

# WHOLE you



2020 Spring Bulletin

## myStrength

Use tools and programs offered by Nebraska Total Care. For example, our myStrength digital app can support your well-being. With myStrength, you can:

- Learn how to reduce stress
- Track your mood online
- Manage depressive or anxious thoughts
- Access and share inspirations
- Explore hundreds of articles

## Manage Your Mental Health

Learning how to deal with overwhelming times is important. Here are some tips to help you manage your mental health.

**Have healthy habits.** Too much stress can take a toll on your body. Develop healthy coping skills to protect yourself from harmful effects. When you are feeling overwhelmed, organize your thoughts for a minute. Take a break from the stressor. Do something that relaxes you like going for a walk or talking to a friend.

**Respect your limits.** You may feel the need to be available at all hours and to always say “yes.” Whether at home or work, try to keep a healthy balance. Set your own rules for taking breaks from your phone or computer. Let your mind recharge! This way you will find more stress-free time for yourself, your family and your favorite activities.

**Pick up on patterns.** Everybody has stressful days, but it is important to take note of what caused you to feel this way. Record what you felt and how you reacted during these times. Find the patterns that best help you to manage your feelings.

**Surround yourself with support.** Build a strong support system. Knowing you have trusted family and friends to listen will help you feel more relaxed. Even a quick chat with someone who cares can be helpful.

**Find fitness.** A great way to take your mind off things and melt stress away is physical activity. Whether it is going for a run around the neighborhood, heading to the local gym or playing a favorite sport, exercise is a great way to help manage your mental health.



# Are You a Caregiver?

Do these 5 things every day.

The care you give is priceless. You do chores, provide emotional support, coordinate medical care and help with finances. That is a lot!

Helping someone in need is rewarding, yes. But it is hard work. The responsibility comes with stress. At times you may feel guilty or overwhelmed. Make sure to care for yourself every day, too. You may not feel you have time, but it is important to make time. Caring for yourself is the first step in caring for others! Take these five actions every day:

- 1** Follow a schedule. Having a daily schedule for the person you are caring for will form routines. Routines allow you to leave some time to care for yourself. It may take some time to figure out what works best for everyone. Some people need a strict schedule to follow each week, while others prefer a simple list of items to do each day. This list might include medication reminders, social activities, doctor appointments and exercise.
- 2** Take care of your body. How you treat your body has a major impact on how you experience the world. Exercise, healthy eating and regular, quality sleep are crucial. These affect your sense of well-being.
- 3** Use your resources. Use services available to you through Nebraska Total Care, like our [Caregiving Collaborations® program](#). You can also find support through your local Area Agency on Aging or other caregiving community.
- 4** Have compassion for your experience. Learn what to expect while caring for someone. Depression is common. So is making mistakes. You may have to learn how to set boundaries and accept help from others. Know that you have options even when you feel stuck.
- 5** Confide in someone. Find a friend who is going through a similar experience and talk on the phone. Sharing your feelings with someone can alleviate stress.



Download the [My Caregiver Journal](#). This guidebook is designed to help you stay organized when it comes to your loved one's care.



# WHOLE you

## Defeat Your Headaches

Do your headaches disrupt your day? It may be time to talk to a doctor. Try some of these prevention tips in the meantime.

**Drink Water.** Develop a routine. Drink at least eight 12-oz. glasses each day. Put reminders on your calendar or set your phone alarm. Keep a water bottle handy and bring it with you to meetings and on routine outings. Drinking enough water not only helps stop headaches but also combats fatigue, prevents muscle cramps and keeps skin hydrated and glowing.

**Rest up.** Follow a schedule. Make sure you are getting at least six to eight hours of sleep every night. This includes weekends! Establishing a sleeping pattern helps repair and replenish your body. This balance can limit headache pain.

**Tame triggers.** Keep a journal or diary on your headaches to discover what could be causing them. When did the pain begin? What started it? How long did it last? What helped ease it? Of course, there are unavoidable triggers like pollen, changes in weather and humidity. Take special care with what you can control, like food and household triggers.



**Exercise.** Take up an activity. Trying walking, jogging or cycling. These activate your muscles and increase blood flow to lower your chances of a headache. Regular exercise also prevents heart disease, cancer and stroke.

**Cut caffeine.** Caffeine is powerful. It can give you a boost of energy and increase alertness. But, it can also cause headaches. Limit your intake of coffee, tea and soda. Try sticking to one caffeinated drink a day. Or you can make your cup half-caf, half-decaf. It is the same great taste but with half the caffeine!

