

## Stress-proof your holiday season

**T**is the season to be ... stressed. At least that's how the winter holidays can feel, thanks to family, work and financial pressures. Here are some ways to cope with—and avoid—holiday stress:

- Discuss plans in advance. If you can't be with one branch of the family for the holidays, breaking the news early can prevent hurt feelings.
- If you have family visiting from far away, don't focus entirely on their visit. This can help prevent the "January letdown."
- Don't feel you have to accept every invitation or perform every holiday activity. Give yourself permission to let some things slide, like that seven-step holiday recipe.
- Feeling hassled by housework? Ask a friend to help you bake or decorate—then return the favor.
- Don't budge on your budget. Small, thoughtful gifts can bring great delights—and prevent post-holiday financial woes.
- Don't do all your heavy lifting at the mall. Try to move your body every day. Give yourself the gift of a yoga class or exercise video.
- Find a volunteer opportunity, or reach out to a relative or neighbor who needs assistance. Even if only for a few hours, volunteering can take the focus off your own holiday tasks and remind you how good it feels to help others. ■

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### How is your emotional health?

Please call **1-877-384-8055** to take a confidential, self-administered screening if you are experiencing constant or overwhelming problems with alcohol or depression. Or you can click on the mental health screening link located at the bottom of **www.bcbsks.com** to take a free, confidential, self-administered screening online.

If you would like additional information or would like to speak with a clinician, please call **1-800-952-5906**.

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## Tools to help you quit smoking

It's never easy to quit smoking. But the toll it takes on your health, your wallet and even your looks is just not worth it. Make a commitment to quit today. Here are five tips to help get you started:

- 1. Set a date to quit.** Pick a day in the next two weeks. Mark your calendar.
- 2. Get support.** Tell your family and friends about your decision to quit and ask for their support. If any of them smoke, ask them to quit with you or to not smoke around you.
- 3. Plan ahead.** Think about what situations make you want to smoke, such as drinking alcohol or talking on the phone. Try to avoid these situations or make a plan for dealing with the cravings, such as chewing on sugar-free gum or a toothpick.
- 4. Talk with your doctor.** He or she may recommend using a nicotine patch or gum to help you quit.
- 5. Find a support system.**

The Kansas Tobacco Quitline 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) provides free one-on-one coaching to help tobacco users quit. Trained counselors provide callers support to create an individual plan for quitting tobacco. This free service is available to Kansans who are ready to quit any form of tobacco.



# Robinson man breathes easier thanks to Healthy Options

**W**hen 59-year-old retired mechanic Harlan Kneisel was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a lung disease that makes it difficult to breathe, he thought the life he knew was over. "I figured I wouldn't be able to build cabinets anymore like I love to do, or go for walks, or do things with my kids and grandkids," Kneisel says.

Fortunately, he found the Healthy Options care management program—a free program from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas that helps people learn to manage chronic diseases.

### NOT JUST A PROGRAM, A RELATIONSHIP

Kneisel wasn't taking steps to manage his disease because he didn't realize there were steps to take. That changed when he was paired with Karen Rooney-Cuevas, RN, a care manager with the Healthy Options program.

"Karen sent me all sorts of information," he says. "I learned what COPD actually was, what

caused it, and the things I could do to manage the disease and make my life more enjoyable."

"By speaking with the same nurse every time, people really build a relationship of trust," says Dana Hammontree, RN, BSN, CCM, manager of quality improvement and care management with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. "They become more apt to tell the nurse what's really going on and, in turn, the nurse can better help them achieve their goals."

### TAKING ACTION

Rooney-Cuevas helped Kneisel create a COPD action plan, including managing his medications, changing his diet, losing weight and doing exercises to open his airways.

Today, Kneisel is back to building cabinets and doing the other things he loves. "This program showed me that COPD doesn't have to rule your life," he says. "They had the information I needed, the support I needed, and it's completely turned my life around." ■

### Take charge of your life today!

To learn more about the Healthy Options program for COPD, asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or heart disease, call 1-800-520-3137.



# Make your winter workout safe

An outside workout can do wonders for your body and mind. To make the most of your winter workout, here's some advice.

## PLAY IT SAFE

Exercising outside during colder weather can mean a little extra preparation. Try these tips to get started:

- Wear several layers and gloves. Look for clothes that will keep your body dry and comfortable—some synthetic fabrics are designed to absorb sweat. Cover up your head with a knit cap.
- Warm up with a few stretches and some easy walking to get your muscles and joints moving.
- You still can become dehydrated even when it's chilly out. Drink plenty

of water before, during and after your workout.

