



Wellness Works

SPRING 2023

Happy 40th Birthday to the Health Trust!

The Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust was founded in 1983 with the goal of containing healthcare costs while maintaining quality benefit programs and providing superior services. For forty years it has been our pleasure to serve municipal and quasi-municipal employees, retirees and their dependents.

The Difference is Trust

- Maine non-profit organization
- Exceptional, local customer service for our members
- Quality programs developed for Maine local government employees
- Innovative wellness programs
- Stable premium rates, with increases consistently lower than the market
- Strong financial position and fiscal management

We will be celebrating the Trust's 40th anniversary and its successes throughout 2023. To start with, you will notice a transition to a new logo and fresh rebranding in the coming months.



Rest assured, we are still the same organization that you have been depending on for many years, and our values and commitment to the members we serve remain unchanged.

Thank you for your support of the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust.

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Wellness on the Web

Did You Know?

Colorectal cancer is the 2nd leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S for both men and women. When colorectal cancer is found and treated early, there is a high survival rate. Unfortunately, one in three American adults are not screened as recommended. Colorectal cancer occurs most often in individuals who are over the age of 45. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that individuals over the age of 45 talk with their health care provider about their personal and family history to determine the best screening schedule for them.





Infusion Services and Locations

Infusion therapy, also known as IV therapy, involves administering medications intravenously by injecting a needle into a patient's arm. This type of therapy is used for treatment of chronic illnesses when there is no oral medication available or if you can't take oral medication. It is becoming more commonly used for some newer medications.

Some conditions that may use infusion therapy for treatment are cancer, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, psoriatic arthritis, and many others. These infusions can take place in a clinical setting such as a doctor's office or hospital. However, more recently infusion centers that are designed to perform this service have been opening in Maine.

These facilities offer comfortable, convenient treatment rooms and amenities for patients that might not need to be seen in a hospital setting. They are also on average much less costly than infusions done in hospital settings. Your physician can discuss with you whether your treatment can be provided at one of these facilities and can determine the best option where you should be referred.

Two new infusion centers have recently opened locations in Maine, and they participate in the Anthem network. Novella Infusion has locations in Augusta, Lewiston and Portland, and Local Infusion has locations in Augusta and South Portland.

If there is no infusion center near you, other options exist for less expensive, high quality infusion therapy, such as in some local walk-in clinics and even infusions delivered in the convenience of your home.

If you have any questions about infusion therapy, the referral process, and the locations where you can receive services, please contact our Member Services Representatives Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-800-852-8300.

Building Healthy Families

Growing families can use a lot of extra support. Whether you are trying to conceive, expecting a child, or already raising young children, the Anthem Building Healthy Families program can help you navigate your unique journey.

This new personalized support program can be accessed through the www.anthem.com website or Anthem's Sydney Health mobile app. It includes digital tools and resources to help track ovulation, monitor prenatal health risks, get updates on pregnancy progress and to log feedings, growth, vaccinations and developmental milestones.

The program also offers the opportunity to connect with a health coach or maternity nurse via chat or by phone to answer your questions or concerns. Lactation support is also available, as well as thousands of educational articles and videos.

To enroll, open the Sydney Health mobile app or login to your account on www.anthem.com and go to My Health Dashboard. Choose the Building Healthy Families option under Programs.

Your family's health is important to you and to us. Building Healthy Families has the support you need to nurture a healthy pregnancy and tackle every stage of your family's growth with confidence.





Five Ways to Flourish in Tough Times

It's a fact that we all go through challenging times. They happen to everyone at different moments and for various lengths of time. Although challenges are sometimes daunting, they don't have to be. Hard times can be an opportunity to emerge from the ashes as a new being, someone better than before, and with a new vision. You don't have to just survive; you can thrive, even with challenges. Here are five ways you can flourish when times get tough.

Focus on Things You Have Control Over

Adding worry to worry is a recipe for disaster. When complicated situations come up, take a moment to determine what you can control and what you can't. Then, tell yourself to let go of what you can't. This simple exercise can make a stark difference in how you see the whole picture. For example, you have no control over other people's decisions. No matter how much they influence your current situation and how hard you try, you can't change what others choose. Don't waste your time or energy. Spend it on rebuilding, overcoming, and being grateful.

