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**US FAMILY
HEALTH PLAN**

summer calendar

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- 14**
U.S. Army birthday
Flag Day
- 16**
Father's Day
- 19**
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- 21**
Summer begins

JULY

- 4**
Independence Day
- ★
Our Member Handbook is always up
to date at usfamilyhealth.org

AUGUST

- 4**
U.S. Coast Guard birthday
- 10**
Eid al-Adha (est.)
- 12**
Victory Day (Rhode Island)
- ★
August is National Immunization
Awareness Month. Learn more at
cdc.gov/vaccines

SEPTEMBER

- 2**
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- 18**
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- 23**
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- 29**
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US Family Health Plan members choose
from a network of over 2,000 civilian primary
care providers and thousands of specialists,
plus a large network of civilian hospitals.

Who We Are

US Family Health Plan of Southern New England is a Department of Defense TRICARE Prime option, and one of six regional US Family Health Plan programs across the nation. Our large network of civilian doctors, hospitals, and other health providers serves Plan members who live in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and parts of southern New Hampshire and northern Connecticut.

We pride ourselves on friendly, personal service. If you have questions, call us at **1.800.818.8589**. If you're nearby, come visit our headquarters in the historic Brighton Marine building in Brighton, Massachusetts. You can also get to know us better at usfamilyhealth.org or at facebook.com/USFHP.SouthernNewEngland.



a message from David Chicoine,
our Senior Vice President and Plan CEO



A Path to Health

I have spent my professional career working in health care. Though I am not a clinician, I have been immersed in understanding the effects of external factors on our well-being. I am personally and professionally dedicated to helping people find a path to health. At the core of US Family Health Plan, we are dedicated to preventing or limiting the effects of illness and the onset of diseases that can be influenced by external factors under our control. In other words, we want to keep you healthy.

One of the most important things we can do to improve or maintain our health is to pay careful attention to what we eat and drink. I am not advocating “dieting” but rather making conscious decisions about what we take into our bodies.

We are fortunate that nutrition science has helped us to understand the link between food choices and conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. We are also fortunate that resources exist to help us understand how to translate the new nutritional research into eating plans that are easy to learn about and to practice.

When we make sound food choices, we feel better and live longer and are more energetic and focused.

The article on pages 6–7 of this magazine about the DASH Eating Plan is one good place to start.

As the French epicure Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin wrote in his 1826 classic, *The Physiology of Taste*, “Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are.” When we make sound food choices, we feel better and live longer and are more energetic and focused.

In modern terms, making sound food choices means eating “clean foods” — foods that are aren’t packaged or processed — and foods that are in season, local, and fresh. Fill your plate with locally grown vegetables, fruits, lean protein, whole grains, and healthy fats, and limit red meat, added sugars, and sodium. Also, be sure to manage portion sizes and eat only when you are hungry. Learn to read your body’s metabolism and gauge how much food you really need to support your level of physical activity.

Finally, enjoy a happy and safe summer and the abundance of fresh food. And don’t forget to practice moderation, even if it’s in moderation! ■



Updates from Our Home Delivery Pharmacy

With Home Delivery, you receive medications quickly and easily through the mail.

Schedule II CNS Stimulant Medication Prescriptions

In order to be covered by the Plan, prescriptions for Schedule II CNS stimulant medications related to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) must now be filled through our Home Delivery mail-order pharmacy. You may fill up to a 60-day supply at your applicable mail-order copayment.

Home Delivery will automatically send the medication to your home overnight at no additional charge. You will be able to choose whether you want a signature to be required for delivery.

Questions about prescriptions?
Call the pharmacy at 1.877.880.7007

Submit refills 10 days ahead

Maintenance medications are medications that you take long-term for ongoing conditions, such as hypertension or diabetes. We mail these medications to you through our Home Delivery mail-order pharmacy. Please don’t use a retail pharmacy to fill these prescriptions.

