



Western Health Advantage

SPRING 2020

ADVANTAGE

Your resource for health and wellness



BODY & SOIL

The benefits of
gardening for
your health

MENTAL HEALTH: Screening kids for depression

SKIN CARE MYTHS: Fact versus fiction

QUIZ: How much do you know
about heart disease and stroke?

advantage > you

Meet the New WHA Chief Medical Officer



In February WHA welcomed Khuram Arif, MD, as our new chief medical officer following the retirement of Don Hufford, MD. Dr. Arif comes to WHA after holding leadership positions at Woodland Clinic and Mercy Medical Group; he has also practiced as a board-certified pediatrician for 19 years.

Dr. Arif is just the second CMO in WHA's history. He follows in the footsteps of Dr. Hufford, who was employee No. 4 in the early days of WHA and has been instrumental in building WHA's unique position as a provider-sponsored, nonprofit health plan. I am pleased that Dr. Don will continue to play a role in WHA's future by providing guidance on our continuing strategy around innovation.

I could not have hoped for a better new CMO for WHA than Dr. Arif. After years in clinical practice, Dr. Arif decided to expand his understanding of its business side and completed his MBA at UC Davis in 2014. He will join WHA with a strong belief in its mission of valuing a trusting doctor-patient relationship, and brings to WHA his dedication to supporting joyful patient healing.



Khuram Arif, MD

Garry Maisel

CEO, Western Health Advantage



TIDBITS

Nuts: A heart-smart snack

Trading in a bowl of potato chips for a handful of unsalted almonds is a no-brainer—nuts are a good source of protein—and snacking on nuts can help both your waistline and your heart.

A recent study in *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health* found that substituting a half-serving of nuts (14 grams) for processed meats or junk food daily can reduce weight gain and lower the risk for obesity. Experts have also linked eating nuts several times a week to a lowered risk of heart disease, heart attack and sudden cardiac death. Including nuts in a healthy diet can lower your “bad” cholesterol, lessen inflammation connected to heart disease and cut the risk of blood clots; it can also lower the risk of heart disease for people with type 2 diabetes.


Nuts are rich in nutrients, fiber and healthy fats, especially varieties such as walnuts that contain omega-3 fatty acids. They are also high in calories, so go nuts—but stick to a small handful.

Sources: *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health*; *Circulation Research*; *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*; *Mayo Clinic*; *Science Daily*

Western
Health
Advantage



ADVANTAGE MAGAZINE

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Frequently Asked Questions

Bea Pennington of WHA Member Services answers your WHA-related questions



Why do I need approval from my primary care physician (PCP) to see my specialist?

Western Health Advantage is an HMO (health maintenance organization). Under an HMO, your PCP is responsible for overseeing and coordinating your medical care. Your PCP will notify your medical group (or sometimes WHA) of your need to be seen by a specialist and submit an authorization.

This authorization can take between three and five business days for approval.

I changed my PCP but never received a new member ID card. Why?

With our new and improved ID cards, your current card is the only one you need. Any time you change your PCP, you will receive a letter confirming the change, but you no longer need to replace your card. Just present your current card to your provider and the staff will be able to confirm your eligibility and plan electronically. If you lose or damage your card, you can request a new one at mywha.org, by calling Member Services or via our MyWHA app.

Does WHA offer fitness center discounts?

Yes. WHA has partnered with American Specialty Health to bring you Active&Fit Direct™. This program allows you to choose from 10,000-plus participating fitness centers nationwide for \$25 a month (plus a \$25 enrollment fee and applicable taxes). WHA has also partnered with several locally owned gyms and fitness centers including California Family Fitness, Spare Time Clubs and Synergy Health Club to offer additional discounts. Visit mywha.org/gyms to learn more.



COMMUNITY CORNER

TAKING A STAND AGAINST HEART DISEASE

Join millions of women and WHA in the fight against heart disease. Heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in women and it's time to take a stand ... in RED! The American Heart Association's Go Red for Women is a nationwide event that is devoted to helping women fight back against heart disease. May is the time for Go Red for Women luncheons, where guests enjoy inspirational stories and great health resources. Urge your mothers, sisters and friends to get their heart checkups. Get a cholesterol screening and regular medical care from your PCP. And make sure to attend your local Go Red for Women event. Find more information at goredforwomen.org.

