



MercyCare Health Plans™
HEALTHY LIVING

A wellness newsletter for MercyCare members



Keep kids safe and healthy

Get regular checkups and vaccinations

Routine checkups identify ways to maintain your child's health and find any problems early, when chances for treatment are better. Vaccinations help prevent many diseases and can save lives. Keep track of your family's checkups and vaccinations to ensure they stay current.

Provide healthy meal choices

Eating right provides the nutrients needed for energy, builds stronger bones and fights diseases. As your kids grow, help them choose healthy meals and snacks. Pay attention to what and how much they eat. Help them stay on track and avoid potential health problems.

Keep them active

Encourage your kids to be active for at least one hour each day. Include activities that raise their breathing and heart rates, and strengthen their muscles and bones. Fun, safe activities keep the whole family healthy.

Teach healthy habits

Help your kids develop the skills needed to make safe, healthy choices every day, including fastening seat belts, wearing helmets, applying sunscreen, brushing teeth, washing hands, forming healthy relationships and more. Make safe and healthy choices every day to show your kids how to do it.

Offer love and support

Teach kids how they can be healthy, safe and happy. Find out what's going on with them and how they are making decisions and handling problems. Respond to their physical and emotional needs. It's important for kids to know they have a safe, loving and secure environment.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2
Guard against
skin cancer

Page 3
Top five
sleep myths

Page 5
Eat better
this summer

Page 8
Preventing falls

Page 10
Athletes and
the heat

Volume 17 Issue 2



Mercyhealth partnership opens doors

Javon R. Bea, Mercyhealth President and CEO

In anticipation of the opening of Mercyhealth's \$505 million Women's and Children's Hospital and Medical Center Campus on Riverside Boulevard in Rockford, Mercyhealth formed a partnership with Lurie Children's Hospital to expand its services. This will provide young patients with complex and rare conditions access to advanced outpatient and inpatient services in pediatric cardiovascular surgery, pediatric plastic surgery, pediatric urology, pediatric hematology/oncology, and 24/7 consultative and telemedicine coverage for pediatric neurocritical care and pediatric emergency medicine. Specialists from Mercyhealth and Lurie Children's Hospital will work hand-in-hand to provide innovative, integrated care to neonatal and pediatric patients and their families.

Leading up to the opening of the Mercyhealth Women's and Children's Hospital and Medical Campus in 2018, this partnership will continue to explore opportunities to expand pediatric services to meet the region's needs. As the area's only Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for the 11-county region of northern Illinois, we will provide the highest level of services for premature babies, infants and children. Mercyhealth is working with Lurie Children's Hospital on a plan to bring advanced pediatric subspecialty physicians to Rockford. We are able to bring these services to Rockford for our young patients and their families, allowing them to focus on their medical needs without the additional burden of travel to Chicago, except in unusual cases.

Mercyhealth serves 2.1 million patients in 11 northern Illinois counties and four southern Wisconsin counties.



Colorectal screening saves lives

Dean Wolanyk, MD, MercyCare Health Plans Interim Medical Director

Colorectal cancer is a topic not usually discussed in polite company, but is important because it is the third most common cancer.

Good news: Due to improved screening and early polyp removal, both the number of surgeries and death rate is decreasing.

Better news: We can catch it before it's even cancer. Most colorectal cancer begins as a slow-growing polyp that becomes cancerous only after many years. During a screening colonoscopy, a pre-cancerous polyp can be removed before it becomes a cancer.

Best news: It can be detected at an early stage, resulting in a cure in over 90% of patients. A colonoscopy is the best screening test because if a polyp or cancer is detected, it can be removed immediately, resulting in a potential cure. (Bowel perforation is a rare complication, occurring in only one out of 1,000 cases.) If the colonoscopy is normal, it only needs to be repeated every 10 years.

A new noninvasive test called ColoGuard, only needs to be repeated every three years. Contact MercyCare at (800) 895-2421 or visit cologuardtest.com for more information.



Guard against skin cancer

Stay sun safe outdoors

Nearly five million people are treated for skin cancer each year in the US. Skin cancer can be serious, expensive and sometimes even deadly.

Fortunately, most skin cancers can be prevented.

Ultraviolet (UV) rays, from the sun or from artificial sources like a tanning bed, are known to cause skin cancer. Damage from exposure to UV rays builds up over time, so sun protection should start at an early age.

