MEDICA®

4members

Lifestyle Changes for Better Health

Spring has sprung and it's time to get moving. If you hibernated over the winter, this is the perfect time to get organized, motivated and healthy. Think of it as spring cleaning for your body and mind. Check out the tips below that can help keep you happy and healthy all year long.

- **Map out your meals**: Planning healthy meals each week has many rewards, including saving time and money, and helping you avoid bad food choices like fast food.
- **Stay on track**: Schedule your activities and add them to your calendar as you would a doctor's appointment. Enlist friends and family to make it fun and keep you accountable. Track your steps and activities with a fitness tracker, such as a pedometer, Fitbit® or Garmin™.
- **Hit the gym**: Joining a gym is the easy part but training yourself to actually go can be more of a challenge. Start off by signing up for a class you've always wanted to try, like spin or yoga. Or schedule time with a personal trainer to help set goals and manage expectations.
- **Get your zzz's**: Are you getting seven to nine hours of sleep each night? Getting enough sleep helps reduce your stress and risk for chronic disease and obesity. Set a bedtime and stick with it, avoid certain foods before bed (especially caffeine or anything spicy) and keep electronics out of the bedroom.

With a little planning and support, you can build healthy habits that will help you achieve your wellness goals this year.

Say Yes to Gardening

Have you been thinking about growing your own garden? Make this the year you say yes to gardening for good health. People who grow their own produce tend to eat healthier and burn more calories. Gardening can burn up to 400 calories per hour and help you reach the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity each week.

Before you dig in, here are some tips to keep you safe while gardening:

- **Dress for success**: Protect your skin by wearing long sleeves and pants (when it's hot, choose lightweight fabrics). Use bug spray and SPF 30 sunscreen. Wear a hat, gloves and sunglasses.
- **Get vaccinated**: Gardeners have an increased risk of tetanus infection because the bacteria live in soil. A mishap with a prickly plant or garden tool and tetanus can easily enter your bloodstream. Protect yourself by getting a tetanus shot every 10 years.
- **Stay cool**: Take breaks in the shade, drink plenty of water and avoid gardening during the hottest part of the day.
- **Give your body a break**: Sit on a stool rather than bend over, switch hands often and lift with your legs not your back. Try to change positions every 10 minutes to avoid overusing a particular muscle group.

If gardening isn't your thing, you can still enjoy fresh produce during the spring and summer months by visiting your local farmer's market. Check out the Medica Healthy Savings program by reading this month's **Did You Know** section or visit medicahealthysavings.com to learn more.

"Paying it Forward" Helps You, Too

The concept of "paying it forward" happens when someone does something nice for you and then, instead of paying them back, you do something nice for someone else. So how does this play a role in your health and well-being?

Numerous health-related benefits have been linked to paying random acts of kindness to someone in need.

1. Being kind to others not only feels good but also has a positive effect on your immune system.
2. Kindness helps relieve stress and undo negativity.
3. Being a Good Samaritan encourages you to meet new people and step out of your comfort zone.
4. Acts of kindness make you feel happier and more in control.
5. Good deeds give you a strong sense that you are making a difference and can inspire others to do the same.

Here are some ideas to help you start your own kindness movement:

- Call or visit an older family member.
- Mow your neighbor's yard.
- Pay for a stranger's coffee.
- Tip a little extra on your next restaurant bill or haircut.

Being kind has many positive health benefits, including living a longer, healthier life. Get started today to make the world a kinder place and create a happier you.

Did You Know?

The Medica Healthy Savings program makes it easy to eat healthier and save money. Each week, your Healthy Savings card is automatically loaded with more than $100 in potential savings from every food group – dairy, fruit, vegetables, proteins and grains – at participating stores. During the summer months, you can also save on healthy produce at participating farmers markets. You can choose to have weekly savings emailed, or view them on the Healthy Savings website—even on your smartphone.

Healthy Savings is available to members who live near participating stores. Learn more at medicahealthysavings.com or call Customer Service at the number on the back of your Medica ID card.

MEDICA®

Personalize. Empower. Improve.