Sacramento

May 15 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hilton Sacramento Arden West, Sacramento

North Bay

May 8 | 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Rohnert Park

DID YOU KNOW?

Telehealth for behavioral health services

Magellan now offers telehealth for behavioral health services. These visits cost the same as an office copay* and provide:

- **Faster access to mental health services**
Televisits are often available within two to three days.
- **Provider flexibility**
You are not limited to the WHA service area and can "see" a telehealth provider anywhere in California.

- **Flexible scheduling and no travel time**

Talk to a Magellan provider when it's convenient and save the expense of the commute.

As always, televisits are completely confidential. To learn more, visit mywha.org/bh or call 888.563.2250.

*Refer to your plan's copayment summary at mywha.org.

COMMON VIRUS PREVENTION STEPS

As this publication went to press in March, the status of COVID-19, commonly referred to as the coronavirus, was ever-changing. However, there are measures that you can take to help stem the spread.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests the following preventive measures:

- Wash your hands frequently, especially after you use the restroom; before you eat; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Use soap and water and wash for at least 20 seconds.
- If you can't access soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are feeling sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue—throw tissue away in the trash. If a tissue isn't available, cough into the crook of your arm (not your hands).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Avoid large crowds whenever possible.

Follow the directions and guidance of the CDC, as well as state and local officials. WHA will update [westernhealth.com/coronavirus](https://www.westernhealth.com/coronavirus) as we continue to monitor fast-changing developments.

Expert Advice for Healthy Kids

Pediatrician Rebecca Lee, MD, on
depression warning signs and screenings

While it's normal for kids to feel sad sometimes, too often there might be a bigger underlying issue such as depression. Dr. Lee of Mercy Medical Group discusses what parents need to know.



What are the warning signs for depression in young people?

Younger children may not show outright sadness. Rather, they may seem irritable, annoyed or bothered by everyone and everything; they may pick fights or have anger outbursts or separation anxiety. They might also complain of frequent stomachaches or headaches. Parents should be looking for more than typical

temper tantrums; these symptoms would be more persistent or interfere with everyday activities, schoolwork or relationships with friends and family.

For teens, parents might see some or all of the following: persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness; withdrawing from friends or activities they previously enjoyed; changes in appetite or weight; changes in sleep pattern; fatigue; feeling unmotivated; talking or moving slower than what is typical for them; difficulty concentrating or focusing; declining school performance; experimentation with drugs or alcohol; preoccupation with death or morbid ideas; and talk of suicide. It's never too soon to consult the doctor if there is concern about the child's mood or behavior.

What are typical screenings for depression?

Pediatricians do a universal screening for all children ages 12 and over on a yearly basis, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines. Children fill out a questionnaire at their well-child visit asking if they have experienced any of the common symptoms of depression mentioned above in the past two weeks, and to what degree. If any concerns are noted, then a more in-depth conversation will follow.

What are the standard forms of treatment?

Either therapy alone or a combination of therapy and medication.

Whatever the treatment, it will be a collaborative approach among the child, parents and physician.



Skin Care Myths: Fact vs. Fiction

From the desk of Gary Plundo, DO, MPM, FACOFP, medical director

As the weather warms, it's a great time to refocus on skin care. But there are plenty of skin care myths out there that, repeated over time, start to seem like facts. Let's look at some common skin care beliefs to see if they pass muster.

If a skin care product tingles or burns, it's working.

False. Many things, like a product's pH level or having an allergic reaction, can cause tingling or burning. While certain active ingredients, like retinoids, may cause tingling at first, they may also do their job without creating

any sensation. If a product consistently causes irritation, toss it.

Chocolate causes acne.

Possibly true. Research is mixed, but some studies show that eating chocolate can cause flare-ups. If you're a chocoholic who suffers from acne, keep a food diary to learn whether it affects you.

A sunscreen with an SPF of 100 is three times as effective as one with SPF 30.