UV rays are strongest:

- During midday
- Near the equator
- During summer months
- At high altitudes

Remember that sunburns and skin damage can occur even on cloudy or overcast days. If you're unsure about the sun's intensity in your area, check the daily UV Index for your Zip code on the US Environmental Protection Agency's website.

There is no such thing as a safe tan.

Follow these tips to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- Seek shade, especially during midday hours. This includes

10 am to 4 pm, March through October, and 9 am to 3 pm, November through February. Umbrellas, trees or other shelters can provide relief from the sun.

- Be extra careful around surfaces that reflect the sun's rays, like snow, sand, water and concrete.
- Wear sun protection gear like a hat with a wide brim and sunglasses to protect your face and eyes. Baseball caps do not provide full protection.
- Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts and other eye problems. Wrap-around sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection by blocking UV rays from the side.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and pants or a long skirt for additional protection when possible. If that's not practical, try wearing a T-shirt or a beach cover-up.
- Apply a thick layer of broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher at least 15 minutes before going outside, even on cloudy or overcast days. Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours and after swimming, sweating or toweling off.

For more information about sun safety, visit MercyHealthSystem.org.



The average adult now sleeps less than seven hours a night.

Top five sleep myths

Sleep loss and disorders affect 70 million Americans, resulting in an annual cost of \$16 billion in health care expenses and \$50 billion in lost productivity.

Myth 1: Getting just one hour less sleep per night than needed will not have any effect on your daytime functioning.

Even slightly less sleep can affect your ability to think properly and respond quickly, and can impair your energy balance, cardiovascular health and your body's ability to fight infections. If you consistently do not get enough sleep, a sleep debt builds up that you can never repay. This can affect your health and quality of life.

Myth 2: People need less sleep as they get older. Older people don't need less sleep, but they may get less sleep or find their sleep less refreshing. As people age, the quality of their sleep changes. Older people are also more likely to have insomnia or other medical conditions that disrupt their sleep.

Myth 3: Extra sleep for one night will remedy problems with excessive daytime fatigue. Not only is the quantity of sleep important, but also the quality of sleep. Some people sleep eight hours a night but don't feel well rested when they wake up because the quality of their sleep is poor. A number of sleep disorders and other medical conditions can affect your quality of sleep.

Sleeping more won't lessen the daytime sleepiness these disorders or conditions cause. However, many of these disorders or conditions can be treated effectively with changes in behavior or with medical therapies. One night of increased sleep will not correct multiple nights of inadequate sleep.

Myth 4: Naps are a waste of time.

Although naps are no substitute for a good night's sleep, they help counter some of the effects of not getting enough sleep at night. But, avoid taking naps later than 3 pm, particularly if you have trouble falling asleep at night. Late naps can make it harder for you to fall asleep when you go to bed. Also, limit your naps to no longer than 20 minutes. Longer naps make it harder to wake up and get back in the swing of things.

Myth 5: Snoring is a normal part of sleep. Snoring during sleep is common, particularly as you age. Evidence is growing that snoring on a regular basis can make you sleepy during the day and even increase your risk for diabetes and heart disease. Loud, frequent snoring also can be a sign of sleep apnea, a serious sleep disorder that should be evaluated and treated.



In the past 20 years, the size of soft drinks has increased by 52%.

Avoiding portion size pitfalls

People consume more calories when faced with larger portions, which can result in significant weight gain and increased risk of developing serious health problems.

When eating out, it's hard to miss that portion sizes have gotten larger in the last few years. The trend has also spilled over into gas stations, grocery stores and vending machines.

Try these tips to help you avoid some common portion-size pitfalls:

Go ahead, spoil your dinner. If you feel hungry between meals, eat a healthy snack, like a piece of fruit or small salad, to avoid overeating during your next meal.

Out of sight, out of mind. People tend to consume more when they have easier access to food. Make your home a portion-friendly zone:

- Replace the candy dish with a fruit bowl.
- Store especially tempting foods, like chips or desserts, out of immediate eyesight. Move the healthier food in front of those items at eye level.
- When buying in bulk, store the excess in a place that's not convenient to get to, such as a high cabinet or at the back of the pantry.

Portion control in front of your screen. When eating or snacking in front of your phone, laptop or TV, put the amount that you plan to eat into a bowl or container instead of eating straight from the package. It's easy to overeat when your attention is focused on something else.