## You Have Rights and Responsibilities

As a member, there are things you can expect from your health plan. There are also things your health plan expects from you. These are called rights and responsibilities. We list some here. You can read them all in your [member handbook](#).

Here are some of your **rights** as a member:

- Getting all appropriate services that we provide
- Being treated with respect
- Knowing your medical data will be kept private
- Being able to get a copy of your medical record
- Making an [Advance Directive](#)

Some of your **responsibilities** include:

- Working on [improving your own health](#)
- Asking questions if you do not understand
- Keeping your scheduled appointments
- Treating providers and staff with respect
- Showing your member ID card
- Telling your doctor if you had care in an emergency room

Call Member Services at 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711 if you need a paper copy of the [rights and responsibilities](#).

# Your Home May Affect Your Health

A safe, clean home is important for your health. Over two million Americans live in homes with serious safety problems. A poor living environment can cause you to get sick. Damp, cold, and moldy housing is linked to asthma and other breathing problems. Dirty carpeting can hold lots of dirt and allergens that can make you sick.

Older homes sometimes have dangerous toxins like lead paint or asbestos. Living in a home with these problems can cause your health to get worse. This may cause you to miss work. Or your children to miss school. It may mean you have to go to more doctor appointments and get more medical help.

Unsafe living conditions can cause serious health problems. If you or your family start to have new and repeating health problems, you should seek medical help. You should also take a close look at your home. Some signs that your home may be unhealthy are:

- Trouble breathing and throat irritation
- Wheezing, sneezing fits, bloody noses
- Increased number of asthma attacks
- Eye irritation
- Reoccurring headaches
- Aches and pains

If you are a renter, it is your right to have a safe place to live. Look for signs that the property may have problems with temperature, mold, and pests. Including:

- Dirty or old carpet and flooring
- Water stains on the floor or ceiling
- Holes in the walls
- A damp smell

If you feel your home is making you and your family sick there is help. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has a [resource locator tool](#). It will help you find housing resources in Nebraska. They also offer information and help with foreclosure prevention. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has information and resources on [lead poisoning prevention](#).

## Earn Rewards!

\$20 - Lead screening blood test before age 2 (child).

Sources: National Center for Biotechnology Information, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447157/](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447157/)

# Where to Go for Care

Think about all of your choices when choosing where to go for medical care. Many are surprised to learn that this is often not the ER. Be ready by knowing the best place to go based on your medical condition.

**Free 24/7 Nurse Advice Line.** Medical experts can answer your health questions and help set up doctor visits. Call us toll-free: 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711. Call for:

- Help caring for a sick child
- Diaper Rash
- Help knowing if you should see your PCP
- Answers to questions about your health



**Primary Care Provider (PCP).** Your PCP is your main provider. Call the office to schedule a visit if you do not need immediate medical care. Make a visit for:

- Vaccinations
- Yearly wellness exam
- Help with colds, flus and fevers
- Basic advice about your overall health
- Ongoing health issues like asthma or diabetes



**In-Network Urgent Care Center.** Go to a nearby urgent care center if your illness or injury is not life-threatening and your PCP's office is closed. Make a visit for:

- Flu symptoms with vomiting
- Sprains
- Ear infections
- High Fever



**Emergency Room (ER).** Think about all of your options before going to the ER. Visit the ER if you are experiencing a LIFE-THREATENING injury or illness. Go here for:

- Bleeding that will not stop
- Labor pains or other bleeding (if pregnant)
- Shock symptoms (sweat, thirst, dizziness, pale skin)
- Convulsions or seizures
- The sudden inability to see, move or speak
- Chest pains or heart attack symptoms
- Gun or knife wounds
- Bad burns
- Trouble breathing
- Broken bones
- Drug overdose
- Ingested poison



# WHOLE you

## Are You Ready to Make the Change? Be a Quitter.

**High cost of smoking.** We all know smoking is bad for our health. But did you know it is bad for your wallet too? The average price for one pack of cigarettes is about \$6.28. You can figure out how much you are spending on cigarettes each month and year. How much do you spend? Does your spouse or partner smoke too? How much are the two of you spending?

What else would that money buy? By quitting, you can use the money you save on cigarettes to pay your phone bill,

buy groceries, or put gas in your car. You can also use some of the money for a special treat like new clothes or furniture for your home.

