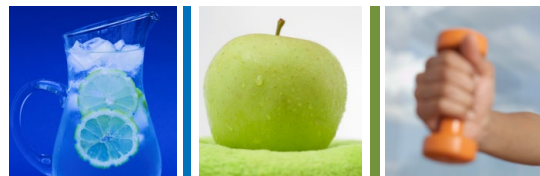


TAKE CHARGE!



October 2019 How Well Do You Know Your Meds?

National Check Your Meds Day is October 21.



This event encourages consumers to review their prescription medicines with local participating pharmacists. It's a great opportunity for you to get to know your pharmacist and ensure proper use of your medicines.



Request a consultation with your regular pharmacist, who should:

- ❖ Review your prescribed medicines and answer questions about them.
- ❖ Advise you to remove any medicines that have expired or are no longer needed.
- ❖ Give you an updated medication list to take to health care visits.

Prior to meeting with your pharmacist:

- 1 Collect all your prescription meds, over-the-counter meds, vitamin and mineral supplements and herbal products.
- 2 List how and when you take each medicine and supplement; bring the list and your medications to review with the pharmacist.
- 3 List all your questions about your medicines and supplements, such as possible side effects or interactions with other meds you use.

Best ways to avoid medication errors and misuse:

- ❖ Take part in your health care decisions.
- ❖ Learn why you need your medicines.
- ❖ Follow instructions for use carefully.
- ❖ Learn about and report possible adverse reactions.

Also, don't take meds that are not prescribed for you. And make sure all your health care providers know all the meds you are taking.

Try to have all prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy. It will track all your meds and alert you or your provider if a new medicine might cause problems. Your pharmacist should be a vital member of your health care team, ready to assist and answer your questions.

“Do the one thing you think you cannot do. Fail at it. Try again. Do better the second time. The only people who never tumble are those who never mount the high wire. This is your moment.” — Oprah Winfrey



The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, **Handwashing: A Refresher Course**, is at www.personalbest.com/extras/19V10tools.

city events

Benefits Fairs & Flu Shots

Open Enrollment
Sept. 30-
Oct. 25

Thurs., October 3
9:30 am - 2:00 pm
City Hall – Bertha K. Landes Rm.

Thurs., October 10
7:30 - 10:00 am
Bitter Lake Community Center

Thurs., October 17
7:30 - 10:00 am
Rainier Community Center

Deferred Compensation Seminars

Building a Budget & Debt Reduction

Wednesday, October 9
11:30 am – 12:30 pm
SMT 4050

Nearing Retirement

Tuesday, October 22
11:30 am – 12:30 pm
SMT 4050

Flexible Spending Account Seminar

Tuesday, October 8
12:30 pm – 1:15 pm
SMT 4050

Flu Shot Clinic

Monday, October 21
8:00 am – 4:30 pm
SMT 4050

Free Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, October 23
11:30 am - 1:30 pm
SMT 4090

City-Sponsored Health Plan Options for Retiring Employees

Thursday, October 24
11:30 am – 12:30 pm
SMT 4050

Registration thru Cornerstone
For Skype login: See future flyer*

*Or call Central Benefits at 206-615-1340.

Breast Cancer: What You Need to Know

October
is Breast
Cancer
Awareness
Month.



More women are surviving breast cancer today, largely due to improvements in early detection. **Some good news:** American Cancer Society (ACS) statistics show the breast cancer death rate dropped 40% between 1989 and 2016 — saving 322,000 lives. And fewer than 1 in 6 women diagnosed will die of the disease.

However, breast cancer remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women (after skin cancer). And it is a major, potentially long-term health problem with more than 268,000 new cases expected this year. Most deaths and diagnoses from breast cancer occur in women after age 50.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for women at average risk:

Age 40 to 44: Discuss screening with your provider by age 40.

Age 45 to 54: Get annual mammograms.

Age 55-plus: Get mammograms every 1 to 2 years, depending on personal risk.

Important: Ask your health care provider about the best screening approach based on your health history. If possible, choose a testing facility that uses digital mammography with potentially better detection. Learn more at [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).



The Social Media Diet



Social media is an integral part of modern life. We use it for entertainment, learning, business and personal communication.

But when social media use is habitual and interferes with your home life, your ability to stay on task at work and even driving safely — it's time to cut back.

