

live life well.

Issue 5 | Winter 2010

May 2010 Be Your Best Year Yet

Healthy Habits Can Limit Your Risk for Hypertension

Hypertension is the term used to describe high blood pressure. High blood pressure is dangerous because it makes the heart work harder to pump blood to the body. It can contribute to hardening of the arteries and the development of heart failure over time.

Most of the time there are no tell-tale symptoms of hypertension. But fortunately it can be easily detected during your routine doctor's visit. (Free blood pressure screenings are often offered at community health fairs or at local senior centers as well.)

The exact cause of high blood pressure is not known, but risk factors include: smoking, being overweight or obese, lack of physical activity, too much salt in the diet, too much alcohol consumption, stress, older age,



family history of high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, and adrenal and thyroid disorders.

Lifestyle changes may help reduce your risk for high blood pressure:

- ▶ Lose weight if you are overweight. Excess weight adds to strain on the heart. In some cases, weight loss may be the only treatment needed.

- ▶ Exercise regularly. If possible, exercise for 30 minutes every day.
- ▶ Eat a healthy diet. Include lots of fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products. Reduce your total fat intake, especially saturated fat.
- ▶ Avoid smoking.
- ▶ If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control.

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A Message From Our Chairman

Dear Valued Bravo Health Member:

Happy New Year! Welcome to another issue of *live life well*, a newsletter created just for Bravo Health members. Each new year provides a clean slate with an opportunity to begin making positive lifestyle choices that can help you live a healthier, longer, more active life.

We know there's a lot of health information out there – in the news media and on the internet. It can seem overwhelming. As your partner in health, we will continue to work to provide you with health information that matters to you.

This issue of *live life well* includes important information about conditions such as glaucoma, hypertension, and depression. In the spirit of a “healthy New Year,” we've also included an article with nutrition tips from the American Dietetic Association.

As you look through these pages, be sure to read “Welcome to Bravo Health, How May I Assist You?” and meet Vanessa Costilla and Francisca Cruz-Munoz. These dedicated women are two of our Member Services Representatives, and we are proud to have them on our team assisting members like you every day.

Whether you're an exercise enthusiast or taking small but important steps to improve your health, I wish you much success – in 2010 and in the many years to come. Thank you for choosing Bravo Health and allowing us to be your partner in good health.

Sincerely,

Jeff Folick
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Bravo Health, Inc.

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- ▶ Limit alcohol consumption. Do not drink more than 1 or 2 alcoholic beverages per day.
- ▶ Try to manage your stress.

If you do have high blood pressure, sometimes lifestyle changes may not be enough. In addition to diet and exercise, your doctor may prescribe medication. Be sure to follow your doctor's recommendations if you need to take medication.

Blood Pressure by the Numbers

Blood pressure readings are usually given as two numbers. For example, 120 over 80 (written as 120/80).

- ▶ The top number is your systolic pressure, the pressure created when your heart beats. It is considered high if it is consistently over 140.
- ▶ The bottom number is your diastolic pressure, the pressure inside blood vessels when the heart is at rest. It is considered high if it is consistently over 90.

Putting the Squeeze on Depression

Sponsored by Healthways, Inc.

Did you know that depression affects approximately 6 million Americans age 65 and older, but only 10 percent receive treatment?

Depression among older adults can be triggered by various factors such as:

- ▶ Medical illnesses or disabilities,
- ▶ Loss of a spouse or other family member,
- ▶ Retirement, or
- ▶ Moving to a new residence.



The good news is medication isn't the only tool to fight depression. In fact, regular physical activity could be the best medicine for older adults who suffer from depression. That's because when we exercise we release 'feel-good' brain chemicals (neurotransmitters and endorphins) that may ease depression. Additionally, you increase your body temperature with exercise, and many doctors believe this may have calming effects that can help counteract anxiety.

Getting the exercise your body needs doesn't have to be a chore. All you need to do is find something you enjoy doing and incorporate

that activity into your routine. Whether it's taking a walk around the neighborhood or taking dance lessons at a community center or simply jogging in your living room while you watch your favorite television program, you can keep the blues away by getting your body in motion. If a group setting is your preference, remember there are also many options for exercise classes at local gyms, community centers, and even churches.