If you smoke this many cigarettes in 1 day	This is how much you spend in 1 month	This is how much you spend in 1 year
10	\$94	\$1,128
15	\$141	\$1,692
20	\$188	\$2,256

**Are e-cigarettes safe to use?** E-cigarettes do not have some of the harmful chemicals found in regular cigarettes. But that does not mean they are safe to use. E-cigarettes still have nicotine. Nicotine raises blood pressure and can hurt your blood vessels. That can cause heart attacks and strokes, and can make it harder for your body to heal.

The nicotine liquid in e-cigarettes can be poisonous or deadly. It is very dangerous to drink or even get on your skin. Certain flavors may even be dangerous to breathe. Nicotine liquid should always be kept away from children. Some e-cigarette vapor has also been found to carry tiny metal particles. These small pieces of nickel, tin, or aluminum can get into your lungs and cause damage.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved any e-cigarettes to help people quit smoking. In fact, all e-cigarettes must now have a nicotine addiction warning. E-cigarettes cannot be sold to people under the age of 21 in Nebraska.

There are many safe products that can help you quit using tobacco or e-cigarettes. They are called nicotine

replacement therapies (NRT). You might know them better as nicotine gum, patches, or lozenges. Smoking cessation is covered through [Tobacco-Free-Nebraska](#). Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) for more information.

**Benefits of quitting.** Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States. More than 480,000 people die from smoking each year. About 16 million Americans also live with health problems because they smoke. The health benefits of quitting range from immediate to long term.

- **20 minutes after:** Your heart rate and blood pressure start to drop.
- **12 hours after:** Your blood oxygen levels start to increase. Carbon monoxide levels in your blood start going back to normal.
- **24 hours after:** Your chance of having a heart attack starts to decrease.
- **48 hours after:** Your senses of taste and smell start to improve.
- **2 weeks to 3 months after:** Blood flow through your body starts to improve. That makes things like walking and climbing stairs easier.
- **1 to 9 months after:** Your lungs are cleaner. That means you are less likely to cough, have sinus problems, or get infections.
- **1 year after:** Your risk of heart disease from smoking is less than half of what it would be if you were still smoking.

Nebraska Total Care cares about you and your family's health. One of the best ways to improve your health and wellness is to **stop smoking and/or tobacco use**. Are you ready to make the change? Our phone number is 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711.



# WHOLE you

## Make Your Health Plan Work for You

Your health is one of the most important things you have. Take care of your mind and body by using all of the benefits your health plan has to offer.

**Earn rewards.** Motivate yourself to be healthy with our [My Health Pays® rewards program](#). Reward dollars can be used at Walmart and for other household expenses like utilities or childcare services. Check out our [video](#) on the My Health Pays® program. (This card may not be used to buy alcohol, tobacco, or firearms products.)

**Check your vision.** At the eye doctor you will get tests to rule out any eye problems. Be sure to know your family medical history. If you need help finding an eye doctor, ask your primary care provider (PCP).

**Ask about vaccines.** When you are at the doctor's office, ask about shots you need. By getting these, you protect yourself and those around you. Keep in mind that some shots need "boosters" to continue working. [Earn Rewards!](#) \$10 - Annual flu vaccine.

**Plan a wellness check.** Do not just visit your PCP when you have health problems. It is important to have an annual checkup to stay ahead of any health issues. If you have been feeling more tired than usual or having difficulty sleeping, your doctor can help find the cause. Get rewarded for focusing on your health! [Earn Rewards!](#) \$20 - Annual checkup with your PCP (adult).

**Explore the health library.** Nebraska Total Care gives you easy access to more than 4,000 pages of information on health and medication. Not sure what to do when you have a cold or the flu? Or how much sunscreen to apply? Or what to do if you are expecting a child? Search for these topics and more on the [Krames Staywell Health Library](#).



## Visit Our Website & Secure Member Portal!

You can see authorization approvals on our secure Member Portal.



Visit [NebraskaTotalCare.com](#) to sign up for your free member account today. You can:

- Change your primary care provider (PCP)
- Update your personal information
- Reprint your member ID card
- Find pharmacy benefit information
- Send Nebraska Total Care a message
- Access claims, see approvals, check reward balance and more!

## Call Member Services!

Call **1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711**. We can help you:

- Find a doctor or change your primary care provider (PCP)
- Update your personal information
- Make an appointment
- Get translation help for medical appointments
- Get transportation to your appointments
- Get a paper copy of anything on our website