- Close your workout with a five-minute cool-down of slow walking or other easy activity.

## BE "STREET SMART"

If you're exercising outdoors, remember it gets dark earlier. So pick well-lit paths and sidewalks for your routine. Other safety advice:

- Pay attention to what's going on around you. Watch out for hazards like ice, dogs and traffic.
- Cross the street only at crosswalks and intersections.
- Don't wear headphones or carry valuables with you when you work out.
- Exercise with a buddy who moves at about the same speed as you—it's safer and more fun. ■



## Keep your family safe with drug take-back programs



Mike Atwood,  
M.D., Chief  
Medical Officer

Every day up to 2,500 teens in the U.S. will abuse prescription drugs in an attempt to get high. Studies show that the majority of drugs abused by teens are obtained

from family and friends, often without permission. Do you have prescription drugs at home that you no longer need? Are you unsure of how to dispose of them?

It is important to safely dispose of your medications; it is equally as important that you not let your friends use your medications when you're done with them. A drug that works for you could be dangerous for someone else.

"Take-back" programs provide a safe alternative to dispose of your medications. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas supports the efforts of local law enforcement agencies that facilitate the drug "take-back" programs every year. For more information and to find a collection site near you, visit [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov) and click "Got Drugs?"

Refer to the article on the back page for additional safe ways to dispose of your medication.



YOUR REFERENCE GUIDE FOR PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Birth to 18 months	19 Months to 6 Years	7 Years to 12 Years	13 Years to 18 Years	19 Years to 49 Years	50 Years to 64 Years
Periodic health exams Eight exams in first 18 months	Periodic health exams Every one to two years	Periodic health exams Every one to three years	Periodic health exams Every one to two years	Periodic health exams Men: Every one to five years Women: Every one to three years	Periodic health exams Every one to two years
<b>History</b> Perinatal hearing Newborn screening (state lab) Update and system review Lead exposure (yearly) Allergies Medications Development Current problems Nutrition	<b>History</b> Update and system review Lead exposure (each visit to age 6) Allergy update Medications Development Current problems Nutrition	<b>History</b> Update and system review Allergy update Medications Development Current problems Nutrition	<b>History</b> Update and system review Allergy update Tobacco/alcohol history Medications Development Current problems Nutrition	<b>History</b> Update and system review Allergy update Tobacco/alcohol history Medications Current problems	<b>History</b> Update and system review Allergy update Tobacco/alcohol history Medications Current problems
<b>Physical exam</b> Height Weight Head circumference Physical examination	<b>Physical exam</b> Height Weight BMI Blood pressure (age 3 years and up) Physical examination	<b>Physical exam</b> Height Weight BMI Blood pressure Physical examination	<b>Physical exam</b> Height Weight BMI Blood pressure Physical examination	<b>Physical exam</b> Blood pressure and pulse Height Weight BMI Head and neck Heart Lungs Abdomen Pap smear (cervix present) and clinical breast exam	<b>Physical exam</b> Blood pressure and pulse Height Weight BMI Head and neck Heart Lungs Abdomen Pap smear (cervix present) and clinical breast exam
<b>Immunizations</b> (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	<b>Immunizations</b> (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	<b>Immunizations</b> (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	<b>Immunizations</b> (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	<b>Immunizations</b> (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)	<b>Immunizations</b> (Your primary care physician has the most up-to-date immunization information.)
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<b>Developmental assessment</b>	<b>Developmental assessment</b>	<b>Developmental assessment</b>	<b>Developmental assessment</b>	<b>Lab</b> As indicated by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org) or the Health Resources and Services Administration (www.hrsa.gov/womensguidelines/)	<b>Lab</b> As indicated by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org) or the Health Resources and Services Administration (www.hrsa.gov/womensguidelines/)
<b>Counseling—parent and patient</b> Substance use Diet and exercise Injury prevention Behavior Dental health Sexual behavior Mental health	<b>Counseling—parent and patient</b> Diet and exercise Injury prevention Behavior Dental health	<b>Counseling—parent and patient</b> Substance use Diet and exercise Injury prevention Behavior Dental health Sexual behavior Mental health	<b>Counseling—patient and/or parent</b> Substance use Diet and exercise Injury prevention Behavior Dental health Sexual behavior Mental health	<b>Lab</b> As indicated by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org) or the Health Resources and Services Administration (www.hrsa.gov/womensguidelines/)	<b>Lab</b> As indicated by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org) or the Health Resources and Services Administration (www.hrsa.gov/womensguidelines/)
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Asymptomatic healthy people may require more testing if risk factors present.

