

HEALTHY LIVING

Avoid the sugar rush this holiday season

From Halloween to Valentine's Day, this time of year is full of tempting sweets. Learn easy ways to cut sugar without cutting the joy out of eating.

Winter holidays often come with candy, cookies and other rich desserts. It's OK to enjoy your favorite treats. But too much sugar can cause health problems.

Good news: You don't have to skip the sweets entirely. Here are some simple ways to enjoy treats without overdoing it.

1 Keep sweets special

Pick your favorite holiday treats and enjoy them mindfully.

2 Watch your drinks

Soda, juice and other sugary drinks are a top source of added sugar. Swap them for water. It's a quick way to make room for holiday treats.

3 Save some for later

Baking at home? Freeze half the batch right away to save for later. Or, give away some of what you bake to your neighbors, coworkers, mail carrier or others.

4 Eat smaller portions

Split a cookie or slice of pie with your kids. If you bake cookies at home, try making them bite-size.

5 Cut back on sugar elsewhere

Check nutrition labels in your pantry for added sugars. Next time you shop, choose products with less added sugar.

Quick sugar-saving swaps

- **Instead of frosting:** Top sugar cookies or cupcakes with colorful fruit slices or jam.
- **Instead of store-bought candy:** Dip fruit slices or pretzels in dark chocolate.
- **In baked goods:** Replace some or all the sugar with mashed banana or apple-sauce. Or try cutting ¼ cup sugar (or more) from a recipe.
- **Make your own whipped cream:** Whip heavy cream until it's light and fluffy. Add sugar to taste.



Soothe kids' dentist fears

Going to the dentist can be scary for kids. But early checkups are key to having a healthy smile for life. Learn why, plus tips to make the visit less scary.

Did you know that by age 9, about half of kids have had at least one cavity? Even in baby teeth, cavities and tooth decay can lead to long-term problems in adult teeth. Plus, cavities hurt.

Seeing the dentist early — and often — can help stop cavities. Kids should see a dentist within six months of their first tooth coming in, or no later than their first birthday. After that, they should continue to see the dentist every six months.

How to help your child feel comfortable

- **Use positive words.** Instead of saying, “Don’t worry,” try, “You’re going to do great” or, “The dentist helps keep teeth strong.” Avoid words like “hurt” and “pain.”
- **Play dentist at home.** Take turns being the dentist and the patient. Use a toothbrush and mirror. Let kids practice on a stuffed animal to make it fun.
- **Read books or watch videos together.** Choose ones made for kids that show a dentist visit in a friendly way.
- **Bring a favorite toy or blanket for comfort.** Ask your dentist ahead of time if it’s okay to bring something.
- **Share your own good experiences.** Tell your child how the dentist helped you and how you felt better afterward. Help them understand that going to the dentist is a normal and positive experience.



We've got you covered. Your benefits include routine dental care for adults and children. And you don't need a referral to see a dentist in the network. Call Member Services or go to [Aetnabetterhealth.com/michigan/vision-dental-benefits.html](https://aetnabetterhealth.com/michigan/vision-dental-benefits.html) for more info.



Winter wellness: Tips for lung health

Winter can take a toll on your lungs. Kids and adults with asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are at an even higher risk. A cold, flu or other lung irritants can cause a flare-up. It can even lead to a trip to the hospital.

The best way to stay healthy? Avoid getting sick in the first place. Here's how.

✔ **Get vaccinated.** Everyone 6 months or older should get a flu shot every year. You can get a flu shot from your provider or at a local pharmacy. Your provider may recommend other vaccines, too, like:

- RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)
- Pneumonia

✔ **Wash your hands often.** Or use hand sanitizer if you don't have access to a sink.

✔ **Keep your distance from people who are sick.** If you can't keep your distance,

a mask may protect you in crowded places. If you're sick, wearing a mask can keep you from spreading it to others.

✔ **Take your medicines as directed** if you have asthma or COPD.

✔ **Stay away from tobacco.** If you smoke or vape, talk to your doctor about quitting. It's one of the best things you can do for your health. Your doctor can recommend tools to help. Steer clear of second-hand smoke, too.

Should I take antibiotics?

Antibiotics can be a powerful treatment for certain illnesses. But using them too often can be harmful. Antibiotics don't treat viruses. Colds and flu are almost always caused by a virus. So, antibiotics won't help.

Antibiotics can only treat bacterial infections. That includes strep throat and some pneumonias. Your provider can help determine the treatment that's right for you. If they prescribe you an antibiotic, be sure to take it exactly as directed.



