



EMPOWERED WELL-BEING

Balancing Health, Happiness, and Community

October 2025

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



To reduce salt, cook at home more often than eating fast food

Salty Facts

Sodium is an essential mineral that we need to get every day for normal health. This mineral is found in sodium chloride, also known as table salt. Foods made with sodium-containing additives, such as sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), sodium benzoate and monosodium glutamate, also contribute sodium to the diet.

The body needs some sodium to function properly. However, many Americans get too much each day. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults have fewer than 2,300 mg per day. However, most Americans get closer to 3,400 mg of sodium per day. That can be a problem since high-sodium diets may increase the risk of developing high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease.

Which foods have the most salt? More than 70% of the sodium in the diet comes from ultra-processed and packaged foods, such as:

- Salty snacks (chips, pretzels).
- Deli meat.
- Pickles.
- Instant noodles.
- Fast food such as pizza, burritos and burgers.
- Canned foods such as soup.
- Condiments, such as soy, teriyaki and fish sauces.

The good news? The salt you use (from a salt shaker) while cooking and eating only contributes about 10% of the sodium in your diet. To reduce salt, cook at home more often

than eating fast food. Here are some other tips for reducing sodium:

- **Choose fewer ultra-processed foods** and more whole foods, such as vegetables, fruit, grains, fish and poultry.
- **Read food labels for the Daily Value (DV) for sodium.** Products with 5% DV or less of sodium per serving are considered low in sodium, while those with 20% DV or more are considered high in sodium.
- **Read labels on sauces, dressings and condiments.** Some can have 500 to 1,000 mg of sodium per tablespoon. Make your own lower-sodium sauces (try the recipe for vibrant green sauce on page 3).

City Events



Open Enrollment
Oct. 6 – Oct. 31

Mobile Mammography Screening

Wednesday, October 1 7:40 am – 3:20 pm

[Register here](#)

Taking Control of Your Finances

Tuesday, October 7 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

[Register here](#)

Benefits 101 – Taking Action with Accolade Advocacy

Wednesday, October 8 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

[Register here](#)

Open Enrollment: What's Changing Next Year

Thursday, October 9 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

[Join here](#)

Tuesday, October 14 12:30 – 1:30 pm

[Join here](#)

Thursday, October 16 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

[Join here](#)

Flexible Spending Accounts Information

Friday, October 10 12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

[Register here](#)

Wednesday, October 15 11:30 am – 12:15 pm

[Register here](#)

Flu/COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

October 7 – October 31 Multiple locations

Times vary

[Register here](#)

Deferred Compensation

Loans from Deferred Compensation

Thursday, October 9 12:00 pm – 12:30 pm

[Register here](#)

Intro to Deferred Compensation

Tuesday, October 21 12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

[Register here](#)

Nearing Retirement - Deferred Compensation

Tuesday, October 30 12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

[Register here](#)

City Events: Continued on page 4>>

Prescription Medicine: Cost-Trimming Strategies

Even with insurance, prescribed medication can still put a dent in your finances. But prescribed drugs are important for your health, whether you need antibiotics for a week or two, or medication daily, such as insulin for diabetes, for an ongoing health problem. Unfortunately, some people skip getting prescriptions filled because of the cost and may end up with more serious health problems.

Tips that are easy on your wallet:

Make sure your pharmacy is in your insurance provider's network. If you have a new health plan, or you've moved to another location, don't assume you have prescription coverage at your local pharmacy. Check with your health insurance.

If your prescription is for a brand name drug, ask your health care provider or pharmacist if there's a generic version. Generics have the same active ingredients as brand names, but typically cost much less.

Consider buying in bulk if you take medications daily. Mail-order pharmacies often send larger orders (e.g., a 90-day supply) at a significant discount.



Check your local, independent pharmacy, if available. Community pharmacies usually have more leeway in pricing prescription drugs than big chain pharmacies, according to the National Community Pharmacists Association.

Consider a pill splitter if you need a dose of a medication twice a day. Some medications come in a less expensive double dose that can be safely split. Talk to your pharmacist before going this route to make sure it is safe and won't reduce the medication's effectiveness.

Talk openly about your finances with your provider. If the cost prevents you from taking your medication as prescribed, your provider can often help you find less costly therapies or other more affordable forms of the medication. You can also look online for coupons.

October is
Breast Cancer
Awareness Month.



For almost four decades, this yearly campaign to educate people about breast cancer has encouraged screening for the disease and lobbied for timely, high-quality breast cancer care. Breast Cancer Awareness Month is recognized internationally, shining a light on more than two million women around the world who are diagnosed with the disease every year. As part of this observance, **October 13 is recognized as Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day.** About 168,000 American women are estimated to have metastatic breast cancer. If you need a breast cancer screening, don't delay — contact your health care provider this month.