Talk to your doctor today about creating an exercise plan for you and get moving toward a healthier body and spirit!

Protect Your Vision With Regular Eye Exams



More than 4 million Americans have glaucoma, a group of eye diseases that can destroy eyesight. Unfortunately, almost half of those with glaucoma don't know they have it. Are you one of them?

Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness. In its most common form, there are almost no signs of the disease. Vision loss begins with peripheral or side vision, so if you have glaucoma, you may not notice anything until you lose most of your vision. Anyone can develop

glaucoma, but those at higher risk for developing the disease include:

- ▶ Everyone over age 60
- ▶ People of African, Asian and Hispanic descent
- ▶ People with diabetes or high blood pressure
- ▶ People with a family history of the disease

The best way to protect your sight from glaucoma is to get a complete eye exam. If glaucoma is detected early, treatments such as eye drops or surgery can slow or stop vision loss.

Facts About Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness

- ▶ There is currently no cure
- ▶ Everyone is at risk
- ▶ There may be no symptoms to warn you

Eating Right for Older Adults

In honor of **National Nutrition Month**, the American Dietetic Association (ADA) reminds everyone of the importance of making informed food choices and developing good eating and physical activity habits. Here are some helpful food, nutrition, and health tips from the ADA:

A Healthy Eating Plan:

- ▶ Emphasize fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products
- ▶ Include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- ▶ Look for foods low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars

Make Your Calories Count

Think nutrient-rich rather than “good” or “bad” foods. The majority of your food choices should be packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients—and lower in calories. Most older adults need fewer calories than in younger years. Making smart food choices can help you stay healthy, manage your weight, and be physically active.

Focus on Variety

Eat a variety of foods from all the food groups to get the nutrients your body needs. Fruits and vegetables can be fresh, frozen, or canned. Include more dark green vegetables such as leafy greens and broccoli and orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes. Vary your protein choices with more

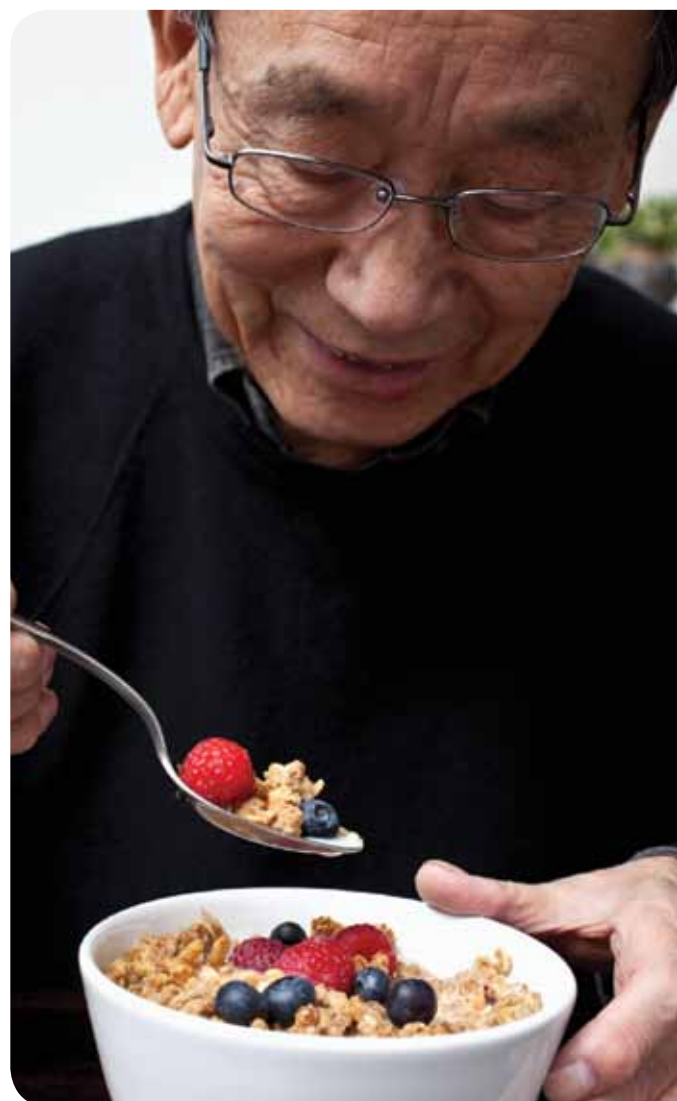
fish, beans, and peas. And, eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day.