Find a Solution

When you have identified which things you have control over, you can try to find the solution. Of course, some situations have more accessible solutions than others, but they all have one. For example, if you are worried about the future and do not know how you can afford to get an education, you must realize that you do have control over yourself to look for options. By actively searching for a solution, for example, applying for scholarships or student loans, you are opening yourself up to solutions and possibilities.

Keep the Right Perspective

Remember that this is not your first time dealing with a challenging situation. You have overcome tough times before, and you will do it again. You are bigger than your problems. Take a

moment to look back at a particularly tricky time in your life, and you will see that you were able to successfully deal with it.

Learn to Accept

Acceptance is one of the most essential parts of flourishing when times get tough. It's okay not to feel okay, and it's better to accept that you're not okay than to resist it. Accepting your situation for what it is means that you refuse to add more tension to an already tense situation. In short, don't focus your energy on denying what is happening because you will come out exhausted. Instead, it's better to focus your energy on accepting the situation as a part of life and becoming determined to make it through.

Learn from It

Finally, learn. Life is a great training ground; hard days are just obstacles that will help you learn, grow, and get closer to your objectives. Everything in life can teach you a lesson, no matter how hard it was or whether you triumphed or failed. Nothing is an absolute failure if you are willing to learn from it. Life is an accumulation of experiences. If you're not willing to learn from your mistakes and challenging times, then life will be a long string of bad days and bad luck. Looking for the lesson, and then applying it the next time, is vital to flourishing.

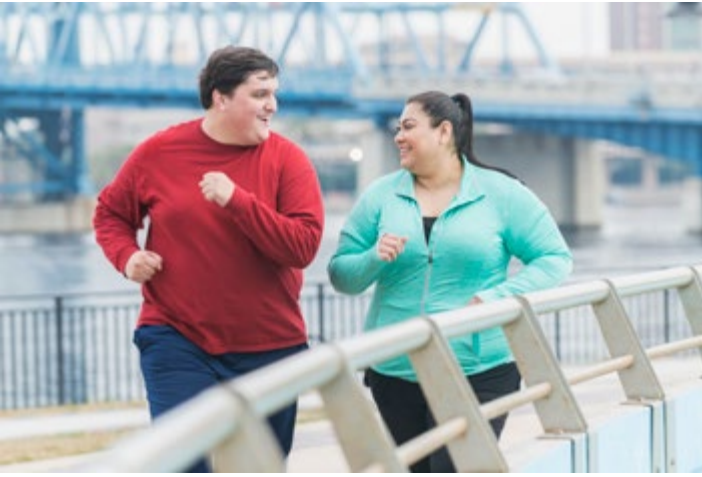
Life has ups and downs, curves and switchbacks, and most of the time, you don't know what is coming next. However, there is something you should never forget: life doesn't happen to you, it happens for you. When time gets tough, the outcome depends on only one thing - you, your attitude, and the way you manage the situation. So, if you fall, don't stay down. Get up and flourish!

Did You Know?

The MMEHT Board of Trustees recognizes the critical need for mental health services for our members. In order to support the increased access to and use of mental health services, copays have been waived through the end of 2023 for members who receive mental health or substance abuse services via telehealth.

Need help finding a provider? Contact Anthem EAP to help get connected to the resources you need.

Visit www.anthemead.com Login: MMEHT or call 1-800-647-9151.



Fit at Any Size

Being physically active may seem impossible if you're overweight. You may get short of breath, tire quickly, or maybe feel uncomfortable working out in front of others. Or you may experience the frustration of finding the right clothes and equipment. While these barriers may make exercise seem impossible, they are really only stumbling blocks. With a little planning, you CAN overcome these challenges and be active at any size - plus feel good and have fun too.

Should I be active?

