Are you earning rewards just for keeping your health in check? Also, do you know about our incentive programs that support certain health service areas? Check out the ones that apply — P.B.D.: Prepare with prenatal care; Beat high blood pressure; and Dominate your diabetes care.

**Prenatal care**
Follow these simple steps and earn up to $125 in rewards on your MyBlue® Wellness Card.
1. Earn $50 by visiting www.fepblue.org/bha and completing the online Blue Health Assessment (BHA).
2. Receive a free Pregnancy Care Box by enrolling in My Pregnancy Assistant.
3. Earn up to $75 by sending a copy of your provider-signed medical record from your first trimester visit to us. Go to www.fepblue.org/maternity to see what types of medical records we accept and for other information.

**Blood pressure**
If you have been diagnosed with hypertension and are age 18 or older, you may qualify to receive a free blood pressure monitor. Follow these simple steps:
1. Visit your provider to discuss your blood pressure reading and if you are diagnosed with high blood pressure;
2. Earn $50 by visiting www.fepblue.org and taking the BHA, check “yes” when asked if you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure.
3. After completing steps 1 and 2, if eligible, you’ll receive a letter about how to obtain a free blood pressure monitor so you can track your blood pressure at home! It will also explain how to obtain your cuff size from your provider.
4. Schedule a follow-up appointment with your provider to discuss your at-home blood pressure readings.

For more information on how to get a free blood pressure monitor, go to www.fepblue.org/highbloodpressure.

**Diabetes**
If you have diabetes, ask your healthcare provider about getting another A1c test. Follow these steps to earn $100 on your MyBlue® Wellness Card.
1. Visit your healthcare or lab services provider to get an A1c test.
2. Log on to your MyBlue® account by visiting www.fepblue.org/myblue and take the BHA. Select “Yes” to answer the diabetes question. You’ll earn $50 on your MyBlue® Wellness Card the first time you take the BHA in 2017.
3. If you had an A1c test completed before July 1, 2017, submit your results by December 31, 2017, and you can earn $25. Receive a second A1c test by December 31, 2017. Mail, fax or upload your A1c test results from your visit.
4. If your A1c is lower than 8 percent, you’ll get an additional $75 on your MyBlue® Wellness Card.
5. If your A1c is 8 percent or higher, you can still earn up to $75 by going to three nutritional counseling visits. You’ll receive the incentive once we receive the claims from all three visits.

Call 1-919-765-2413, for more information, or visit www.fepblue.org/diabetes.
Feeling your age?

Your diabetes might be, too

Your body can change the way it responds to medicine as it ages, according to the FDA. This can affect the medication you take for diabetes, too. Be sure to work closely with your diabetes care team to stay on track.

Keep control of your diabetes
It is important to follow the treatment plan from your healthcare provider. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) says poor blood sugar control can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, nerve damage and vision loss. If you have poorly controlled blood sugar, ask your provider for help getting it under better control.

Treatment needs can change
Several things can affect your response to a diabetes drug as you get older. Your liver and kidneys may not be able to process the drug as well as when you were younger, says the FDA. Plus, the NIH says liver and kidneys may not be able to process a diabetes drug as you get older. Your treatment needs can change.

Your diabetes medicine may begin to interact with other medications you have to start taking. According to the FDA, you may require a higher or lower dose of certain medications as you get older, too. If you were to start a new diabetes medicine, your provider might prescribe one-half the dose given to a younger person. The dose can then be slowly increased or decreased as needed.

Every body is different
Tell your provider if you are having trouble meeting your blood sugar goals. Also, get in touch with your provider if you feel any new symptoms that could be side effects of your medicine. They can pop up even if you have not had any prior problems with it.

As the years go by, you and your diabetes can age gracefully together.

Manage your ABCs
Blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol are known as the ABCs of diabetes, says the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Ask your healthcare provider to help you set and reach goals. This will help you manage your ABCs. Keep the following NIH tips in mind.

- **A1c**: The goal set for many people is less than 7 percent for this blood test. Your provider might set different goals for you.
- **Blood pressure**: The goal is less than 140/90 mmHg for most people. Your provider might set different goals for you.
- **Cholesterol**: LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol can build up and clog your blood vessels. HDL, or “good,” cholesterol can help remove the bad cholesterol. Ask what your cholesterol numbers should be. They can be slightly different for each person.
- **Don’t smoke**: Talk with your provider if you need help putting a plan in place to quit.