False. A sunscreen with an SPF of 30 blocks 97% of burning rays, and the difference with a higher SPF is

negligible. Your best strategy is to apply sunscreen every two hours and also cover up with clothing and UV-blocking sunglasses.

Tanning beds provide a safer tan.

False. Just one tanning bed session before age 35 increases your risk of developing a life-threatening melanoma by 75%.

Any sun exposure is bad for your skin.

False. Small amounts of sun exposure help you produce vitamin D—which many people lack—and help chase away wintertime blues. Just don't overdo it.



Gardening for Good Health

Growing your own produce is a delicious way to increase physical activity, build social connections and learn more about nutrition

There's nothing like digging your hands into fresh earth or watching the fruits and veggies of your labor sprout in a backyard garden. And growing your own produce isn't just a relaxing hobby; it's also good for your health. Read on for some of the ways that gardening can benefit both your physical and mental well-being.

EXERCISE. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, you can burn about 330 calories per hour doing light gardening and yardwork. Getting outside to dig, plant and weed increases your activity level, and breathing fresh air gives you an energy boost.

BONE HEALTH. Exposing your skin to sunshine prompts your body to make vitamin D; this vitamin is necessary for absorbing calcium, the mineral that builds strong bones. Scientists think five to 15 minutes—up to 30 minutes if you're dark-skinned—is about right for getting the most benefit without causing any health risks. Use sunscreen, though, if you plan to be in the sun for lengthy periods of time.

LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends engaging in moderate-level physical activity every day to prevent and control high blood pressure. Gardening for 30 to 45 minutes fills the bill.

STRESS RELIEF. A 2017 review of 22 case studies in *Preventive Medicine Reports* found that gardening reduced depression and anxiety. Some hospitals now use planting and flower arranging to help people recover from injuries, strokes or other conditions. California State University, Chico even offers a course in Horticultural Therapy, which trains professionals to use gardening activities to address special needs of the elderly, veterans, adolescents and people with disabilities.

BETTER NUTRITION. A productive garden can supply fresh produce just a few steps from your door. Research by the American Society for Horticultural Science has found that children are more likely to try vegetables they have not eaten before if they can pull them from the ground themselves. And who can resist a handful of homegrown strawberries? Gardening helps everyone develop a lasting habit of eating enough fruits and vegetables.



GARDENING RESOURCES

Daily Acts

Conducts instructional workshops throughout Sonoma County on saving water, growing food, conserving energy, reducing waste and creating community. dailyacts.org

Peaceful Valley Farm Supply

Online source for organic seeds, plants, fruit trees and gardening supplies as well as an extensive collection of instructional videos. groworganic.com

Petaluma Seed Bank

Retail store with a huge inventory of seeds and plants, tools, books and other products. rareseeds.com/petaluma-seed-bank

School Garden Network of Sonoma County

Offers workshops, consultation and grant funding for schools to develop gardens and integrate them into classroom instruction. schoolgardens.org

Soil Born Farms

Sacramento-area urban agriculture and education project that offers classes, tours, job training and youth leadership development. soilborn.org

Heart and Soil

Anna Hausfeld lives in a Santa Rosa neighborhood that happens to have raccoons, deer and squirrels in competition for the goodies she grows in her prolific garden—one she has nurtured for more than five years.

She recommends growing what you like to eat, look at and smell. Hausfeld plants lavender, pineapple sage and lemon balm near her car so that when she goes out she brushes against the leaves. “The scent makes me happy.”

If you are limited to a window box or patio planter, this urban gardener suggests planting easy-to-grow radish



seeds in prepared soil and adding some lettuce starts. “It’s very pretty, and you have a lovely salad right there.” Herbs are also good in small spaces; try parsley, thyme and dill.

“I’m so excited when the plants come up. I love seeing the day-to-day growth,” Hausfeld says. “I love

watching the bees and the butterflies. It’s so emotionally and spiritually satisfying.”