Portion control when eating in. To minimize the temptation of second helpings when eating at home, serve the food on small, individual plates, instead of putting the serving dishes on the table. Keeping the excess food out of reach may discourage overeating.

Portion control when eating out. Many restaurants serve more food than one person needs at one meal. Take control of the amount of food that ends up on your plate by splitting an entrée with a friend. Or, ask the wait staff for a to-go box and wrap up half your meal as soon as it's brought to the table.

Beware of large packages. For some reason, the larger the package, the more people consume from it without realizing it. To minimize this effect:

- Divide the contents of one large package into several smaller containers to help avoid over-consumption.
- Don't eat straight from the package. Instead, serve the food in a small bowl or container.

Did you know?

If you are overweight or obese, you are at higher risk of developing serious health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems and certain cancers.

Did you know?

Walking is free, easy and you can do it almost anywhere!

Physical activity may seem hard if you're overweight or out of shape. You may get short of breath or tire quickly. The good news is you can overcome these challenges. Not only can you be active at any size, you can have fun and feel good at the same time.

Walking is a great way to get active and can help you:

- Burn calories
- Improve your fitness
- Lift your mood
- Strengthen your bones and muscles

If you are concerned about safety, try walking in a shopping mall or park that is well lit and has other people around. Many malls and parks have benches where you can take a quick break.

Walking with a friend or family member is safer than walking alone and may provide the social support you need to meet your activity goals.

If you don't have time for a long walk, take several short walks instead. For example, instead of a 30-minute walk, add three, 10-minute walks to your day.

Shorter spurts of activity are easier to fit into a busy schedule. If you don't have time for a long walk, take several short walks instead.

Walking tips

- Wear comfortable walking shoes with a lot of support, and socks that absorb sweat.
- Dress for the weather if you are walking outdoors. Wear layers and protect yourself from the sun.
- Warm up by walking more slowly for the first few minutes. Cool down by slowing your pace.



Eat better this summer

Here are some simple ways to cut calories and eat better throughout your day:

Start the day right

- Substitute spinach, onions or mushrooms for one of the eggs or half of the cheese in your morning omelet. The vegetables will add volume and flavor to the dish with fewer calories than the egg or cheese.
- Cut back on the amount of cereal in your bowl to make room for some cut-up bananas, peaches or strawberries. You can still eat a full bowl, but with fewer calories.

Lighten up your lunch

- Substitute vegetables, such as lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers or onions, for 2 ounces of the cheese and 2 ounces of the meat in your sandwich, wrap or burrito. The new version will fill you up with fewer calories.
- Add a cup of chopped vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, beans or red peppers, in place of 2 ounces of the meat or 1 cup of noodles in your favorite broth-based soup. The vegetables will help fill you up, so you won't miss those extra calories.

Do dinner differently

- Add 1 cup of chopped vegetables such as broccoli, tomatoes, squash, onions or peppers, while removing 1 cup of the rice or pasta in your favorite dish. The dish with the vegetables will be just as satisfying but have fewer calories.
- Vegetables, fruit and whole grains should take up the largest portion of your plate. If they do not, replace some of the meat, cheese, white pasta or rice with legumes, steamed broccoli, asparagus, greens or another favorite vegetable. This will reduce the total calories in your meal without reducing the amount of food you eat.

Smarter snacks

- Choosing mostly fruits and vegetables will allow you to eat snacks with only 100 calories.



Providing expanded pediatric services to infants and children

Partnering with Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago

Mercyhealth is pleased to announce it has formed a formal partnership with Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago to bring subspecialty pediatric care—both inpatient hospital and outpatient clinic services—to our Mercyhealth Hospital–Rockton Avenue Campus in Rockford.

Lurie Children’s is the largest children’s hospital in Illinois and provides the most technologically advanced, pediatric subspecialty services in the region. This is the first time Lurie Children’s Hospital has partnered with another children’s hospital to provide care.

Our partnership with Lurie Children’s helps us provide infants and children with complex and rare conditions access to these services:

- Pediatric cardiovascular surgery
- Pediatric plastic surgery
- Pediatric urology
- Pediatric hematology and medical oncology
- 24/7 consultative and telemedicine coverage for pediatric infectious disease, pediatric neuro-critical care and pediatric emergency medicine

As we prepare to open our Mercyhealth Women’s and Children’s Hospital and Medical Center Campus in late 2018, we will explore more opportunities with Lurie Children’s to further expand our pediatric services to meet this region’s needs.