Have you gotten your reward?
You can earn up to $100 on your MyBlue® Wellness Card by submitting your A1c test results. See page 1 for more details about the Diabetes Management Incentive Program.

Ask the doctor: Understanding blood pressure

Having high blood pressure means the pressure of the blood in your blood vessels is higher than it should be. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), high blood pressure can increase the risk for heart disease and stroke.

Q. What signs and symptoms will I have if I have high blood pressure?
A. High blood pressure is called the “silent killer.” This is because it often has no warning signs or symptoms. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your healthcare provider measure it regularly.

Q. What do blood pressure numbers mean?
A. Blood pressure is measured using two numbers. The top number, or systolic pressure, measures the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats. The bottom number, or diastolic pressure, measures the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart rests between beats.

The blue chart on this page shows the ranges of blood pressure. A blood pressure less than 120/80 mmHg is normal. People with levels in between 120/80 and 140/90 have a condition called prehypertension. They are at risk for high blood pressure.

Q. Can I improve my blood pressure numbers if they are high or prevent high blood pressure?
A. Yes, you can make these lifestyle changes to help control your blood pressure or prevent high blood pressure.

- Eat a healthy diet that includes a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables and is low in sodium, fat, saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Stay active and get exercise. The CDC recommends 30 minutes of activity five days a week.
- Do not smoke. Or quit smoking as soon as possible if you do.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Ask your provider to measure your Body Mass Index (BMI) to determine if you are a healthy weight.
- Limit alcohol use. The CDC recommends men have no more than two drinks daily, and women only one.
- Taking an 81-milligram aspirin each day may help reduce your risk for a heart attack, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Talk with your provider about the benefits and risks of taking a daily aspirin.

Check your blood pressure
If you have high blood pressure, you may qualify for a free blood pressure monitor (BPM). See page 1 to find out how to get your own BPM to check your blood pressure at home.
Controlling seasonal asthma triggers

Taking care of your asthma helps you feel your best. When your asthma is controlled, you have fewer symptoms, says the National Institutes of Health (NIH). You are then able to lead a more active life.

Find and control your triggers
Good asthma control means managing your triggers. The American Lung Association says these are things that may set off your asthma symptoms or make them worse. A list of example triggers for fall and winter include:

- Allergens (such as dust mites, animals, pollen and molds)
- Viruses (such as the flu or colds)
- Cigarette smoke
- Cold, dry air or temperature changes
- Physical activity

Work with your healthcare provider to find your triggers. Discuss ways to handle them. For example, if your asthma is worse in cold weather, you might wrap a scarf loosely over your mouth and nose on cold days, recommends the American Lung Association.

Your asthma medication
Another key to successful asthma control is taking your medication. The NIH says asthma medication helps reduce coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. Here are the two basic types of asthma medication:

- Quick-relief medication is used at the first sign of asthma symptoms. It offers fast relief from a flare-up.
- Long-term control medication is taken every day, even if you feel fine. It also helps prevent future flare-ups.

Asthma action plan
Ask your doctor to help you create an asthma action plan. This will outline how to care for your asthma each day. Your plan should tell you:

- How to deal with your asthma triggers
- When to take your asthma medication
- When to call the doctor or go to the emergency room

The CDC says to follow your asthma action plan every day. These tips can help you stay on track:

- Make asthma medication a priority. When travelling away from home, always keep extra quick-relief and long-term control medication handy.
- Stay active, eat healthy and get plenty of sleep.
- Talk with your provider if you find it hard to follow your asthma action plan. Your provider may offer helpful advice or make changes in the plan.

Managing your medications

It is important to manage your medicines when you have chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma or high blood pressure. Did you know your healthcare provider and pharmacist can help you manage your medications? The tips below from the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will get you started.

Take your medicines as prescribed.
Talk with your provider and pharmacist if you experience:

- Allergic reactions to your medicines
- Problems, such as forgetting to take your medications or trouble swallowing them
- Changes in your diet or health, such as pregnancy or breast-feeding

Keep a list of all the medicines you take.
Give your provider and your pharmacist a copy of the list. It should include:

- All medicines your provider has prescribed
- Any vitamins and herbal supplements
- Over-the-counter items, such as aspirin and cold medicines

Have an asthma question?

Speak to a registered nurse at the Nurse Line 24 hours a day, seven days a week for all of your asthma-related questions. You can call 1-888-258-3432. Or, to chat online or email a nurse, log in to your MyBlue® account. On the home page, click the blue “Nurse Line” tile. Then click “Chat with a nurse” or “Send a secure message to a nurse.”