Heidi Fantacone has been a garden and irrigation consultant for 17 years. The top benefits she has experienced from gardening are having fewer colds and more energy from being outside and active every day. She also likes knowing that she is contributing to her community by teaching people how to provide habitats for native plants, bees and other pollinators. “I love working in the soil,” Fantacone says. “It’s a visceral thing.”



Growing Together

If you live in an apartment or don’t have dirt to call your own, consider participating in a community garden (see sidebar on next page for some suggestions). In addition to the time spent cultivating fresh food, you’ll enjoy connecting with your neighbors and learning from more experienced gardeners. You can also help those in need; several community gardens raise fruits and vegetables specifically to supply local food banks. (One such example is Harvest for the Hungry Garden at Christ Church United Methodist in Santa Rosa; visit harvestgarden.org for information about volunteering.)

Many cities include community gardens in their climate action plans, promoting the use of surplus properties for

growing food. In addition to providing fresh local produce, these green spaces absorb carbon, support pollinator insects and add beauty to the region.

Encouraging good nutrition and preserving our horticultural history are at the root of several garden-related programs and retailers in Northern California, including the Petaluma Seed Bank. The store stocks approximately 1,200 varieties of seeds, including many heirloom fruits and vegetables.

Store manager Elyn Mavalwalla says their mission is to educate the public about pure, natural and non-genetically-modified food. “Seed saving is making a gift to the future,” she says. “All our products focus on sustainable living.”



Planting the Seeds of Knowledge

Anne Loarie teaches gardening at Healdsburg's Alexander Valley School and is director of the School Garden Network of Sonoma County. Through the network, 60 local schools have received grant money, consultation and mentoring to establish gardens and help with water-wise irrigation and schoolyard habitat projects, nutrition education workshops and much more.

One of the most important things Loarie does is identify barriers to students eating well and find interesting ways for them to engage with food. "Many kids don't know where food comes from and what the human connection to food is," she says.

"We established the 'no-thank-you bite,'" Loarie adds. "This gives kids the choice to reject a food, but only after they take one bite." Children can get into a power struggle with their parents over eating, so she suggests having kids help build menus at home once a week or month, to give them the power to choose what's healthy.

Loarie talks to students about how eating nutritious food helps them concentrate in school and control their emotions.

"Kids want to do well, and I want to empower them. I always remind them, 'Nobody can swallow your food for you. Take charge and take care of yourself.'"

Gardening can help your health no matter your age. Just communing with plants on a sunny day can inspire happiness, while cultivating fresh fruits and vegetables offers a delicious reward—one that benefits you now and in the future.

Community Gardens

A sampling of local plots in the Western Health Advantage service area

MARIN COUNTY

Canal Community Garden,
[lifelocally.org/
 community-gardens](http://lifelocally.org/community-gardens)

Larkspur Community Garden,
larkspurgarden.weebly.com

Mill Valley Community Gardens,
millvalleyrecreation.org
 (search for "Mill Valley Community Gardens")

NAPA COUNTY

Napa Community Garden,
 Trower Avenue and
 Jefferson Street, Napa,
napacommunitygarden.com

SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Fremont Community Garden,
 14th and Q streets,
 Sacramento,
fremontgarden.wordpress.com

New Era Community Garden,
 204 26th St., Sacramento

Oak Park Sol Community Garden, 3733 Broadway,
 Sacramento

Southside Park Community Garden, 2226 Fifth St.,
 Sacramento

SONOMA COUNTY

Bayer Farm Park and Gardens, 1550 West Ave.,
 Santa Rosa,
sonomamg.ucanr.edu
 (search for "Bayer Farm")

South Park Community Garden, Milton Street and
 Grand Avenue, Santa Rosa

Town Green Community Garden,
 Town Green, Windsor

YOLO COUNTY

Davis Community Gardens,
 825 Fifth St., Davis,
cityofdavis.org (search for
 "Community Gardens")

Elk Grove Community Garden,
 10025 Hampton Oak Drive,
 Elk Grove,
elkgrovecommunitygarden.org

Hanna and Herbert Bauer Memorial Community Garden,
 37 North Cottonwood St.,
 Woodland,
www.yolocounty.org
 (search for "Hanna and Herbert Bauer Memorial Community Garden")

Get more info from the American Community Gardening Association at communitygarden.org.