Call MercyCare’s customer service department at (800) 895-2421 for more information about this partnership.

Asian noodle bowl

Makes 6 servings

- 1 lb. egg noodles (uncooked)
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 can low-sodium mixed vegetables (about 15 ounces, drained)
- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup barbecue sauce
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- ¼ cup roasted peanuts (chopped)

1. Cook egg noodles according to package directions. Drain well.
2. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add oil and cook garlic and chili powder until golden, about 1 minute.
3. Add vegetables and water. Cook until vegetables are warmed, about 3 minutes. Add barbecue sauce and peanut butter; stir until sauce is smooth.
4. Toss sauce and vegetables with egg noodles and chopped peanuts.

Tip: Try adding chopped cooked chicken, turkey or beef to the vegetable mixture. Use green beans, frozen broccoli or fresh chopped squash and/or carrots.



Most healthy eating plans allow for one to two small snacks a day.

Eat more, weigh less

Have you tried to lose weight by cutting down the amount of food you eat? Do you still feel hungry and not satisfied after eating? Or, have you avoided trying to lose weight because you're afraid of feeling hungry all the time? If so, you are not alone.

Many people throw in the towel on weight loss because they feel deprived and hungry when they eat less. But, there is another way! Aim for a slow, steady weight loss by decreasing calorie intake while maintaining an adequate nutrient intake and increasing physical activity. You can cut calories without eating less nutritious food. The key is to eat foods that will fill you up without eating a large amount of calories.

If I cut calories, won't I be hungry?

Research shows that people get full by the amount of food they eat, not the number of calories they take in. You can cut calories in your favorite foods by lowering the amount of fat and/or increasing the amount of fiber-rich ingredients, such as vegetables or fruit.

Take macaroni and cheese as an example. One recipe uses whole milk, butter and full-fat cheese, which has

about 540 calories in one serving (1 cup). Here's how to remake this recipe with fewer calories and less fat:

- Use 2 cups non-fat milk instead of 2 cups whole milk.
- Use 8 ounces light cream cheese instead of 2¼ cups full-fat cheddar cheese.
- Use 1 tablespoon butter instead of 2 or use 2 tablespoons of soft trans-fat-free margarine.
- Add about 2 cups of fresh spinach and 1 cup diced tomatoes (or any other veggie you like).

Your redesigned mac and cheese now has 315 calories in one serving (1 cup).

You can eat the same amount of mac and cheese with 225 fewer calories!

A healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium) and added sugars
- Stays within your calorie needs

Preventing falls

Every second an older American falls. These falls threaten the health and independence of older adults and result in high medical costs across the US.

Falls aren't just a normal part of aging—they are preventable. Screening and effective strategies can save lives and money. Four things older adults can do to prevent falls:

Exercise to improve balance and strength

Exercises that improve balance and make your legs stronger lower your chances of falling. They also help you feel better and more confident. Lack of exercise leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling. Ask your doctor or health care provider about the best type of exercise program for you.

Review your medicines

Have your doctor or pharmacist review all the medicines you take, even over-the-counter medicines. As you get older, the way medicines work in your body can change. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you sleepy or dizzy and can cause you to fall.

Get your vision checked

Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor

at least once a year and update your eye-glasses. You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition like glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision.

Make your home safer

About half of all falls happen at home. To make your home safer, follow these tips: (1) Remove things you can trip over (like papers, books, clothes and shoes) from stairs and places where you walk. (2) Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping. (3) Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without using a step stool. (4) Have grab bars put in next to and inside the tub and next to the toilet. (5) Use nonslip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors. (6) Improve the lighting in your home. (7) Hang light-weight curtains or shades to reduce glare. (8) Have handrails and lights installed on all staircases. (9) Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.



Avoiding varicose and spider veins

Not all varicose and spider veins can be prevented. But, there are some steps you can take to reduce your chances of getting new varicose and spider veins:

- Exercise regularly to improve your leg strength, circulation and vein strength.
- Control your weight to avoid placing too much pressure on your legs.
- Don't cross your legs for long times when sitting. It's possible to injure your legs that way, and even a minor injury can increase the risk of varicose veins.
- Don't stand or sit for long periods of time. If you must stand, shift your weight from one leg to the other every few minutes. If you must sit, stand up, move around or take a short walk every 30 minutes.
- Avoid wearing high heels for long periods of time. Lower-heeled shoes can help tone your calf muscles to help blood move through your veins.
- Eat a low-salt diet rich in high-fiber foods. Eating fiber reduces the chances of constipation, which can contribute to varicose veins.