You receive your maintenance medication within 10 business days after we receive your prescription, regardless of whether it is a new prescription or a refill. Please keep track of how much medication you have left and plan accordingly. ■

Keep a Member Handbook Handy

Our Member Handbook helps keep you up to date about Plan details, from contact information, to copays, to coverage. Find it online at usfamilyhealth.org (click on “Members” on the top bar, then on “Member Handbook”). If you’d like a copy that you can hold in your hands, just call Member Services at 1.800.818.8589.

A Visit to Washington, DC

In March, David Chicoine, our Plan Senior Vice President and Plan CEO; and Gail Schlesinger, our Plan Vice President of Operations and Finance, made a trip to Washington, DC. They were joined by a delegation from the Brighton Marine Board of Directors, including Chairman Bill Perry; Corporate Director Dick Power, COL, USA (Ret.); and Brighton Marine President and CEO Michael Dwyer.

Their mission was to visit the offices of U.S. senators and representatives from the states and districts that make up Brighton Marine’s US Family Health Plan service area — Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and parts of New Hampshire and Connecticut — and let them know about the comprehensive services that US Family Health Plan provides to our members, and has been providing for over 25 years.

They were especially proud to convey our story to the newest representatives from our service area, U.S. Representatives Ayanna Pressley of the 7th District for Massachusetts and Lori Trahan of the 3rd District for Massachusetts.

In addition to visiting the offices of Representatives Pressley and Trahan, along with Stephen Lynch of the 8th District for Massachusetts and U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen



Top left to right: Wilson (Bill) Perry, Chairman of the Brighton Marine Board of Directors; Michael Dwyer, Brighton Marine President and CEO; John R. (Dick) Power, COL, USA (Ret.), Brighton Marine Corporate Director; Representative Stephen Lynch of the 8th District for Massachusetts; Gail Schlesinger, Plan Vice President of Operations and Finance; David Chicoine, Plan Senior Vice President and Plan CEO; Steven Wolfe, Government Relations Representative.

Bottom left to right: Gail Schlesinger with U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen for New Hampshire; David Chicoine with U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley of the 7th District for Massachusetts; Michael Dwyer with U.S. Representative Lori Trahan of the 3rd District for Massachusetts.

for New Hampshire (whose photographs are shown here), the group also took time to spread word of the Plan’s high-quality care to U.S. Senators for Massachusetts Edward Markey and Elizabeth Warren; and U.S. Senator for Rhode Island Sheldon Whitehouse; as well as to

Representatives Seth Moulton of the 6th District for Massachusetts, Joseph Kennedy III of the 4th District for Massachusetts, Bill Keating of the 9th District for Massachusetts, and Katherine Clark of the 5th District for Massachusetts. ■

Being Active in the Summer Heat

When to Call It a Day

It’s healthy to get plenty of physical activity. But in the summer heat, the risks of working out sometimes outweigh the benefits of that walk, run, or bike ride.

Before you get active on a hot day, it’s important to know the “heat index,” which is based on air temperature and relative humidity. The heat index tells you how hot it actually feels outside, which is sometimes much hotter than the air temperature would lead you to think. For example, if the air temperature is 86°F and the relative humidity is 90 percent, the heat index is a dangerous 105°F.

The heat index

It’s a simple two-step process to find the heat index:

- 1 Go to [weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov) and enter your ZIP Code to find out your local air temperature and relative humidity.
- 2 Then go to [weather.gov/safety/heat-index](https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-index) and find your local air temperature on the horizontal bar and the relative humidity on the vertical bar. This brings you to the heat index.

Depending on the heat index, the National Weather Service provides these categories of health risk:

80°F – 90°F	Caution
91°F – 103°F	Extreme caution
104°F – 124°F	Danger
125°F or higher	Extreme danger

Chill

These tips from the Centers for Disease Control can help keep you healthy in hot weather:

- *Stay in an air-conditioned place as much as possible.* If you don’t have air-conditioning, go to a shopping mall, public library, or designated heat-relief shelter.
- *Schedule outdoor activity carefully.* Limit it to the coolest times of day. Take frequent breaks to rest in the shade.
- *Drink plenty of fluids regardless of how active you are.* Don’t wait until you’re thirsty.
- *Avoid hot and heavy meals.* They make your body even hotter.