What's Your Heart Health IQ?



SEE HOW MUCH YOU
KNOW ABOUT HEART
DISEASE AND STROKE

You might have heard heart disease and stroke are leading causes of death in the United States, with heart disease ranking No. 1 and stroke No. 5. And you have the power to lower your risk of developing these cardiovascular conditions.

Take this quiz to test your knowledge—and pick up pointers—about risk factors, warning signs and prevention.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE RISK FACTORS FOR HEART DISEASE AND STROKE?

- a. High blood pressure and high cholesterol
- b. Smoking
- c. Diabetes
- d. Sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy diet
- e. Being overweight, obesity
- f. All of the above

F. The first step to preventing heart disease and stroke is being aware of your own vulnerability. The risk factors listed above are all within your control, but keep in mind there are additional risk factors—like age and family history—that you can't change.

Talk with your doctor about strategies for managing your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels; revamping your diet; becoming more active; and living without tobacco. If you're overweight, you may see improvement in your blood pressure after losing 5 to 10 pounds.



CHEST DISCOMFORT IS A COMMON SYMPTOM OF BOTH STROKE AND HEART ATTACK. TRUE OR FALSE?

FALSE. Stroke (sometimes called a brain attack) and heart attack have separate sets of warning signs—but your response should be the same. Call 911 if you or someone else has any of these symptoms.

Common heart attack symptoms include:

- Chest discomfort, often in the center of the chest. It may feel like uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain. Typically it lasts more than a few minutes; it might go away and come back.
- Upper body discomfort or pain in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Breaking out in a cold sweat, having nausea or feeling lightheaded

IF YOU HAVE A FAMILY HISTORY OF HEART DISEASE OR STROKE, YOU SHOULD DO WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING?

- a. Talk to your doctor.
- b. Do nothing, since you can't change your family history.
- c. Commit to a heart-healthy lifestyle.
- d. None of the above

A. & C. While having a family history of heart disease and stroke raises your risk for those conditions, you are still very much in control of your cardiovascular health. Healthy steps like controlling your blood pressure, exercising and eating well can all lower your risk.

PEOPLE WHO ARE DEPRESSED HAVE A HIGHER RISK OF HEART DISEASE. TRUE OR FALSE?

TRUE. The reverse—people with heart disease are more likely to experience depression—is also true. It's fairly common to have both conditions at the same time. Studies show people who are depressed have worse outcomes following a heart attack and are more likely to die from heart disease.

More research is needed to better understand the relationship between heart disease and depression. Lifestyle likely plays a role, since depression symptoms such as fatigue and low motivation can make it hard to stick with heart-healthy choices like exercising and eating well. Researchers have also linked depression to physical changes including inflammation and higher levels of stress hormones. Talk to your doctor if you think you might be depressed.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT MEDITATION ARE TRUE?

- a. Meditation may help reduce blood pressure, depression and anxiety.
- b. Meditation may help with quitting smoking.
- c. More research is needed to understand the effect of meditation on heart health.
- d. All of the above

D. In 2017, the American Heart Association made its first statement about meditation, announcing it has shown potential to benefit cardiovascular health, but more research is needed to find out for sure. The AHA says the simple, low-risk practice can be done in addition to heart-healthy lifestyle choices and any medical treatments that your doctor prescribes. (See page 14 for more on the health benefits of meditation.)

Sources: American College of Cardiology; American Heart Association; American Stroke Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Cleveland Clinic; Harvard Health Publishing; Mayo Clinic; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Unauthorized Access Denied

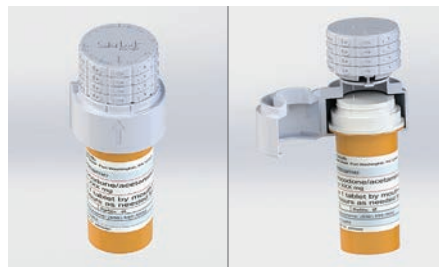
LOCKING MEDICATION CAPS HELP KEEP PRESCRIPTION DRUGS OUT OF THE WRONG HANDS

Watching someone you love fight drug addiction can cause feelings of helplessness and despair. For Joseph Simpson, inventor of the Safer Lock™ medication cap, seeing his younger brother suffer drove him to action.