To receive educational materials and participate in the Healthy Endeavors™ program, call 1-888-392-3506.

Medication checkups

Do you take medications for chronic health conditions? If you do, you might need to take the medications for months or years. Schedule regular visits with your healthcare provider. It is important to go over your medications every year. Your provider may order a blood test. The test can help your provider keep an eye on things like:

- The amount of medicine in your blood
- The levels of important minerals, such as potassium, in your blood — some drugs can reduce these
- How well your kidneys and liver are working with the medicine

Pharmacists: Your medication partners

According to the National Institutes of Health, patients see their pharmacists up to seven times more often than their healthcare providers. Pharmacists are often available all day, in the evening and on weekends. Here are some questions your pharmacist can help with:

- What are the brand and generic names of my medicines?
- What is the name of my medicine for? When should I take each medicine? How much should I take of each medicine?
- When will the medicine start to work? What are the possible side effects? Can I still take my over-the-counter medicines with my prescription medicines? Will this medicine replace anything I already take? Are there any other medicines, foods, drinks or activities that I should avoid? Are there programs that can help me if I can’t afford my medicines?

Pharmacy benefits

You can work with a pharmacist and discuss your medications. Call 1-877-765-4703. To look up prescriptions covered by your benefits plan and to find out the benefits of generic drugs, visit www.fepblue.org.
Treating back pain without imaging

Back pain is a common reason people see their healthcare providers. You might expect your provider to send you for imaging to find the source of your pain. Imaging may not be the best option though, according to the Choosing Wisely website.

Understanding imaging tests
Imaging tests, such as X-rays, CT scans or MRIs take pictures of the inside of your body. They can help diagnose some conditions. They do not usually help for back pain. In some cases, imaging leads to surgery or other treatments you do not need. They may not help you feel better any quicker either. X-rays and CT scans can also expose you to radiation. Choosing Wisely says the effects of radiation can be harmful over time. You should avoid it if possible.

How to treat back pain instead
Talk with your provider about your pain and have a thorough physical exam. Describe what you are feeling. Your provider can recommend types of movement, such as walking, that may help ease your pain. He or she may offer other suggestions to help with pain, such as using heat and sleeping on your side or back, or medications. Other forms of treatment may be able to help, too. Discuss the possibility of the following treatments with your provider:
- Physical therapy
- Chiropractic care
- Acupuncture
- Massage
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy
- Progressive muscle relaxation

Call your health insurance representative to find out which treatments are covered.

When to have an imaging test
After a physical exam and having tried other treatments for a month or two, tell your provider if you still have pain, says Choosing Wisely. Your provider may order an imaging test at that point. In some cases, you may need imaging right away. Talk with your provider if you have back pain with any of the following symptoms:
- Weight loss that you cannot explain
- Fever higher than 102 degrees
- Loss of control of your bowel or bladder
- Loss of feeling or strength in your legs
- Problems with your reflexes
- A history of cancer

Choosing Wisely says these can be signs of a serious problem.

When life’s pressures are greater than your ability to deal with them, it causes stress. On the spot, stress may cause symptoms, such as irritability, anxiety and headaches, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It can also contribute to other health problems, such as depression, high blood pressure, heart disease and obesity.

Stop stress in action
Watch for warning signs that stress is building up. Your muscles may tense, your jaw may clench or you might develop unexplained aches and pains, according to the CDC. You may also feel overwhelmed, helpless, angry or depressed. Try these calming strategies for easing immediate stress:
- Count to 20. Take a minute to collect your thoughts. Or physically step away from the situation for a few minutes.
- Use positive self-talk. Rethink negative thoughts in more upbeat terms.
- Distract yourself. Listen to music or watch a funny video.
- Get enough rest. Shoot for eight hours per night.
- Avoid self-medicating. Using drugs, tobacco or alcohol can make feelings of depression worse and harm your health.
- Watch your diet. Eating too much or too little can go hand in hand with depression. Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.

