!

Dark Chocolate Banana Bites

70% or higher cacao dark chocolate contains flavonoids that may improve blood vessel function-paired with potassium-rich bananas and you have a win-win!

Maple Mashed Sweet Potatoes

The sweetness of maple paired with two minerals (potassium & magnesium) that help relax your blood vessels and improve circulation will have you dancing to the kitchen for more.

For these recipes and more visit the the link below:

<https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/holiday-recipes-for-healthy-blood-pressure/>

Lose Yourself in the Music, Not in the Rush of the Holiday Season.

Whatever your holiday traditions are don't make stress one of them. Prioritize your health (physical and mental), the holidays are supposed to be enjoyable not perfect!

Set your boundaries now before the demands of the season start coming in. Boundaries are not a negative thing; they are part of self-preservation and a must for a healthy you and an enjoyable holiday season. Deciding now which parties and gatherings are a must to attend and which ones are optional will help decrease your time demands. This goes for hosting as well. Have your holiday catch phrase and start practicing it now, "That won't work for us this year, but thank you for thinking of us", you do not owe anyone an explanation. It is OK to be a little grinchy with your time.

Remember to check-in with yourself each day to see how you are feeling. This time of year can be lonely, even if you are in a crowd. Family does NOT have to be blood. Your family are the ones who show up for you, support you and do not drain you. It is ok to create a little distance (yes even this time of year) if your current family is more obligatory than supportive.

It is important to keep your healthy routine and habits that you already have in place. If you know there will be indulging at some point in the week, plan your meals and snacks accordingly for the rest of the week. It is ok to indulge: just half the regular portion size, be mindful of alcohol consumption and high calorie/sodium filled drinks. And remember one slip up does not mean you have blown it for the day, week or even holiday season, give yourself some grace. Don't forget to keep your exercise routine-this may mean planning your workouts ahead of time and scheduling the festivities around your workouts.

Keeping a healthy sleep routine is also part of the plan in not losing yourself. Sleep is not only a good "re-boot" for your body and mind, but it helps curb sugar cravings, helps support heart health, supports weight management, combats germs to keep your immune system strong, boosts memory and learning, increases attention span and so much more.

Remember being kind to yourself starts with setting boundaries! Be safe and healthy this holiday season.

For more details and additional information on ways to set yourself up for an enjoyable holiday season click on the links below:

<https://health.ucdavis.edu/blog/cultivating-health/10-tips-to-reduce-stress-and-take-care-of-yourself-during-the-holidays/2023/12>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/mental-health-and-the-holidays-9-tips-for-self-care/>

<https://awildflowersociety.com/2025/10/24/how-to-not-lose-yourself-during-the-holiday-season-a-reminder-you-need/>

<https://health.ucdavis.edu/blog/cultivating-health/better-sleep-why-its-important-for-your-health-and-tips-to-sleep-soundly/2023/03>

The Hidden Clues That Your Eyes May Hold

It has been said "The eyes are the windows to your soul" this may be the case for Shakespeare but to medical professionals your eyes are another window to assess your heart health and diabetes risk.

High blood pressure is known as the silent killer due to the fact that many people do not know they have it until they suffer a stroke or heart attack. One simple early detection tool is your annual eye exam. An optometrist not only assess your vision and prescribes your glasses/contact strength they also assess the tiny blood vessels within your eye. They monitor these vessels for any changes over the years that may include stiffening, crowding, tiny leaks, and even pressure build up within your eye.

This is important as these tiny blood vessels are telling them and you how well the larger blood vessels in your body are performing. Uncontrolled diabetes and blood pressure can cause blurred vision, loss of vision (temporally or permanently) nerve damage to even eye cell death.

If you participate in the MMIA vision benefit you are eligible for a free eye exam each year (check with your benefit department for full details and to verify any co-pays in or out of network etc.).

If you participate in the State of MT basic vision benefit you are eligible for a \$10 eye exam each year with an in-network provider.

(check with your benefit department for full details and to verify any additional co-pays for in and out of network etc.).

Be your own health advocate and schedule your annual eye exam today!

For more information regarding the connection between eye health and blood pressure click on the link below.

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2018/12/13/the-eyes-have-it-for-high-blood-pressure-clues>