Simpson's brother, Stephen, began sneaking their mother's painkillers, prescribed to her following a serious car accident, when he was 14 years old; Stephen went on to develop an opioid addiction, though he is now in recovery. Hoping to keep others from a similar situation, Joseph—then a student at California State University, Sacramento—invented a prescription pill bottle cap with a combination lock. In 2015, he co-founded Gatekeeper Innovation, Inc. with his college roommate, Nathan Langley, and started offering Safer Lock.

"Safer Lock was born out of a true family tragedy," says Kim Box, CEO of Gatekeeper Innovation. "Our company is dedicated to ensuring we help prevent this for other families and to raising awareness about medication safety in the home."

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 90% of teens who misuse prescription drugs find them in the medicine chest at home or in that of a friend, yet less than 3% of households lock up their medications.



Now, Western Health Advantage is partnering with Gatekeeper Innovation and OptumRx to provide WHA members with their new product, Rx Locking Cap™, at no cost to them.

If a WHA member is prescribed a scheduled drug—medications that the Drug Enforcement Administration considers to have a high potential for abuse—the pharmacy will offer the Rx Locking Cap when filling the prescription. "It's also a great opportunity to open the dialogue about medication safety between the

pharmacist and the Western Health Advantage member," says Box.

The Rx Locking Cap is simple to use and offers a higher level of security than standard childproof caps. The cap fits the top of most bottles and comes with a four-digit code. Box suggests logging your code at saferlockrx.com/register in case you forget it. Limiting access to drugs will not only help stop misuse, it can also prevent accidents.

Gatekeeper Innovation works with community groups and prevention organizations all over the country, and Box says the company is excited to partner with WHA on this effort.

"The collaboration with Western Health Advantage and OptumRx has been truly amazing," she says. "Together we have a chance to really make a difference and help keep families healthy and safe."

How to Obtain Medical Care Outside of a Regular Appointment

Health problems don't occur at our convenience. You may experience an issue late at night, on the weekend or while traveling. Even if you don't have access to your primary care physician's (PCP) office, you should still reach out for help.

URGENT CARE

If you have a nonemergency condition after clinic hours, it is important to call your PCP's office first, as some medical groups require prior authorization to visit an urgent care center. Explain your condition to the on-call physician; he or she will direct your care. If you can't reach your PCP, go to an urgent care facility. Use WHA's online provider directory at mywha.org/directory to find a contracted urgent care facility, making sure that it is one affiliated with your PCP's medical group.

NURSE24™

Another option when you have a medical concern and are not sure what to do is to call WHA's nurse advice line at 877.793.3655 any time of day. Nurse24 is staffed with experienced, highly trained California-licensed registered nurses. They will advise you on where to seek treatment. Bilingual nurses are available 24/7.



EMERGENCY CARE

It is important to know the contact information and location of the closest emergency room, your medical group's contracted urgent care center(s), poison control and closest friend/relative. If you have a medical emergency—such as a heart attack, stroke, serious injury, severe pain or a condition that is quickly worsening—call 911 or go to the closest emergency room. If you are hospitalized at a nonparticipating facility because of an emergency, you must notify WHA within 24 hours or as soon as possible. If you are unable to make the call, have someone else make it for you (such as a family member, friend or hospital staff member). Please note emergency room visits are not covered for nonemergency situations. To learn more about

emergency, urgent and after-hours care, visit mywha.org/er.

FOLLOW-UP CARE

If you have been seen at an urgent care center or emergency room, be sure to get your follow-up care and any additional treatment from your PCP. If your health problem requires a specialist, your PCP will refer you to a participating provider. Nonemergency follow-up care received at an urgent care or emergency facility or out-of-network hospital is not covered by your health plan.