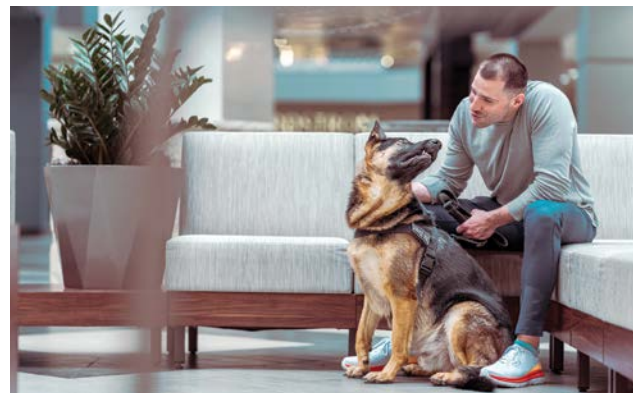
Emotional Support Animals

Pets can provide companionship and emotional comfort. Although that's not news to anyone who has ever had a beloved cat or dog, research from the National Institutes of Health confirms having a pet can result in multiple positive emotional and physiological benefits for pet owners, including lowering stress and improving mood.

When animals provide comfort and companionship to people with emotional or mental health challenges, pets (whether dogs, cats or other animals) are considered Emotional Support Animals. People who have ESAs often report less depression, anxiety and loneliness, helping them become more outgoing and active.



These animals do not have special training or abilities to assist people with disabilities and do not qualify as service animals. The Americans with Disabilities Act defines service animals as "dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for



people with disabilities." For example, service dogs can guide the visually impaired, pull wheelchairs, turn lights on and off, retrieve dropped objects and more. The act makes clear pets that simply provide emotional comfort are not service animals.

However, some state and local laws have broader definitions. That's why it's important to check with local government agencies to learn if ESAs in your area qualify for public access (e.g., riding with your ESA on a public bus). The ADA also recommends checking with a college or university to see if an emotional support animal is allowed in a dorm before your offspring takes a dog or cat to school.

Study: Preventing Food Allergies in Children

Food allergies can be serious, especially in children. Allergic reactions to common foods like peanuts, wheat, fish and milk can result in minor rashes or life-threatening anaphylaxis and asthma attacks in children. But researchers in recent years have found introducing a variety of foods to infants at about nine months of age may prevent food allergies, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

A large recent study of more than 2,000 Swedish children, published in *Pediatric Allergy and Immunology*, followed the allergenic foods infants ate at six and nine months of age and documented any diagnosed allergies in the children during the study. The results showed diet diversity decreased food allergies in babies by 61% by the time they were 18 months old. However, the AAAAI emphasizes pushing food diversity before six months isn't a good idea. Breast milk remains the healthiest option for babies for the first six months.

TIP of the MONTH Okay to Eat?

Plant-based meat alternatives can be highly processed, so you may wonder if they are healthy to eat. They are fine occasionally. It depends on which alternative you choose. Options such as tofu or tempeh are minimally processed and a great source of protein. They are better than veggie dogs and mock deli meat, which contain more additives, preservatives and sodium. Overall, meat made from plant foods have less saturated fat and more fiber than real meat, which aligns with heart health guidelines. Harvard experts categorize them as "not less healthy than red meat." Your best bet is variety. Choose whole foods (tofu, tempeh, poultry, fish) most often. Enjoy burgers, dogs and deli meats — whether plant-based or not — on special occasions.

Diet Culture

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Diet culture is a set of beliefs that glorify thinness above all else, including health. It's easy to fall for this thinness narrative, since it is reinforced by social media, pop culture and advertising. If you've seen ads for "guilt-free ice cream" or ones that portray happiness after weight loss, you've witnessed diet culture and its unrealistic beauty standards.

You can quickly spot diet culture, as it:

- Labels foods as "good" or "bad."
- Equates weight with morality.
- Says smaller bodies are better and more disciplined.
- Stigmatizes larger bodies as lazy or unhealthy.

Diet culture can damage mental and physical health. It can make you feel bad about your perfectly functioning body. The constant barrage of pressure to conform to an unrealistic body size can lead to:

- Harmful fad diets.
- Eating disorders.
- Malnutrition.
- Weight loss and gain.
- Low self-esteem.
- Anxiety.
- Depression.

How can you protect yourself? Start by challenging diet culture's messages and question



media that promote thinness. Remember that what you see on TV and social media is not always real. And celebrities have personal chefs and trainers to help them maintain the appearance they need for their careers. Social media influencers may use image editing and filter apps to create unrealistic images.