Research shows that physical activity is safe for almost everyone. The health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks, but you should always check with your doctor before you get started. This is especially true if you have problems moving, staying steady on your feet, if you become out of breath easily, or you are unsure if exercise may be safe for you.

Being active may help you live longer and protect you from developing serious health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer. Regular physical activity is linked to many health benefits, such as:

- lower blood pressure and blood glucose, or blood sugar
- healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- a strong heart and lungs
- better sleep at night and improved mood

How much do I need?

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans suggest adults aim for regular exercise, which means at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. Brisk walking (3 miles per hour or faster) is an example of moderate-intensity exercise. This type of activity

should make you breathe harder but not overwork or overheat you. Muscle-strengthening activities should also be included at least two days a week.

150 minutes may seem like a lot at first, but remember that you can reach this goal by doing just five minutes of physical activity several times a day, five to six days a week. You could then gradually work up to ten minutes per session, three times a day. Before you know it, you will easily be over the recommended 150 minutes per week. Plus, if you choose an activity you enjoy, and are active with other people, it can really make this time more enjoyable!

Find an activity to fit you!

Choosing physical activities that match your fitness level and health goals can help you stay motivated and keep you from getting hurt. Of course, you may feel some minor discomfort or muscle soreness when you first start, but these feelings should go away as you get used to your activity. If you have been inactive, start slowly and see how you feel. Gradually increase how long and how often you are active. If you need guidance, check with a health care or certified fitness professional. Remember, that the goal is to have fun - not to hurt you!

You don't need to be an athlete or have special skills or equipment to make physical activity part of your life. Many types of activities you do every day, such as walking your dog or going up and down steps at home or at work, may help improve your health. Try different activities you enjoy. If you like an activity, you're more likely to stick with it. Anything that gets you moving around, even for a few minutes at a time, is a healthy start to getting fit.

Stay on track by tracking.

Tracking your progress can help keep you accountable and motivated to continue in your exercise journey. You can download fitness apps, record your progress on a calendar or wear a fitness tracker or pedometer to help you keep track of your steps and minutes of physical activity. Set small, achievable goals and work towards progress... not perfection! Don't get discouraged if you have setbacks from time to time, and more importantly - don't give up. Any movement, even for a short time, is a good thing. Each activity you add to your life is another step toward a healthier you.

For more information about exercising at any size, visit the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease at <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/tips-get-active>.

Spring Clean with A Purpose

Spring is upon us. It's a perfect time to change out your winter gear for summer apparel, wash those windows to let the sunshine in and clean out your medicine cabinets! Research tells us that many people keep expired or unused medications in their homes, with nearly three in five (58%) admitting to holding onto their old medications in order to self-medicate or treat an illness when they don't feel the need to see their doctor. Not only is this a bad idea, but it could also be dangerous. Leftover or expired medications might not be effective after their expiration date and taken inappropriately may create even bigger health issues.

Additionally, having a stockpile of prescription and non-prescription medication in your house can be dangerous due to the increased risk of misuse and overdose. Unused prescription drugs are the most common source of drug misuse in teens - misuse that in many cases may lead to addiction and overdose. Drug overdose deaths in our country are currently at the highest levels ever recorded, with opioid-related deaths accounting for more than 75 percent of all overdose deaths. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the majority of people who misused a prescription medication obtained the medicine from a family member or friend.

Not sure what to do with all those medications you pull from the cabinet? You can contact your local pharmacy or police department to find out if there is a Prescription Take Back Day happening near you or if there is a drop off location that will accept these expired or unused medications in your community.



Have Your Medications Sent to Your Home

Did you know that you can save time and money by having your prescription medications sent directly to your home? CarelonRx (formerly IngenioRx) is the pharmacy benefit manager for the Health Trust medical plans, and they offer a home delivery option for prescriptions you take on a regular basis.