Know Your Fats

Look for foods low in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol to help reduce the risk of heart disease. Most of the fats you eat should be polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Check the Nutrition Facts panel on food labels for total fat and saturated fat.

Physical Activity for Fitness and Health

Balancing physical activity and a healthy diet is your best recipe for managing weight and promoting overall health and fitness. Set a goal to be physically active at least 30 minutes every day. If you are currently inactive, start with a few minutes of activity such as walking. Then gradually increase the minutes as you become stronger. Talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise program.



Thank You for Calling Bravo Health, How May I Assist You?

Meet Two Bravo Health Member Services Representatives

At Bravo Health, we have a team of skilled representatives trained to answer your calls and help you get the answers you need. In each issue of live life well, we'll introduce you to some of the people who help you when you call us.



Vanessa Costilla

I enjoy helping Bravo members and knowing that I made their day a little bit better. When I am not working, I love to

spend quality time with my family, especially my six beautiful girls. My goals are to move up within the organization in order to continue to make a difference for our members and to be a positive role model for my children. I want my daughters to understand that through hard work and determination you can do anything you put your mind to.



Francisca Cruz-Munoz

Bravo Health provides a great work environment. I am proud to work for a company where

our culture is to support each other so we can succeed in resolving everyday matters affecting our members and providers. Everyone always has the opportunity to speak and be heard in regards to any personal ideas, observations, or concerns that may affect our working environment. Away from Bravo Health, I love to spend quality time with my family, enjoy outdoor activities, listen to music, and try different foods.

Case Management Available

If you would like to talk to a nurse about your health, please call Bravo Health's Case Management Department at [1-888-454-0013](tel:1-888-454-0013), extension [336351](tel:336351), Monday through Friday, between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm. Please call TTY [1-800-964-2561](tel:1-800-964-2561) for the hearing impaired.

Your Member Services Questions Answered

Q: *What can I do if my medication is not covered on my plan's formulary?*

A: Your prescribing physician may request a Formulary Exception Authorization for your medication from Bravo Health by calling our Pharmacy Authorization department at [1-877-813-5595](tel:1-877-813-5595). Requests are reviewed and a decision is made within 72 hours.

Healthy Snack Ideas

A healthy diet includes eating healthy snacks. Here is a snack you can enjoy without guilt.

Mediterranean Hummus

This delicious spread is perfect with whole wheat pita bread or even spread on sandwiches (it's a healthy alternative to mayonnaise).

Ingredients

1 clove garlic	2 tablespoons olive oil
1 (19 ounce) can garbanzo beans, half the liquid reserved	1 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons lemon juice	black pepper to taste
	2 tablespoons olive oil



Directions

1. Chop the garlic. Pour garbanzo beans into blender.
2. Place lemon juice, olive oil, chopped garlic and salt in blender. Blend until creamy and well mixed.
3. Transfer the mixture to a medium serving bowl. Sprinkle with paprika, if desired. Store in refrigerator.

Tell Us How We're Doing

Each year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) sends out a survey to some members called the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS).

This survey asks Medicare members to rate their satisfaction with their health care plan and doctors. In a few weeks you may get a CAHPS survey in the mail. We encourage you to fill it out and return it right away. The survey is easy to read and takes only 20 minutes to complete.

Bravo Health has achieved the highest ratings possible for a Medicare Advantage health plan for some

categories such as Telephone Member Services in all Bravo Health regions.

We are also proud of the "Commendable" rating we received from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), awarded to health plans whose service and clinical quality meet or exceed the rigorous requirements for consumer protection and quality improvement.

Thank you for letting your voice be heard through these surveys. Your feedback matters to us.

Your comments let CMS know how well we're doing, and make sure that Bravo Health will continue to provide the kind of services that matter most to you.





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For more information or if you have questions, please call
Bravo Health Member Services at **1-800-291-0396**,
seven days a week, 8 am – 8 pm. Please call
TTY **1-800-964-2561** for the hearing impaired.



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Baltimore, MD 21224



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