NONEMERGENCY CARE OUTSIDE OF SERVICE AREA

Any care received outside of WHA's service area must be limited to medically necessary urgent or emergency services. In the event of an emergency when traveling 100 miles or more from home, WHA's travel assistance partner Assist America can help. The operations center is staffed 24/7 by emergency-dispatch, medically certified, multilingual personnel who can make recommendations for any emergency situation, including referrals to qualified doctors and hospitals. Learn more at mywha.org/travel.

Meditation as Medicine

Most people know that meditation aids relaxation and reduces stress, but did you know it helps your body in other ways as well?

Research has shown the following benefits of meditation:

Help for those experiencing cancer symptoms and treatment.

The Society for Integrative Oncology recommends using meditation as part of a multidisciplinary approach to lower anxiety and chronic pain, improve mood, and enhance quality of life.

Reduced blood pressure. The American Heart Association stated

that meditation helps manage high blood pressure and may even lower heart disease risk.

Decreased anxiety. Some studies have linked mindful meditation programs to improved symptoms of anxiety.

Pain management. A study by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health found that mindful meditation can lessen pain sensations and help conditions including osteoarthritis and headaches.

Meditation has also been connected to reducing common symptoms of menopause and



irritable bowel syndrome, helping manage asthma and sleep issues, and improving cognition, though more research is needed.

Sources: American Heart Association, Mayo Clinic, National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, Society for Integrative Oncology

TIMELY ACCESS TO CARE

Did you know that there are limits on how long you have to wait to get an appointment with your provider or telephone advice? Health plans like WHA must ensure that members have timely access to care. Standard wait times are shown here (some exceptions apply). Members who have questions or believe they need to be seen sooner should contact their provider's office or WHA's Member Services. WHA members can also reach the Nurse24 advice line 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year long, by calling 877.793.3655 or 800.877.8793 TTY. For more info, visit mywha.org/timelyaccess.

APPOINTMENT AVAILABILITY STANDARDS BY REQUEST FOR CARE TYPE

Visit for primary care

- Routine: 10 business days
- Urgent: 48 hours

Referral for visit with medical or behavioral health specialist

- Routine: 15 business days
- Urgent: 48 hours if no prior authorization required
- Urgent: 96 hours if prior authorization required

Visit with non-physician behavioral health provider

- Routine: 10 business days

Ancillary services (such as lab tests and X-rays) for diagnosis or treatment of injury, illness or other health condition

- Routine: 15 business days

Telephone triage and screening services with a health professional

- Routine/Urgent: Wait time cannot exceed 30 minutes

Speaking with a WHA Member Services representative by phone during normal business hours

- Routine/Urgent: Wait time cannot exceed 10 minutes



Apple and Gorgonzola Cheese Salad

This fresh and crunchy salad is given extra flavor thanks to the Gorgonzola cheese.

8 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 large Braeburn apples (thinly sliced)
4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (divided)
1 large carrot (peeled and thinly sliced)
8 cups mixed salad greens
1 small red onion (thinly sliced)
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1 tablespoon honey
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
¼ cup walnut oil
¼ cup toasted walnut pieces
3 tablespoons Gorgonzola cheese (crumbled)

DIRECTIONS

Coat the apples with 2 tablespoons lemon juice and set aside. Place the carrot slices and mixed greens on a platter. Top with the onion and set aside.

Whisk together the orange juice, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, honey and mustard. Slowly add the oil in a thin stream, whisking constantly.

Add the apples to the salad. Top with walnuts and cheese. Drizzle on the vinaigrette.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (PER SERVING)

Calories: 150	Fiber: 3 g
Saturated fat: 1.5 g	Sugars: 10 g
Carbohydrates: 14 g	Protein: 2 g

Courtesy of the American Diabetes Association



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916.563.2250
888.563.2250
westernhealth.com

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#BDOG2020 | #whasupports

Big Day of Giving

**Make a difference.
Feel good.
Donate locally.**

**Participate in the Sacramento region's
Big Day of Giving on Thursday, May 7**

Starting at midnight, a full 24 hours of giving

Choose from more than 600 local nonprofits.
Share your community pride by supporting a
charity or cause that is important to you.



Western Health Advantage
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