Get help with healthy meals. Healthy eating helps you feel your best. That's why we offer food services like home-delivered meals and fresh produce — at no cost to you. Call Member Services to see if you qualify.



Brighten your winter blues

The darker months can take a toll on our mood and energy. But small changes can make a big difference. Here are simple ways to boost your spirits and bring joy to the people around you.

Reach out to friends and family. A simple phone call, text or video chat can make a big difference.

Embrace holiday cheer. Hang twinkle lights, listen to festive music or make a batch of your favorite holiday cookies. Get involved in local activities, too.

Give back. Volunteering can help you feel connected and needed. Find a cause you care about and look for ways to help.

Finds ways to stay active. If it's too cold outside, take a brisk lap around the mall while you shop or work out at home with a free online video.

Take care of yourself. Make time for things that relax and refresh you. Read a good book, do some gentle stretching or enjoy a quiet moment with a cup of tea.

How to spot signs of loneliness

The holidays can be a lonely time for those who are far from family, coping with loss or feeling left out.

Watch for these signs of loneliness in others:

- Changes in behavior
- Avoiding social activities
- Increased substance use
- Changes in mood or energy
- More physical aches or pains

Reach out if you spot these signs in friends, family, neighbors and other loved ones. Sometimes the smallest act — an invite, a check-in or just sitting together — can help someone feel less alone.



Get help in a crisis. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides private, no-cost counseling and emotional support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call or text **988** or chat at **988lifeline.org** for help.



How to have less pain all day

Do you wake up stiff and sore? Or does your pain get worse as the day wears on? These tips can help ease and prevent pain from morning to night.

In the morning	During the day	At night
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Do some simple stretches. Try this stretch while you're still in bed: Gently hug your knees to your chest and rock them from side to side. Then straighten your legs upward and bend them back in a few times. ✔ Go for a morning walk. ✔ Take a warm shower. ✔ Eat a good breakfast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Take breaks. Do short breathing or mindfulness exercises to ease stress and tension. ✔ Cut back on high-fat, high-sugar foods. They can cause inflammation, which may make pain worse. ✔ If you sit most of the day, get up at least once an hour. Walk around for a few minutes or do some gentle stretches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Switch up your sleeping position. Try sleeping on your back with a pillow under your knees. Or on your side with a pillow between your knees. ✔ Keep your bedroom cool — around 65 degrees. ✔ Try an over-the-counter topical cream to relieve pain. <p>Talk to your doctor or Care Manager for more help with pain management.</p>



The dangers of opioid use

Opioids are powerful painkillers. They're often used for short-term pain relief for things like injuries or surgery recovery. But they're also highly addictive. Take these steps to lower your risk of addiction or overdose:

- Use the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time.
- Never take more than prescribed.
- Don't take opioids with alcohol.
- Store opioids in a safe and secure place.
- Never share your medicine with others.
- Throw away any unused pills. But don't throw them in your household trash. Ask your pharmacist how to safely dispose of opioids.

Find information about your plan. A new member handbook will be available soon. You can find it online at [AetnaBetterHealth.com/michigan/member-materials-forms.html](https://www.aetna.com/betterhealth/michigan/member-materials-forms.html). Or call Member Services to have one mailed to you.

Good health care starts with the right doctor

Your primary care provider (PCP) is your first stop for all your health care needs. But at some point, you may need to see a specialist to help treat certain injuries or illnesses.

When this happens, your PCP will help you find a specialist and refer you for care. But, you don't need a referral or prior authorization to see a specialist in the network.

Women's health care

Women do not need a referral or prior authorization to see a women's health specialist. That includes:

- Obstetricians
- Gynecologists
- Certified nurse midwives

Routine and preventive health care services for women include, but are not limited to:

- Prenatal care
- Breast exams
- Mammograms
- Pap tests

Provider network

You must get most of your care from providers in our network. Go to [AetnaBetterHealth.com/michigan/find-provider](https://www.aetna.com/michigan/find-provider) to find in-network providers. You can search or download our provider directory.

Call Member Services if you need help or want a hard copy of the provider directory.

Out-of-network care

Let's say there are no network providers near you. Or there aren't any appointments available.

If that happens, we can help you get a referral to see a provider outside of the network. You won't be charged more for out-of-network care in this case.