Help Keep High Blood Pressure at Bay

With the DASH Eating Plan

If you've been diagnosed with high blood pressure, your doctor may suggest that you follow the DASH Eating Plan. With DASH, you'll be eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and you'll cut down on sodium. The DASH Eating Plan doesn't just help people keep their blood pressure under control, it can also help prevent high blood pressure in the first place.

Because the DASH Eating Plan emphasizes fruits and vegetables, it can be extra easy to start in the summer, when fresh produce is overflowing at local farmers' markets.



The basics

The DASH Eating Plan recommends that you:

- ✓ Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains
- ✓ Include fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and vegetable oils in your meals
- ✓ Limit foods that are high in saturated fat, such as red meat, full-fat dairy products, and tropical oils such as coconut, palm kernel, and palm oils
- ✓ Choose foods that are low in sodium and limit the amount of sodium that you use to prepare foods
- ✓ Limit sugar-sweetened and artificially sweetened beverages.



A Dash of History

"DASH" stands for "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension." The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, first created and tested the eating plan in the 1990s as a response to increased rates of hypertension and what was then called pre-hypertension in the U.S.

How many servings?

With the DASH Eating Plan, you'll eat four to five servings of vegetables and four to five servings of fruit every day.

Many of us aren't used to eating that many fruits and vegetables. But if you have a serving of fruit and a serving of vegetables at every meal, and have an apple, orange, carrots, or some low-sodium tomato juice for morning and afternoon snacks, you'll be in great shape.

How big is a serving?

Vegetables 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables; ½ cup of cooked or cut-up raw vegetables

Fruit 1 medium fruit; ½ cup of fresh, frozen, or canned fruit; ¼ cup of dried fruit

Whole grains 1 slice of bread; 1 oz. of dry cereal; ½ cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta

Poultry, fish, other meat 1 oz. cooked

Dairy products 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt; 1½ oz. of cheese; 1 egg

Vegetable oils (including olive, canola, and safflower) 1 teaspoon

Nuts, seeds, legumes (lentils and beans) ½ cup or 1½ oz. of nuts; 2 tablespoons of peanut butter; 2 tablespoons or ½ oz. of seeds; ½ cup of cooked legumes

Less sodium

With DASH, you'll also limit your sodium intake. To benefit from the DASH Eating Plan, the National Institutes of Health recommends limiting your daily sodium to 2,300 milligrams. Research shows that reducing your daily intake even further — to 1,500 milligrams — has still greater health benefits. If you're African-American or age 51 or older, limiting sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams a day is even more important.

Because most of our daily intake of sodium comes from sodium in processed foods rather than sodium that we add to food ourselves, it's key to read nutrition labels to determine a product's sodium content.

Learn more

Learn more about the DASH Eating Plan at the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute's website at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan. ■



Charles Rollinger, MD, is our Vice President of Medical Management and Quality

US Family Health Plan Benefits for Weight Loss and Obesity

US Family Health Plan follows TRICARE Prime regulations for member benefits. TRICARE offers limited benefits for weight loss and obesity treatment. According to the *Policy Manual*, “Nonsurgical treatment of obesity, morbid obesity, dietary control, or weight control may not be cost shared.”

TRICARE does not allow nutritional counseling services except for a few specific conditions, such as diabetes or issues with absorbing nutrients. TRICARE does, however, allow for surgical treatment for morbid obesity. This treatment is called bariatric surgery.

Bariatric surgery

Bariatric surgery is allowed for members who meet certain guidelines. The guidelines require a measure of body mass index (BMI), which is a height-to-weight ratio that is used to determine if a person is overweight. To meet the guidelines for bariatric surgery, a member must have:

- a BMI of 35 or more, and
 - medical complications from their weight
- In addition,
- a referral for bariatric surgery must be approved by a Plan Medical Director, and
 - the surgery must take place at an in-network facility

Nutritional counseling services for certain conditions

Most people who are overweight don’t meet the requirements for bariatric surgery. However, they may be at risk for conditions related to their weight, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure.