Instead, appreciate what your body can do rather than how it looks. If this seems impossible, help is available from dietitians or therapists who practice through an intuitive eating lens. They work with you to dismantle diet culture and teach you to enjoy eating again by listening to your body's cues instead of following rigid food and exercise rules. Search for a practitioner at intuitiveeating.org/professionals/.

Another important step is to diversify your social media feeds by following evidence-based content provided by professionals, rather than diet influencers with no credentials (and sometimes altered photos).

Vibrant Fresh Green Dressing

4 cloves garlic	¼ cup ripe avocado
1 jalapeño pepper, seeded	¼ tsp salt
1 cup fresh cilantro leaves	¼ cup fresh lime juice
1 cup fresh flat parsley leaves	1 tbsp honey

In a food processor or blender, combine garlic, jalapeño, cilantro, parsley, avocado, salt, lime juice and honey. **Blend** until smooth, adding 1 tbsp water at a time until it is a pourable texture. **Serve** as a salad dressing or pasta sauce, use as a marinade for poultry or tofu, or drizzle over grain bowls.

Makes 16 servings. Per serving (1 tbsp): 10 calories | 0g protein | 0.4g total fat | 0g saturated fat | 0.3g mono fat | 0.1g poly fat | 1.5g carbohydrate | 0.8g sugar (0.5g added sugar) | 0g fiber | 39mg sodium



EASY recipe

News & Notes

Benefits Open Enrollment is October 6 – October 31

- Find 2026 plan changes in the Open Enrollment Highlights at bit.ly/benhome1
- New!** All benefits changes for 2026 must be made in **Workday**. Access your *My Tasks* inbox and select *Open Enrollment Change* under *Awaiting Your Action*.
- Enroll or Re-enroll in a Health and/or Daycare Flexible Spending Account. The Health Care FSA annual maximum will be \$3,300 in 2026.
- Review your AD&D and Life insurance beneficiaries in **Workday**.
- Attend an Open Enrollment webinar and healthcare panel discussion (see page 1).



**Make Your 2026
Benefits Changes
by Oct. 31**

City Events: Continued from page 1>>

Benefits 101: 10 Ways to Save on Prescriptions

Tuesday, October 21 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
[Register here](#)

Empowered Health: A Focus on Women's Well-being

Monday, October 27 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
[Register here](#)

Along with fun costumes and trick-or-treat goodies, Halloween can bring risks. Plan ahead with these safety tips to keep your ghosts, goblins and superheroes safe:

- Choose** bright and reflective costumes. Make sure masks don't obscure vision or opt for makeup instead.
- Talk** to youngsters about risks. Make it clear they need to stay in well-lit areas and not enter any homes.
- An adult** should always accompany young children. The highest risk for children getting hit by cars while walking is between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- Review** the route of teens trick-or-treating without adult supervision and set a curfew. Warn them about the dangers of crossing streets while using their phones.
- Give** your trick-or-treaters flashlights. Make sure they provide enough light; avoid those marketed as novelty or party favors.

EXPERT advice

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Q: Why is grip strength important?

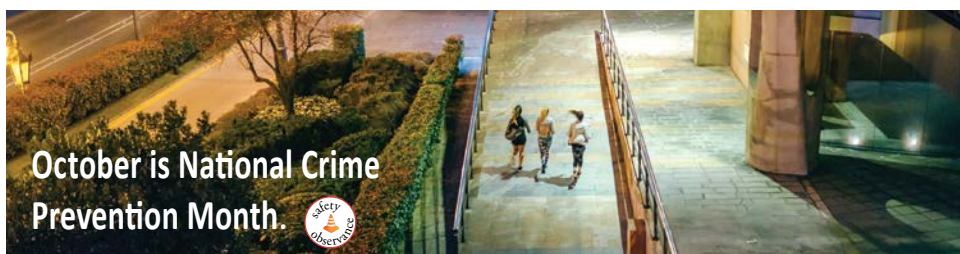
A: Grip strength is a measure of overall health. The force you exert when you squeeze an object depends on the strength of your hands, wrists and forearms. As measured with a hand dynamometer, lower grip strength is correlated with poorer health. In some studies, a weak grip is defined as fewer than 57 pounds for men or 35 pounds for women.

Research shows greater grip strength is associated with better well-being. It's an indicator of the muscle strength you have throughout your body. You need strong muscles for walking, climbing

stairs, avoiding falls and performing daily activities. People with stronger grips tend to stay more active as they grow older, which leads to a longer life expectancy.

Also, a strong grip is correlated with a stronger immune system and greater resistance to infectious diseases. The risk goes down for chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Insomnia, depression and cognitive impairment occur less frequently in people with more robust grip strengths.