Cut stress and boost your mood

Work toward better days
You can turn your mood around and help prevent stress from taking over in the first place. Use these tips from the CDC often:
- Take control of your time. Make a to-do list. Do important tasks first, put off anything that can wait.
- Get some exercise. As little as 20 minutes of physical activity like walking, running, cycling, swimming, tennis or dancing can help.
- Make time for something fun. Do something you enjoy for at least a few minutes every day.
- Learn to relax. Try deep breathing exercises, yoga or meditation.
- Stay connected with others. Supportive family, friends, a support group can help you recover from a bad day and encourage you to keep moving forward. Avoid those who would judge or criticize you.
- Get enough rest. Shoot for eight hours per night.
- Avoid self-medicating. Using drugs, tobacco or alcohol can make feelings of depression worse and harm your health.
- Watch your diet. Eating too much or too little can go hand in hand with depression. Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
Baja-style salmon tacos

**Ingredients**

- 12 oz. salmon fillet, cut into 4 portions (3 oz. each)
- 4 (8-inch) whole wheat tortillas
- 1 cup green cabbage (about ¼ head), rinsed and shredded
- 1 medium jalapeño chili pepper, rinsed and split lengthwise (remove seeds and white membrane, and mince (about 2 tbsp.); for less spice, use green bell pepper
- 1 tsp. lime juice
- 1 tsp. honey
- ½ cup red onion, thinly sliced (or substitute white onion)
- 1 medium fresh cilantro, minced (or substitute ¼ tsp. ground coriander)

**For marinade:**

- ½ tsp. corn oil or other vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. fresh cilantro, minced (or substitute ½ tsp. ground coriander)

**Directions**

1. Preheat grill or oven broiler (with the rack 3 inches from heat source) on high temperature.
2. Prepare taco filling by combining all ingredients. Let stand for 10 to 15 minutes to blend the flavors.
3. To prepare the marinade, combine the oil, lime juice, chili powder, cumin, coriander and salt in a bowl.
4. Place salmon fillets in a flat dish with sides. Pour marinade evenly over fillets. Let stand for 10 to 15 minutes to blend the flavors.
5. Place salmon fillets on grill or broiler. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, until fish flakes easily with a fork in the thickest part (minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees). Remove from the heat and set aside for 2 to 3 minutes. Cut into strips.
6. To make each taco, fill one tortilla with ¼ cup filling and one salmon fillet. Makes four, one-taco servings.

Per serving: Calories 325, Total fat 11 g (Saturated fat 1 g), Cholesterol 54 mg, Sodium 395 mg, Carbohydrates 29 g, Fiber 4 g. Protein 24 g

**Ask the doctor:**

Understanding blood pressure

Having high blood pressure means the pressure of the blood in your blood vessels is higher than it should be. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), high blood pressure can increase the risk for heart disease and stroke.

Q. What signs and symptoms will I have if I have high blood pressure?

A. High blood pressure is called the “silent killer.” This is because it often has no warning signs or symptoms. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your healthcare provider measure it regularly.

Q. What do blood pressure numbers mean?

A. Blood pressure is measured using two numbers. The top number, or systolic pressure, measures the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats. The bottom number, or diastolic pressure, measures the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart rests between beats.

Q. Can I improve my blood pressure numbers if they are high or prevent high blood pressure?

A. Yes, you can make these lifestyle changes to help control your blood pressure or prevent high blood pressure:

- Eat a healthy diet that includes a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables and is low in sodium, fat, saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Stay active and get exercise. The CDC recommends 30 minutes of activity five days a week.
- Do not smoke. Or quit smoking as soon as possible if you do.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

**Directions**

1. Preheat grill or oven broiler (with the rack 3 inches from heat source) on high temperature.
2. Prepare taco filling by combining all ingredients. Let stand for 10 to 15 minutes to blend the flavors.
3. To prepare the marinade, combine the oil, lime juice, chili powder, cumin, coriander and salt in a bowl.
4. Place salmon fillets in a flat dish with sides. Pour marinade evenly over fillets. Let stand for 10 to 15 minutes to blend the flavors.
5. Place salmon fillets on grill or broiler. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, until fish flakes easily with a fork in the thickest part (minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees). Remove from the heat and set aside for 2 to 3 minutes. Cut into strips.
6. To make each taco, fill one tortilla with ¼ cup filling and one salmon fillet. Makes four, one-taco servings.

Per serving: Calories 325, Total fat 11 g (Saturated fat 1 g), Cholesterol 54 mg, Sodium 395 mg, Carbohydrates 29 g, Fiber 4 g. Protein 24 g

**Blood pressure log**

The following instructions are recommended by the American Heart Association. Measure your blood pressure twice a day (morning and late afternoon) at the same times every day. For best results, sit comfortably with both feet on the floor for at least two minutes before taking a measurement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>A.M./P.M.</th>
<th>Blood Pressure</th>
<th>Pulse</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/5/2017</td>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>120/80</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Low-stress day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>