For members in this situation, we offer a value-added service of three nutritional counseling services per year to assist in dietary management of their medical condition.

Other nutrition-related services

Through our partnership with Tufts Health Plan, our members can receive other nutrition-related services at a reduced rate. They include:

- DASH for Health, an online program to help you learn how to eat better, exercise better, and lose weight. Our members receive a six-month subscription at a 50 percent discount.
- Dinner Daily, a food-service delivery option offered at a 25 percent discount. The menus focus on minimally processed healthy foods and can be tailored to family size and personal food choices.
- Jenny Craig Rapid Results, also offered at a significant discount.

To learn more, visit the US Family Health Plan member portal on the Tufts Health Plan website (go to usfamilyhealth.org and click on “For Members,” then on “Member Portal”). ■

Find Your Body Mass Index

Try these easy-to-use online BMI calculators:

- The National Institutes of Health at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm
- The Centers for Disease Control at cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/index

What About Eggs?

If you grew up before the 1970s, you probably grew up with eggs for breakfast, maybe even every day. That’s because, starting in the 1920s, eggs, along with bacon and toast, were touted as the quintessential American breakfast. The burgeoning new advertising industry spread the word.

Bad egg

By the 1970s, researchers warned that dangerous cholesterol lurked in eggs, and many people, especially if they had a family history of heart disease, cut back on eggs or began to avoid them altogether.

Good egg

Findings published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* in 1999 suggested that eating up to one egg a day was unlikely to have a “substantial overall impact on the risk of coronary heart disease or stroke among healthy men and women.” The 2015 – 2020 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* placed no limit on the number of eggs we should eat.

Bad egg again

A long-term study published in *JAMA* in early 2019 reported that adults who ate more eggs and other dietary cholesterol had a significantly higher risk of

cardiovascular disease and death from any cause. The authors urged people to reduce the amounts of cholesterol they consume in order to lower their risk of heart disease.

Moderation

No more eggs? Not so fast. Experts in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health say that a major limitation of the 2019 study is the use of just one measure of diet to look at long-term outcomes.

According to Dr. Frank Hu, the department chair, “For those who are generally healthy, low to moderate intake of eggs can be included as part of a healthy eating pattern, but they are not essential.” He encourages people to vary their breakfasts with other healthy foods, such as whole-grain toast with nut butter, fresh fruits, and plain yogurt. ■



SERVING EGGS SAFELY

Bacteria that can cause illness grow quickly at warm temperatures. Keep these FDA guidelines in mind if you bring an egg dish to a cookout this summer:

- ❑ Never leave cooked eggs or egg dishes out of the refrigerator for more than two hours when the temperature is below 90°F.
- ❑ If the temperature is 90°F or above, don’t leave them out of the refrigerator for more than one hour.



Matthew Werger, MD

Former Major, USAF
Chief of Arthroplasty, Steward Health Care

Dr. Werger sees patients and performs surgery at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Brighton, Massachusetts and at Morton Hospital in Taunton, Massachusetts. Both hospitals are part of Steward Health Care and are in the US Family Health Plan network.



By the time he was five years old, Matthew Werger knew what he wanted to do when he grew up. His mother, Annette Werger, now a pediatric nurse practitioner at Boston Children's Hospital, says he made it clear: "I'm going to Notre Dame and I'm going to be a surgeon." His decision to join the Air Force came later on, when he was a student at — you guessed it — Notre Dame.

During his childhood, Dr. Werger's family moved many times to explore opportunities in Kansas, Colorado, New Jersey, and New Hampshire. But there were powerful constants in Matthew's life. "My parents taught me to respect other people and their perspectives, to be courteous, and to listen well. And instead of playing with Legos, I built real things with my dad. We had a woodshop and I learned how to use tools, plan, and carry something out. We were always building something."

The family settled in Amherst, New Hampshire, for Dr. Werger's teenage years, and moved to Dunstable, Massachusetts, for his senior year in high school. He played soccer and maintained a close relationship to his family, especially his grandfather.