This guide is based on published literature by nationally recognized authorities in health care and the expressed opinions of participating network physicians. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be interpreted as medical advice nor as a listing of preventive services with no-cost sharing as required under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Please consult your doctor for advice about changes that may affect your health. Some services may not be covered under your health plan. Please refer to your benefit plan document for details concerning benefits, procedures and exclusions.

# Resource Blue offers discount partner for saving baby's cord blood



**S**aving your baby's cord blood is a once in a lifetime opportunity. These priceless stem cells are something that can be a family resource, providing possible treatment for siblings, parents and even grandparents. If your child ever needs a stem cell transplant, having his or her set of perfectly matched cord blood stem cells readily available can dramatically increase the chance of success. CorCell, an umbilical cord blood stem cell

preservation company, is the newest discount vendor in the Resource Blue portfolio.

Umbilical cord blood contains stem cells, which can be used to treat genetic disorders as well as 75 major diseases including leukemia, anemia, sickle cell, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, metabolic blood disorders and immune deficiencies.

Ongoing medical research is being conducted to determine how stem cells can be used to combat some of

the nation's most serious diseases, including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, cerebral palsy, lupus, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and other diseases for which there is currently no cure.

CorCell has the oldest licensed cord blood stem cell bank in the U.S., with more than 16 years experience, and takes every step necessary to ensure your baby's cord blood stem cells, from collection to specimen retrieval. Through CorCell's partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, members will receive preferred pricing on CorCell's all-inclusive enrollment fee, which includes: cord blood collection kit, cord blood testing and processing, private medical courier and the first year of storage. ■

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Blue Cross members are automatically eligible to take advantage of Resource Blue, our value-added discount and health and wellness program. This free resource is easy to use. Visit [www.bcbsks.com/resourceblue](http://www.bcbsks.com/resourceblue) for more information about the CorCell discount as well as exclusive access to a wealth of health information and resources.

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## Wesley Medical Center earns Blue Distinction®

Congratulations to Wesley Medical Center, Wichita, for being selected as a Blue Distinction Center for Spine Surgery® and a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement®!

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas awards these designations based on rigorous clinical criteria, developed

with input from expert physicians and medical organizations in spine surgery and knee and hip replacement.

The Blue Distinction program is part of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas' continuing efforts to collaborate with physicians and medical centers to improve the overall quality and safety of specialty care.

*Note: Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading professional organizations' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at any facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan; and call your provider before making an appointment, to verify the most current information on its network participation and Blue Distinction status. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any of its Licensees are responsible for any damages, losses or non-covered charges that may result from using this resource or receiving care from a Blue Distinction provider.*

# Lighten up the comfort foods you love



## Quick and Easy Recipe

### Beef casserole

Tired? Busy? You don't need hours to make healthy dishes. Try this one-skillet wonder.

½ lb. lean ground beef  
 1 c. onion, chopped  
 1 c. celery, chopped  
 1 c. green pepper, cubed  
 3½ c. tomatoes, diced  
 ¼ tsp. salt  
 ½ tsp. black pepper  
 ¼ tsp. paprika  
 1 c. frozen peas  
 2 small carrots, diced  
 1 c. uncooked rice  
 1½ cups water

1. In skillet, brown ground beef and drain fat.
2. Add rest of ingredients. Mix well.
3. Cover and cook over medium heat until boiling.
4. Reduce to low heat and simmer for 35 minutes. Serve hot.

Yield: 8 servings. Each serving provides: Calories: 201, Total fat: 5 g, Saturated fat: 2 g, Cholesterol: 16 mg, Sodium: 164 mg, Total fiber: 3 g, Protein: 9 g, Carbohydrates: 31 g, Potassium: 449 mg

**F**oods that we connect with our roots or our families are comforting not only because they taste good, but also because they bring back memories. Unfortunately, many favorite comfort foods are high in fat and calories. Luckily, there are ways to trim down the unhealthy ingredients in some of your heart-warming family favorites.

#### TRY THESE HEALTHY SUBSTITUTIONS

Here are some recipe swaps that can make comfort food healthier:

- If a dip or spread calls for cream cheese, substitute half a cup of ricotta cheese blended with half a cup of fat-free cream cheese. Serve with whole-grain crackers.
- Add creaminess to soups and casseroles with evaporated fat-free milk instead of heavy cream. Bulk up casseroles, stews, and soups with beans and vegetables.

- Cradle your pie filling with a crust of crumbled graham crackers instead of pastry dough.

- Cut the butter and oil from baked goods by using applesauce instead. A half-cup of applesauce equals one cup of oil or butter.