These social media diet tips can help:

Give up social media that's not critical to your work and personal time for a month. Then slowly add back what you truly missed and what's meaningful to you. Georgetown University scientist Cal Peterson found this strategy can boost interest in hobbies and improve work focus.

Cancel online newspapers and newsletters you don't need. Change daily email subscriptions to a weekly or monthly digest.

Make social media off limits at dinnertime with family and visits with friends. Put the phone away.

Scrolling through your phone in the car is a hazard. Place your phone out of reach in the backseat of your vehicle.

Designate twice-daily check-ins with social media and stick with the schedule. Lack self-control? Consider apps that alert you to specific times to access social media sites.

HEALTH WEBSITES We Recommend



Organizations around the world promote the importance of accurate health information during Health Literacy Month in October. Unfortunately, with the enormous amount of medical information online, navigating what's accurate, unreliable or downright bogus isn't always easy.

That's why it's important to check certain details before trusting posted medical information.

For example, do medical professionals serve on the board of directors of a health website? Is the medical information current or years old? Are health articles written or reviewed by health professionals? Red flags for fake health websites include research that sounds too good to be true, ads for products and only positive reviews.

To find trustworthy health websites, look for URLs (website addresses) that include **.org**, **.edu** and **.gov**. Harvard, Yale, Mayo, UCLA and many other well-known medical centers, universities, government agencies and non-profit organizations are good sources, including:



American Cancer Society: [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)

American Diabetes Association: [diabetes.org](https://www.diabetes.org)

American Heart Association: [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Johns Hopkins Medical Health Library: [hopkinsmedicine.org/health/](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/)

National Institute on Aging: [nia.nih.gov](https://www.nia.nih.gov)

National Institutes of Health: [nih.gov](https://www.nih.gov)

U.S. National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus: [medlineplus.gov/](https://www.medlineplus.gov/)

Bottom line: Don't rely on website health information without talking to your health care provider first.

Give It A Roast

In addition to squash, try roasting Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, mushrooms, beets, onions and broccoli. Make sure to cut pieces into equal sizes, so they cook evenly. Leave enough room on your sheet pan to avoid crowding the vegetables. Otherwise, they will steam instead of roast, and you'll miss out on the caramelized (delicious) edges.



DR. ZORBA'S corner

Here's another reason not to smoke — eye problems.

Research shows smoking increases your risk for **macular degeneration**, a common cause of blindness, as well as optic nerve and retinal problems. And if you use cigarettes and suffer from dry eyes, guess what? Smoking is probably the culprit. **The answer is clear:** Try to quit. Nicotine replacement aids, such as gum or patch, and medications, such as bupropion and varenicline, work for many. If you haven't tried recently, try again. Don't give up. The average smoker tries to kick the habit 4 times before they succeed. — Zorba Paster, MD

Celebrate Squash Season

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Looking for a delicious and nutritious side dish? Try squash, such as butternut, pumpkin, spaghetti, acorn or Hubbard.

Squash provides a variety of vitamins and minerals, including iron, folate, potassium and vitamin C. Plus, the bright orange or yellow color is your clue that squash is filled with the antioxidant beta-carotene, a form of vitamin A that is helpful for protecting vision.

Did you know squash is technically a fruit?

That's the botanical classification because they have seeds in the middle, but it's served as a vegetable.

Here's your cheat sheet for preparing squash:

Peeled and cubed butternut or Hubbard squash can be drizzled with olive oil and roasted in the oven at 400°F for about 30 to 40 minutes. Use the cubes as a side dish, atop salad, or as the start of a delicious squash soup recipe (see below).

When cooking pumpkin, use the smaller varieties, which have a sweeter flavor compared to the large carving Halloween pumpkins. Boil the flesh for a delicious pumpkin mash. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Spaghetti squash is the most unique variety. After roasting it for about 40 minutes, use a fork to tease out the spaghetti-like strands, and serve similar to pasta, topped with marinara, pesto, or olive oil and garlic. **Bonus:** It's just 40 calories per cup versus 235 calories for a cup of pasta.

Try roasted acorn squash with the finest drizzle of pure maple syrup, paired with pecans or walnuts.



Don't forget to save the seeds. After you clean out your squash, rinse and dry the seeds, then roast in the oven at 350°F until slightly tanned (timing will vary based on the size of the seeds).



Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

4 cups peeled, cubed (1 inch) butternut squash
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, *divided*
1 shallot, chopped
1 tbsp minced garlic
1 tbsp minced ginger
Pinch ground nutmeg
¾ tsp salt
Pinch ground pepper
4 cups water or unsalted vegetable broth
2 tbsp toasted pumpkin seeds
1 tsp real maple syrup

Preheat oven to 400°F. **Line** a baking sheet with parchment paper. **Place** squash on baking sheet and drizzle with 2 tsp olive oil. **Roast** 20 minutes, stir, then roast another 10-20 minutes or until flesh is fork-tender. **Meanwhile**, in medium pot set over medium heat, add remaining olive oil. **Sauté** shallot, garlic and ginger for 3-4 minutes. **Stir** in roasted squash, nutmeg, salt, pepper and water or broth. **Bring** to a boil, and then remove from heat. **Blend** with immersion blender until smooth. **Serve** topped with pumpkin seeds and a drizzle of maple syrup.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving:

156 calories | 4g protein | 5g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 3g mono fat | 1g poly fat | 28g carbohydrate | 5g sugar | 7g fiber | 490mg sodium

EASY recipe



Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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News & Notes

Open Enrollment is September 30 – October 25

Planning tips:

- **Review Plan Changes** in the Open Enrollment Highlights at seattle.gov/personnel/benefits/home.asp.
- **Enroll online** (from home or work) if you have changes for 2020. Go to www.seattle.gov; “City Employment” under Services and select “Access Seattle Employee Self-Service”. After logging into Employee Self-Service, choose *Open Enrollment* under Benefits.
- **Enroll/Re-enroll** in a Health Care or Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account. The Health Care FSA annual maximum will increase to \$2,700 in 2020.
- **Review your AD&D and Life insurance beneficiaries** on Employee Self-Service.
- **Go to a Benefits Fair** (see page 1).
- **Get your flu shot.** See the schedule at seattle.gov/personnel/benefits/home.asp.

Make your
2020 benefits
changes by
October 25

SAFETY corner

October is Fire Prevention Month.

Home Fire Drills

Here's how to prepare for and conduct a home fire drill:

- 1 **Know where to go.** Develop several evacuation routes and choose a designated meeting spot near your home that's a safe distance away.
- 2 **Test your smoke alarms every 6 months.** Make sure there's a smoke alarm on every level of your home and 1 in each bedroom. Also, install carbon monoxide detectors.
- 3 **Practice the drill.** Rehearse your escape plan so you can all get out in 120 seconds and show children how to crawl if there's smoke, feel a closed door for heat and how to unlatch a door. For fire drill games that you can play with your family, visit homefireddrillday.makesafehappen.com.



October is Liver Cancer Awareness Month.

The American Liver Foundation is raising awareness about increasing liver cancer rates in the U.S. Although not the only risk factors for liver cancer, hepatitis C and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease are strongly linked to liver cancer. Talk to your health care provider to learn about liver cancer risk factors and screenings. Learn more at liverfoundation.org/for-patients/resources/.

TOPDOLLAR tip

Premium vs. Regular

Whether a car needs premium or regular gasoline depends on the type of car and engine. Premium gas, with a higher-octane rating than regular, costs 20 to 40 cents more, depending on your location. Premium is best for vehicles with higher compression ratios or a turbocharge feature. Since most modern engines have improved designs, they can run almost as efficiently on regular gas instead. Unless a reliable mechanic tells you to use only premium, regular gas is fine.



EXPERT advice

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: OTC meds for colds and flu?

A: Medications available over-the-counter do not cure the common cold or influenza. But they may alleviate symptoms and temporarily help you feel better:

DECONGESTANTS: They decrease nasal or sinus congestion. Side effects include anxiety, insomnia or increased heart rate and blood pressure. Use of decongestant nose sprays should not exceed 3 days to avoid rebound congestion. **Tip:** Consider using a saline nasal spray instead.

ANTIHISTAMINES: Excess drainage? Antihistamines can help dry up a runny nose or watery eyes. But they may make you drowsy and thicken the mucous, allowing secretions to build up.

COUGH SUPPRESSANTS: They're useful for frequent coughing, especially if it's painful or keeps you awake.

DRUGS FOR FEVER AND ACHES: Acetaminophen and ibuprofen can provide relief; check labels to ensure you're not getting the same ingredient from multiple products. **Note:** People younger than 19 should avoid aspirin, which is a cause of Reye's syndrome.