With home delivery you get:

- **More time.** Less time in line at the pharmacy means more time for you.
- **Added convenience.** CarelonRx Mail works with your doctor to renew your prescriptions. You can manage everything through www.anthem.com or the Anthem Sydney Health mobile app.
- **Safety.** All orders are checked by a licensed pharmacist before they ship. The packaging is tamperproof, weatherproof and temperature controlled if needed.
- **Peace of mind.** You can set up automatic refills and reminders if you prefer. Pharmacists are also available to help 24/7.
- **Savings.** For a 90-day supply of your medication you pay two copays rather than the three copays that you would pay at a retail pharmacy.

Start home delivery now with these steps:

- Visit the Request a New Prescription page on www.anthem.com or the Sydney Health mobile app.
- Type in the prescription you'd like to have delivered.
- Select Request a New Prescription under the name and cost of your prescription.
- Choose a prescriber and review your request to make sure your information is correct.
- Select Continue to Medical Profile if you're a first-time requester.
- Verify any allergies or health conditions, then select Continue to Submit Order.

Charcoal Toothpaste - What We Know and What We Don't

There are many whitening toothpaste products available online and on store shelves that include charcoal. These products are made with activated charcoal which is a fine grain powder made from wood, coconut shells, and other natural substances that are oxidized under extreme heat. While charcoal has been touted as a tooth whitening agent, is it safe and does it really work?

More research is needed on the long-term effects of charcoal toothpaste, because we really don't know much! Back in 2017, a study published in the Journal of the American Dental Association warned that dentists should advise their patients to be cautious when using charcoal-based toothpaste due to unproven claims and safety concerns. Unfortunately, the popularity of these products has exploded since then and these warnings to use caution have largely gone unheeded.

This is what we DO know:

- **Charcoal toothpaste is too abrasive for everyday use.** Using a material that is very abrasive on your teeth can wear down your enamel. This may make your teeth look more yellow by exposing the dentin, a calcified yellow tissue. It can also make your teeth more sensitive.
- **Most charcoal toothpaste brands do not contain fluoride.** Fluoride helps keep your tooth enamel strong, which helps to protect your teeth against cavities and decay. There is some evidence linking charcoal toothpaste to increased tooth decay.
- **It may cause staining on some teeth.** Charcoal particles could accumulate in the cracks and crevices of older teeth.
- **Charcoal's effect on dental restorations is not known.** We don't know how charcoal affects the materials used to make veneers, bridges, crowns, and white fillings. Particles of charcoal could build up between them, leaving a black or gray outline.

What else can you do?

The best thing you can do to preserve your pearly whites is to ensure you are getting your routine dental cleanings and are regularly brushing your teeth with traditional toothpastes. This includes brushing after meals and after drinking beverages known to stain teeth (like coffee, tea, and red wine). Although charcoal toothpaste is getting a lot of attention and press, it's not more effective than other toothpastes or at-home whitening products on the market. Don't forget - your dentist is always your best resource for determining what whitening options are right for you.

Source: Healthline



Is Spring Fever Real?

Spring fever may not be a diagnosable medical condition, but research is clear that more sunlight and warmer days do have an impact on your mental and physical health. Exposure to sunlight can boost production of serotonin, a feel-good chemical that can lift our moods. Natural light also helps regulate your sleep cycle, ensuring you get a good night's rest. The switch from cold, dreary weather to warm, sunny days is enough to make anyone feel hopeful for adventures coming our way.

The science behind spring fever indicates that it's not just a coincidence that your mood improves and you experience other benefits with warmer weather, longer days, and the bright sunshine. Researchers have long studied the correlation between weather and health. For example, scientists know that the change in weather can trigger an alteration in your mental health, and this is referred to as seasonal affective disorder. Just as the dark, cold days of winter can make you feel depressed, the bright, warm days of spring help boost your mood.

Researchers believe sunlight triggers your brain to release serotonin, a hormone that helps boost your mood. Here's how it works: Sunlight passes through your eyes and stimulates your optic nerve. Then, the optic nerve sends a message to the part of your brain that produces serotonin. As serotonin is released, it sends signals to nerve cells throughout your body, offering up instructions on a wide range of functions from managing emotions, digesting food, helping you sleep and even controlling your motor skills.