Note: People who have wrist arthritis have a decreased grip strength but can be in good health otherwise.



8 Tips for Staying Safe on Nighttime Walks

Taking an evening stroll while enjoying the cool fall weather? Here are eight tips to keep you safe after dark:

- 1 Pay attention to your surroundings.** Maintain your focus and avoid distractions. If you're listening to music, make sure you have hear-through turned on so you can hear oncoming traffic or people behind you.
- 2 Stay in well-populated, well-lit areas.** Avoid shortcuts through dark alleys, hidden trails or any secluded areas.
- 3 Walk with a friend.** Safety in numbers can mean a lot at night, especially in less-populated areas.
- 4 Take routes with sidewalks** in heavily trafficked areas.
- 5 Tell someone when you leave and expect to return.** Turn on location services so a loved one can see your whereabouts.
- 6 Wear reflective clothing or carry a flashlight** and face oncoming traffic. This way vehicles can see you from afar.
- 7 Take your cell phone and keys,** and keep both within easy reach.
- 8 Trust your instincts.** If something doesn't feel right, go home or seek safety nearby.

Executive Editor: Susan Cottman • Advisers: Patricia C. Buchsel, RN, MSN, FAAN; Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, CFP, AFC, RSSA; Eric Endlich, PhD; Kenneth Holtyn, MS; Gary B. Kushner, SPHR, CBP; Zorba Paster, MD; Cara Rosenbloom, RD; Elizabeth Smoots, MD; Margaret Spencer, MD • Editor: Aimie Miller • Designer: Sheila Nupen

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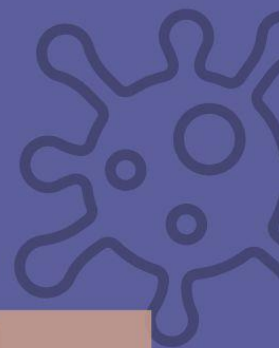


2025

FLU SHOT CLINICS



October clinic dates and locations on page 2.



Employee Medical Plans Covered: All Preventive/All Kaiser/Most & Local 77 Traditional

1. Register and select your appointment time online

- All clinics are paperless and require online registration.
- Register with the **QR Code** or at <https://bit.ly/47aooby>
- Enter your insurance information and sign the online **consent form**.

2. Wear clothing that allows access to your upper arm

3. Bring photo ID to your scheduled appointment



*An Accolade representative will attend several designated clinics (next page) to help employees with Most benefits coverage learn more about advocacy support and services.

**Stop by a clinic marked with 2 asterisks for question about the Deferred Compensation plan. Or contact Susan Wilsson at: wils931@nationwide.com or 206-399-8367

All Clinic Locations

Downtown

Date	Time	Address	Location
10/7/2025*, **	9:30 am – 3:00 pm	Seattle City Hall 600 4 th Ave, Seattle 98104	Bertha Knight Landes Room
10/20/2025**	9:00 am – 3:30 pm	Seattle Municipal Tower 700 5 th Ave, Seattle 98104	Floor 40. Room 4050/4060
10/31/2025**	10:00 am – 2:00 pm	Seattle Municipal Tower 700 5 th Ave, Seattle 98104	Floor 40. Room 4050/4060

Additional Locations

Date	Time	Address	Location
10/15/2025	8:00 am – 10:00 am	Charles Street Complex 805 S. Charles Street, Seattle 98134	Large Conference Room
10/15/2025	11:00 am – 12:30 pm	Airport Way Center / Park 95 2203 Airport Way S, Bldg. B, Seattle 98134	Large Conference Room
10/21/2025*	2:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Traffic Shop 4200 Airport Way S., Seattle 98108	Common Area
10/27/2025 *, **	9:30 am – 11:30 am	Jefferson Community Center 3801 Beacon Ave S, Seattle 98108	Meeting Room
10/28/2025	10:00 am – 11:30 am	Elliot Bay Office Park, Suite 100 300 Elliott Ave W., Seattle, WA 98119	Grand Fir Conf. Room
10/29/2025	7:30 am – 9:30 am	Haller Lake 12600 Stone Ave N, Bldg C, Seattle 98133	Conference Rm; Enter on Stone Way, close to 125th
10/30/2025	7:30 am – 9:30 am	South Service Center 3613 4 th Ave S, Seattle 98134	Conference Room B2220
10/30/2025**	8:00 am – 9:30 am	Bitter Lake Community Center 13035 Linden Avenue N., Seattle 98133	Gym

If your medical plan does not cover the flu shot, you may schedule an appointment and be bill \$55 for a flu shot and \$200 for a COVID-19 vaccine after the clinic.