#### SWAP OUT THE SALT

Cutting your sodium intake is one of the heart-healthiest moves you can make in the kitchen. Use these tactics:

- Season potatoes with garlic, onion, paprika or sage instead of salt.
- Use fresh or frozen veggies rather than canned ones, which pack a lot of sodium. If you do choose canned vegetables, buy the “no salt added” variety.
- Add some kick to sauces with a dash of paprika, basil or dry mustard.
- Lighten the sodium load of your favorite recipes by using unsalted varieties of broths, sauces and nuts. ■





## Find hospitals and Blue providers nationwide with a new iPhone app

Blue Cross members now have a new tool to help manage health care while on the go. The Blue National Hospital/Doctor Finder is now available as a mobile app for iPhone users to locate contracting Blue providers anywhere in the country.

Members and guests can quickly find a hospital or urgent care center or locate a contracting Blue provider through a free Apple iPhone, iPad and iPod touch app. The app enables a nationwide search for a health care provider by specialty and name. It also features GPS navigation search, map links, e-mail, SMA and "click to call," which allows you to dial a phone number with one tap on the phone screen.

A mobile app for Android, Blackberry and other smart phone users will become available in the coming months. For more information, visit [www.bcbsks.com](http://www.bcbsks.com).

## Help us help you

We have a team of knowledgeable and friendly customer service representatives dedicated to helping you while protecting your identity. In order for our customer service representatives to serve you as effectively as possible, please provide your ID number and be ready to answer any additional questions to verify your identity when you call. If you are calling about a claim, please be prepared to give the provider name, service date and type of service received.

Additionally, if you have questions about the medical bills of a parent, spouse or adult child, our customer service representatives cannot discuss personal health information about anyone age 18 and older without a current signed authorization form or valid durable power of attorney.

You can access the authorization form by going to [www.bcbsks.com](http://www.bcbsks.com), clicking "Members" and then selecting "Forms." The Authorization for Release of Protected Health Information (HIPAA) form is located under "Miscellaneous Forms." Your spouse, child age 18 or older, or parent needs to complete this form before you will be able to obtain any of their information.

If you need information about your loved one's account prior to customer service receiving the proper paperwork, he or she may give verbal approval on the phone. The verbal authorization must be given for each phone call until the paperwork is received.

Please call the number on your identification card. Representatives are available from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., CST, Monday through Friday. ■

## Exercise without leaving your chair

Do you have limited mobility? If so, don't let that stop you from exercising. Regular exercise is important even for those who are chair-bound or who have reduced mobility.

To help get you started, here are some muscle-strengthening and flexibility exercises you can do right from your chair. Repeat each exercise 10 times, if possible.

- 1. Reach for the sky.** Sit tall and reach overhead with both arms stretching as far as you can. Lower your arms and repeat.
- 2. Bicep curl.** Using a light weight, such as a 12 oz. can of vegetables in each hand, start with your arms at your sides. Bending your arms at the elbows, lift the weights to your shoulders then lower them back to your sides.
- 3. Leg extensions.** Lift one leg off the floor and straighten it so your leg is parallel to the seat of your chair. Hold for two seconds, then lower your foot and repeat with the other leg.

Before you start any exercise program, always talk with your doctor about the specific types of exercises that will be safe for you.

## Healthy You

*Healthy You* is published as a service for members of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The newsletter is intended to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a health care provider. © 2011. Printed in U.S.A.



## Keep your hands germ-free

Shaking hands, opening doors, using a computer mouse—your hands do many things throughout the day, which make them magnets for germs that can cause colds or stomach ills.

November through May is when these germs are at their trouble-making peak. So get in the habit of washing your hands with soap and warm water several times a day. A few good times to wash:

- Before cooking and eating
- After using the bathroom or changing a diaper
- After playing with pets

When washing, rub your hands together and scrub all areas of your hands for 15 to 20 seconds. If it's not convenient to wash, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can help kill germs.

## Time to clean out your medicine cabinet

When you make your cleaning list, don't forget to include your medicine cabinet. It's important to properly dispose of unused or expired medicine. Disposing of old medications reduces the risk of unintentional use, overdose and illegal abuse.

Follow the disposal instructions on the patient information that comes with your medicine. If you don't have this information, follow these tips:

- Take the medicine out of its original container. Scratch off any personal information on the label.
- Mix the medicine with something that masks the medicine, like kitty litter or used coffee grounds.
- Put the mixture in a container or a plastic bag and place it in your trash.
- Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet unless the disposal directions on the label specifically instruct you to do so.

When in doubt about safe disposal, talk to your pharmacist. See Dr. Atwood's column on page 3 for information about another safe disposal alternative.