Opposite right: Dr. Werger (top row, second from right) at U.S. Air Force Officer Training School.

Above left: (Top) With his parents, Dennis Werger and Annette Werger. (Bottom) Dr. Werger in South Korea.

Above right: U.S. Air Force Surgeon General Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Thomas Travis visits Dr. Werger's operating room at Osan Air Base.

In college, he grew his faith, became even more passionate about college football, and continued his focus on becoming a surgeon. When military recruiters came to campus in 2003, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, he was ready to sign up — as a way to serve his country and to finance his medical training. Through the Air Force, he went to Georgetown Medical School.

When it came time to choose a specialty, Dr. Werger found orthopedic surgery a natural fit with his lifelong drive to construct things. "I went into the operating room," he says, "and saw all of the familiar tools I grew up using, and I thought, 'This is it. This is what I want to do.'"

After a residency in orthopedic surgery at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, he completed his first duty assignment at Osan Air Base in South Korea, and his

second at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, the nearest treatment center for wounded service members coming from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Dr. Werger credits his military experience with helping him develop critical leadership skills that transfer to running an orthopedic practice. "In the Air Force," he says, "I learned the importance of accountability and transparency in an organization. I push constantly for both in a medical setting, too. The military — and my parents — taught me the importance of valuing and respecting people from all backgrounds. That's a major part of my approach to practicing medicine."

Dr. Werger and his wife Janelle are in the thick of parenthood, raising Kensington, who is three, and Jordan, who is one. ■

Summertime

And the Melons Are Perfect



There's no time like summer, when New England farm stands are spilling over with produce, to start eating more fruits and vegetables. This easy hot (chili powder to taste) and cool (ah, those icy melons and cukes!) salad for two contains nearly half of the DASH Eating Plan's daily fruit and vegetable goal in each serving.

It's low in sodium, too. One tablespoon of crumbled feta, the amount per serving, weighs in at a little over 100 milligrams of sodium, just a sliver of the DASH allotment of 1,500 to 2,300 milligrams a day.

Melon-Cuke Salad with Chili and Lime

2 big servings

4 cups chopped or balled melon (honeydew, watermelon, cantaloupe — whatever combo you like)

1 cup chopped or sliced cucumber

Half a lime

¼ to ½ teaspoon chili powder (more if you like more heat)

1 tablespoon unsalted toasted pepitas

2 tablespoons crumbled feta cheese

1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint or cilantro

Put the melon and cucumber pieces in a large bowl, then squeeze the lime juice across the top. Dust with the chili powder and toss lightly. Sprinkle with the pepitas, feta, and mint or cilantro and enjoy the play of hot and cool, crunchy and smooth.

This would be great with a simply prepared piece of fish or chicken and a scoop of a cooked whole grain like brown rice, farro, or barley.

Switchouts

Try avocado or jicama instead of cucumber; unsalted nuts instead of pepitas, dabs of mozzarella instead of feta, za'atar or Aleppo pepper instead of chili powder. ■

at ease

I leave a lovely opalescent ribbon. I know this.

— Elizabeth Bishop, "Giant Snail"



Upping Fruits and Vegetables

I've always liked to think of myself as a healthy eater. I don't do fast food, I switched out white rice for whole grains a long time ago, and I don't keep a salt shaker on the table.

So I was surprised when I did the research for the DASH Eating Plan article in this issue: I was woefully short on fruits and vegetables in my daily diet, especially if I want to keep high blood pressure at bay. At the end of March, I decided to make a point of eating at least three servings of fruit and four servings of vegetables a day.

At first it was hard. I was counting and planning all the time. After a while, though, I got into a rhythm. Now I keep fruit in the office, and snack on oranges, melon, or low-sodium vegetable juice. My colleague Elaine brings fruit, too, and we share. My husband, the chief salad maker in our home, makes a huge green salad every night, and I bring the leftovers for part of my lunch the next day.

Two months in, I'm hitting my goal, and what was complicated at first is second nature.

How about you? How do you get more fruits and vegetables into your day? Let me know at Kerry.Tucker@usfamilyhealth.org.

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