

## 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.



Aetna Better Health®  
of Oklahoma

### Questions about your health plan?

Call Member Services at 1-844-365-4385 (TTY: 711).

Or visit [AetnaBetterHealth.com/oklahoma](https://www.AetnaBetterHealth.com/oklahoma)

# 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.** Check your member handbook online at [AetnaBetterHealth.com/oklahoma/member-materials-forms.html](https://www.aetna.com/betterhealth/oklahoma/member-materials-forms.html). Or call us at **1-844-365-4385 (TTY: 711)** for information about your benefits.



## 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 quitting.** Quitting tobacco is hard. We're here to help. Your plan covers nicotine replacement, prescription medicines, counseling and more to help you quit. Call Member Services or talk to your care manager for more information.



## 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.

## Suicide prevention

If you're concerned about a loved one, here are a few tips that can make a big difference:

- Listen to their story without judgement and encourage them to express their feelings.
- Ask directly and calmly about any suicidal thoughts they might be having.
- Remove or lock up items that could be used to harm oneself.
- If they are in imminent danger, stay with them until you can get further help. You can call or text **988**, or **911** if it's an emergency.



**Get help in a crisis.** The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides confidential, 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"> <li>✔ 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.</li> <li>✔ Go for a morning walk.</li> <li>✔ Take a warm shower.</li> <li>✔ Eat a good breakfast.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Take breaks. Do short breathing or mindfulness exercises to ease stress and tension.</li> <li>✔ Cut back on high-fat, high-sugar foods. They can cause inflammation which may make pain worse.</li> <li>✔ 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ 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.</li> <li>✔ Keep your bedroom cool — around 65 degrees.</li> <li>✔ Try an over-the-counter topical cream to relieve pain.</li> </ul> <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.

**Get more tips for healthy living.**

Go to [AetnaBetterHealth.com/education](https://www.aetna.com/betterhealth/education) to browse our health and wellness library. You'll find articles packed with info to help you feel your best.



## Earn rewards for getting care

You can earn rewards for completing these diabetes wellness checks:

- \$15 for completing a kidney screening
- \$15 for completing a diabetic eye exam
- \$15 for completing an A1C test

Plus, get a \$50 each month for healthy foods.

Go to [AetnaBetterHealth.com/oklahoma/rewards-program.html](https://www.aetna.com/better-health/oklahoma/rewards-program.html) or ask your care manager for more info.

# Your diabetes checkup checklist

Diabetes affects your whole body. But you can prevent serious problems with regular self-care and checkups. Use these guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to stay on top of your health.

## Daily checks

- ✔ **Blood sugar.** Talk to your care team about how often to check your blood sugar at home. Write down your numbers and bring them with you to your appointments.
- ✔ **Foot check.** Call your care team if you notice any cuts, sores, blisters, redness or swelling on your feet.
- ✔ **Medications.** Take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor.

## Biannual checks

- ✔ **Dental exam.** Keep your teeth and gums healthy with twice-a-year cleanings. Tell your dentist you have diabetes.
- ✔ **A1C test.** This blood test measures your average blood sugar levels over the past few months. Your care team may want to test this more often.
- ✔ **Doctor visit.** Talk to your care team about how often you should see your doctor.
- ✔ **Blood pressure.** Get this checked every time you see your doctor.

## Yearly checks

- ✔ **Dilated eye exam.** A yearly eye exam can help find diabetes-related eye problems early, when they're easier to treat.
- ✔ **Kidney tests.** Regular kidney checks can help prevent or slow kidney problems.
- ✔ **Cholesterol test.** This helps monitor your risk of heart disease.
- ✔ **Complete foot check.** Have your doctor do a full foot check at least once a year. They may refer you to a podiatrist (foot specialist) if needed.

# Get extra support for your health care needs

Every Aetna Better Health® member is on their own health care journey. We can help guide you in managing and improving your health.

Our population health management programs can help you live your healthiest life possible.

Whether you're managing a chronic condition or just trying to stay healthy, we have special programs to help. You can get the care you need now — and prevent health issues in the future.

You can learn about these programs online at [AetnaBetterHealth.com/oklahoma](https://www.aetna.com/betterhealth/oklahoma) or in your Member Handbook. You can also call us at **1-844-365-4385 (TTY: 711)**.

You have the right to make decisions about your health care. If we contact you to join one of our programs, you may decline.

If you are already in a program, you may choose to stop at any time by calling us at **1-844-365-4385 (TTY: 711)**.



## Your pharmacy benefits

Wondering if your medicines are covered? Check out your plan's List of Covered Drugs (also called the "Drug List," or formulary). It tells you which medicines are covered at network pharmacies. It also tells you if there are any special rules or restrictions on any covered drugs.

The Drug List is updated regularly. Find the latest list at [AetnaBetterHealth.com/oklahoma/pharmacy-prescription-drug-benefits.html](https://www.aetna.com/betterhealth/oklahoma/pharmacy-prescription-drug-benefits.html). Or call Member Services to ask for a printed copy. You can also find more info in your member handbook.

Aetna complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

**ENGLISH: ATTENTION:** If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call **1-844-365-4385 (TTY: 711)**.

**ESPAÑOL: ATENCIÓN:** si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **1-844-365-4385 (TTY: 711)**.

**CHÚ Ý:** Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số **1-844-365-4385 (TTY: 711)**.



Aetna Better Health® of Oklahoma  
777 NW 63rd Street, Suite 100  
Oklahoma City, OK 73116

4511425-12-01 (12/25)

## Get more from your newsletter

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

To sign up for email, call Member Services at **1-844-365-4385 (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/oklahoma/medicaid-renewal.html](https://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/oklahoma/medicaid-renewal.html) to learn more.