Everyone needs something to look forward to, and spring days allow people to come out of their homes to enjoy the fresh air and make plans for what the future may hold. So, whether that takes shape as a deep spring cleaning around your house, treating yourself to new spring clothes, or even planning a trip with family and friends, enjoy the possibilities in the warmer spring days ahead.

Source: Swedish Blog

Thai Peanut Chicken Wraps



Nutrition Information:

Serves: 4

509 calories, 23 g fat, 5 g saturated fat;
151 mg cholesterol, 19 g carbohydrate,
55 g protein, 681 mg sodium, 3.5 g fiber

Source: WellSteps

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ pounds chicken breast
- 1 cup low sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup cabbage, thinly sliced
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 carrot, shredded
- 2 tablespoons peanuts, chopped
- 4 large flour tortillas

Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon vinegar
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon pineapple juice
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic

Instructions:

- 1) In a small saucepan, simmer the chicken breasts in the chicken broth for 10 minutes or until cooked through, then shred the chicken.
 - 2) Place the chicken, cabbage, green onions, and carrot in a large bowl and toss together.
 - 3) Thoroughly mix ingredients for the dressing.
 - 4) Add peanuts and dressing over the chicken salad and toss to coat.
 - 5) Divide the salad into fourths and fill tortillas. Fold the top and bottom over and roll the sides tightly.
 - 6) Can serve immediately or save in plastic wrap to eat later.
- Tastes great served hot and cold!

Benefits of Packing a Lunch

A healthy lunch is essential for getting us through the workday. On hectic days many of us turn to takeout to get us through. Here are some benefits of packing your own lunch:

You'll save money. When you eat out you may not even realize how much you spend a week. It really adds up! If you spend \$10 a day on lunch, 5 days a week, that adds up to over \$200 a month. Consider making eating out a once in awhile treat and use that money for something you'll enjoy!

You'll eat healthier. When you pack your lunch, it lets you control exactly what goes into the food you eat. You get to determine the ingredients, the quality and freshness, and the portion size.

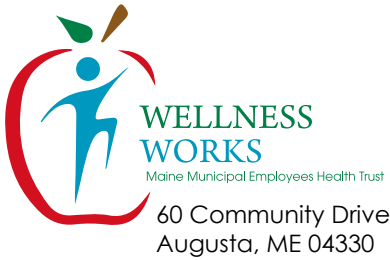
You will be prepared for snack attacks. Another benefit to packing lunch is that it gets you thinking about packing healthy snacks too. So, when hunger strikes in the mid-afternoon, you will be prepared with a favorite healthy snack and won't have to default to the options in the vending machine.

There will be less waste. By packing a lunch you can use reusable containers. This will help the environment by cutting back on the amount of disposable wrappers and takeout bags used.

You'll feel more relaxed. Taking time to prepare lunch for the week can be relaxing. Put on some funky tunes and meal prep



for the week. The time spent doing this one day during the week will pay off as you're rushing out the door to head to work. Just grab your meal out of the refrigerator and go! You'll also feel more rested during the workday because you won't have to navigate traffic to get your lunch. You can simply walk to the break room and enjoy a leisurely lunch. Who knows, you might even find extra time to get outside and enjoy a brisk walk!



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Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust

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Members Resources

Keep these resources handy for future reference!

MMEHT Member Services 1-800-852-8300

Representatives are available to assist you Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. for questions on dental, medical, IPP and life benefits and claims

Anthem EAP

Available for anyone whose employer offers a Health Trust health plan

1-800-647-9151
Support for life's challenges for active members and those in their household



The following number applies to members in the Health Trust vision plan:

VSP
1-800-877-7195
Member Services for the Health Trust Vision Plan

The following numbers apply to members in the Health Trust health plan:

CarelonRx Home Delivery Pharmacy

1-833-236-6196
Service for managing your prescriptions filled via mail order

24/7 NurseLine

1-800-337-4770
Speak with a nurse anytime about non-emergent issues

Anthem Condition Care

1-866-962-0960
Support for managing chronic health conditions

Building Healthy Families

(and other valuable health and benefits information) via Sydney Health app or at www.anthem.com