Many yoga poses are based on the different postures animals do in nature.

Yoga in the park

Did you know that yoga has been around for over 5,000 years? No matter what other activities you participate in, yoga can strengthen your abilities by increasing flexibility, staying power and your ability to focus.

Yoga strengthens, tones and stretches your muscles, helping to increase your flexibility.

Most yoga practices focus on physical postures called asanas, breathing exercises called pranayama, and meditation to bring your body and mind together through slow, careful movements.

But, there's more to it than that! Yoga leads to improved physical fitness, increased ability to concentrate and decreased stress.

Yoga is an activity that helps both your body and mind work a little better.

When to practice

Yoga can fit easily into your schedule—taking 10 to 15 minutes each day to practice can make a difference (just make sure to wait at least two to three hours after you've eaten). Yoga is a perfect way to take some time just for yourself. So, set aside a special time each day and relax, release and rejuvenate.

Where to practice

Find a quiet spot where you won't be distracted. Look for a level area that is large enough for you to stretch upwards as well as to the sides for standing and floor positions or stretches.

How to practice

Always warm up. Plan a well-rounded workout that includes different positions from all of the major muscle groups (arms, legs, abs, back, chest). Most importantly, remember to breathe! It's a good idea to start with several arm stretches over your head and deep breaths. Inhale when you try upward and expanded movements and exhale during downward or forward bending motions.

Concentrate on each position—move slowly making controlled movements until you feel your muscles tensing and resisting (you should feel your muscles stretching, not straining). Each pose in yoga is an experiment, so go slowly and listen to your body. Know when you are pushing yourself too hard or need to challenge yourself a little more.

Last but not least, remember to take 5-10 minutes to relax your body at the end of your workout. This will help to prevent sore muscles and is a way to unwind your body.



Athletes and the heat

Tips to playing it safe this summer

Athletes and people who exercise in extreme heat are more likely to become dehydrated and get heat-related illnesses.

Extremely hot weather can cause serious health effects, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which may lead to death.

Try these tips to stay cool, hydrated and informed about what extreme heat can do to your body:

- Limit outdoor activity, especially midday when the sun is hottest.
- Wear and reapply sunscreen as indicated on the package.
- Schedule workouts and practices earlier or later in the day when the temperature is cooler.
- Pace your activity. Start activities slow and pick up the pace gradually.
- Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more.
- Monitor a teammate's condition and have someone do the same for you.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Seek medical care immediately if you or a teammate has symptoms of heat-related illness (next column).
- Stop all activity and get to a cool environment if you feel faint or weak.

Muscle cramping might be the first sign of heat-related illness, and may lead to heat exhaustion or stroke.

Heat exhaustion symptoms

- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Cold, pale and clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

What you should do

- Move to a cooler location.
- Lie down and loosen your clothing.
- Apply cool, wet cloths to as much of your body as possible.
- Sip water.
- If you have vomited and it continues, seek medical attention immediately.

Heat stroke symptoms

- High body temperature (above 103°F)
- Hot, red, dry or moist skin
- Rapid and strong pulse
- Possible unconsciousness

What you should do

- Call 911 immediately—this is a medical emergency.
- Move the person to a cooler environment.
- Reduce the person's body temperature with cool cloths or even a bath.
- Do NOT give fluids.

PRSR-T STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Janesville, WI
Permit #1286

MercyCare Health Plans
PO Box 550
Janesville, WI 53547
(608) 895-2421

MercyCareHealthPlans.com



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2

Guard against
skin cancer

Page 3

Top five sleep myths

Page 5

Eat better
this summer

Page 8

Preventing falls

Page 10

Athletes and
the heat

Snacks with 100 calories or less

Choosing these fruits and vegetables for snacking keeps your calorie intake around 100:

- A medium-size apple (72 calories)
- A medium-size banana (105 calories)
- 1 cup steamed green beans (44 calories)
- 1 cup blueberries (83 calories)
- 1 cup grapes (100 calories)
- 1 cup carrots (45 calories)
- 1 cup broccoli (30 calories)
- 1 cup bell peppers (30 calories)
- Pair veggies with 2 tbsp. hummus (46 calories)