Second opinions

You may not always agree with your doctor's plan of care. If this happens, you have the right to go to another provider for a second opinion. You don't have to pay to get a second opinion, and you don't need prior authorization. Call Member Services to learn more.

Check your member handbook for more info on:

- Primary care
- Specialty care
- Behavioral health care
- Emergency care

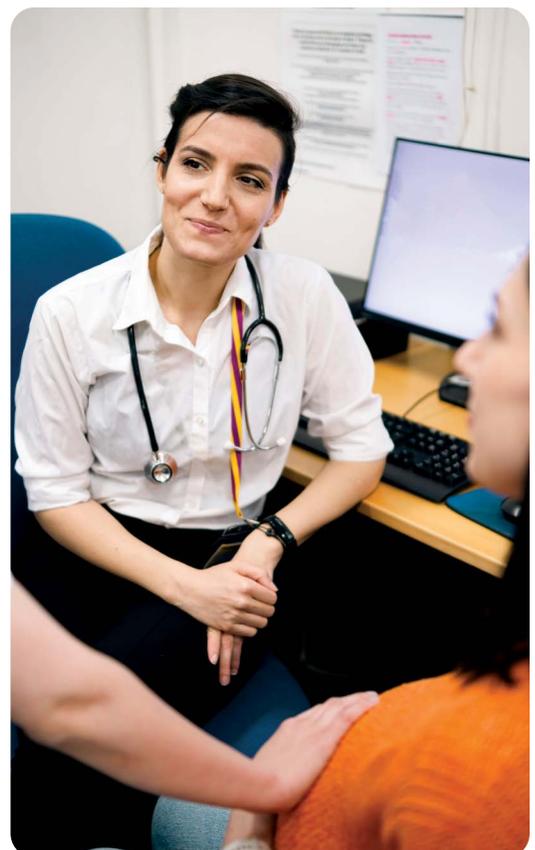
You can view your handbook at [AetnaBetterHealth.com/michigan/member-materials-forms.html](https://www.aetna.com/michigan/member-materials-forms.html). Or call Member Services for a hard copy

Care you can trust

Our network providers follow proven care guidelines. These guidelines:

- Are based on strong, trustworthy medical evidence or agreement among experts in the field
- Take members' needs into account
- Created with input from the providers we work with
- Are checked and updated at least every two years

You or your provider can call Member Services for a copy of these guidelines. Find out more at [AetnaBetterHealth.com/michigan/providers/clinical-guidelines-policy-bulletins.html](https://www.aetna.com/michigan/providers/clinical-guidelines-policy-bulletins.html).





Quality matters

You deserve to get the highest quality care. And we work with your provider to make sure that happens. Together, we're committed to giving you the best health care experience possible.

The Quality Improvement (QI) Program helps us to make sure that our services meet high standards for safety and quality.

We annually make our QI program information available to our members. We look at ways to better members':

- Satisfaction
- Safety
- Services
- Access to doctors

We also always look for ways to make our services better. We do that by:

- Measuring the quality and

effectiveness of care and services

- Making sure we use the best ways to check our services
- Having qualified, competent and knowledgeable staff
- Focusing on important problem areas
- Being aware of our members' culture and language needs
- Making sure that we meet state and federal laws
- Meeting all requirements of health care accreditation
- Making sure we have a good network of doctors and hospitals
- Making sure doctors and staff keep member info private

Every year we review our QI Program to be sure it meets guidelines. This helps us make the QI Program better for next year.

For more info on our QI programs, go to **[AetnaBetterHealth.com/michigan/quality-improvement-program.html](https://www.aetna.com/better-health/michigan/quality-improvement-program.html)**

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ENGLISH: ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call the number on the back of your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

SPANISH: ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número que aparece en el reverso de su tarjeta de identificación o al **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

Go to **[AetnaBetterHealth.com/Michigan/notice-of-non-discrimination.html](https://www.aetna.com/better-health/michigan/notice-of-non-discrimination.html)** for more info. Or call Member Services to have a print copy mailed to you.



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You can get your newsletter delivered directly to your inbox. Sign up to get more health and wellness content online and quick access to important plan info. Plus, enjoy a clear, easy-to-read layout on any device.

To sign up for email, call Member Services at **1-866-316-3784 (TTY: 711)** and tell us your email address.



Need to renew your coverage?

You must renew your coverage every year. Look for your renewal notice in the mail.

Visit [AetnaBetterHealth.com/michigan/member-materials-forms.html](https://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/michigan/member-materials-forms.html) to learn more.