Health Matters

GROW it BETTER
Tips for successful gardening in Northern and Southern Nevada

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

THE BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP YOU CAN’T LIVE WITHOUT

SMART SPEAKER SAVVY

TURN OFF, TUNE OUT

FALL 2018
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**We’re on call.**

If you’re unsure about your condition, our 24/7 advice nurse may be able to help. Our nurse is available to answer questions, provide self-care advice and help you decide whether to seek urgent care, emergency care, or schedule an appointment with your provider. Just call toll-free **1-800-288-2264**, TTY **711**.

**Questions about your health plan?**

Call the number on the back of your health plan ID card to speak with our Member Services team.

Or visit [HealthPlanofNevada.com](http://HealthPlanofNevada.com) or [SierraHealthandLife.com](http://SierraHealthandLife.com) and sign in.

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HealthMatters is published as a community service for members of Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life. Benefits discussed in this newsletter may vary by plan and geographic region. If you have specific questions regarding your coverage, please refer to your plan documents or call Member Services at the telephone number listed on your health plan ID card.

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We’re not talking cookies and sweet treats here—we mean real food. Knowing how to plan and prepare nutritious meals is an essential life skill. It also builds on the math, reading, science and art skills your child learned over the school year.

You already have some of the most important tools to help make a lasting positive impact on your child’s health now—and in the years to come. They’re in your kitchen.

People who cook at home tend to eat a healthier diet. A 2014 Johns Hopkins study found that those who cook most meals at home eat fewer carbohydrates, and less sugar and fat, even if they are not trying to lose weight. Additionally, those who cooked at home six to seven nights a week ate fewer calories when they did eat out.

Childhood obesity contributes to serious health issues in later life, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. But even if your child is at a healthy weight, there are so many advantages to knowing how to cook, said Carolyn Schut, MS, LD, RD with our Health Education and Wellness team.

**Quality control**—This is even more important if your child has food allergies and intolerances. One of Schut’s daughters must avoid gluten, which makes dining out a challenge. “I do not enjoy it as much,” Schut said. “When I cook at home, I know things are not contaminated.”

**Picky palates**—Enlisting your child’s help in food preparation and cooking increases the chances of them eating the result. Schut advises taking picky eaters to the store and having them pick out fruits and vegetables. “Make it a game,” she said. “Have your child pick something and then figure out how to prepare it together.”

**Do the math**—You may know that buying eggs and boiling them yourself is cheaper than buying...
hard-cooked eggs. But your child may not understand the savings of cooking at home. The next time your family visits a restaurant, discuss the cost of menu items compared to making it at home.

“Sometimes it is easier to just do it all yourself,” Schut said. “It may get messy, but it is part of teaching kids how to grow up and be healthy adults.”

YOUR LITTLE SOUS CHEF

Go ahead—offload some of those kitchen tasks.

Ages 3 to 5
Supervise closely as motor skills are still developing. Teach your child to always wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before helping you in the kitchen.

• Wash fruits and vegetables under cool tap water
• Tear lettuce
• Dump pre-measured ingredients into a mixing bowl
• Stir mixing bowl
• Mix ingredients in a bowl
• Brush oil over bread or vegetables
• Use a cookie cutter
• Grease cake pans, cookie sheets
• Help set the table
• Fold napkins

Ages 6 to 7
Most older children have developed fine motor skills. However, your child still needs supervision and food safety reminders.

• Measure out dry ingredients
• Load most ingredients into a slow cooker

• Use a peeler on potatoes, carrots, and other produce
• Break eggs into a bowl
• Scoop out avocados
• Remove seeds from tomatoes
• Snap green beans
• Shuck and rinse corn
• Use kitchen shears to cut parsley or green onions
• Load the dishwasher

Ages 8 to 9
Older children may be able to do even more, including clean up. Teach your child how to avoid cross contamination of raw foods and to refrigerate perishable food within two hours.

• Use a can opener
• Juice a lemon or orange
• Pound chicken on a cutting board
• Beat eggs
• Use a food thermometer
• Refrigerate leftovers

Ages 10 to 12
Many preteens may independently prepare a recipe from start to finish, but supervision may still be needed.

• Use the oven and microwave
• Cook hard-boiled eggs
• Simmer ingredients on a stove
• Slice or chop vegetables
• Boil pasta

For delicious, kid-friendly activities and recipes, Schut recommends weelicious.com and eatright.org.
TRY IT!

GRANDMA'S MEATBALLS
Carolyn remembers rolling these meatballs with her own mother. Watch carefully to make sure little fingers don’t go into the mouth!

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 egg
- 1 small can tomato sauce
- 1/4 c. chopped onion
- 1/2 c. oatmeal
- 1 can low-sodium cream of mushroom soup

Place cooking rack onto foil-lined cookie sheet so the fat falls off.

Mix first five ingredients together, roll them into balls. Cook at 350° for 20 to 30 minutes. Heat soup in a saucepan. Add cooked meatballs and serve

Cook’s Note: You may substitute ground turkey.
Now that it’s fall, are you scouring your cookbooks for the type of cozy comfort food that warms your heart and soul? Us too. That’s why we are so excited to share this delicious recipe. It combines the nutty flavor of butternut squash with sweet apples and staple seasonings to create a soup you’ll want to make all season long. With 7 grams of fiber and 6 grams of protein per serving, this soup satisfies and pairs nicely with a dark-green salad.

**INGREDIENTS**

- 4 pounds butternut squash, peeled and diced into chunks
- 2 tablespoons avocado oil
- 1 medium sweet onion, chopped
- 5 medium mixed apples, peeled and chopped (Red Delicious, Granny Smith, etc.)
- 4 cups low-sodium organic chicken broth (substitute vegetable broth to make vegan)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon coriander
- 1 cup milk (substitute cashew milk to make vegan)
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Dash of cayenne pepper

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Heat avocado oil over medium heat. Add onion and cook until it begins to soften, about 5 minutes.
2. Add squash and cook until soft, about 10 minutes; stir occasionally.
3. Add apples, broth, ginger, nutmeg and coriander. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 25 minutes or until ingredients are tender. Remove from heat.
4. Place mixture in blender, in two or more batches if necessary. Blend until smooth. Return mixture to pot.
5. Bring to a gentle boil over low heat, stirring frequently. Slowly stir in milk, salt, pepper and cayenne pepper.
6. Remove from heat and serve!

Garnish with sour cream, croutons or pomegranate seeds!
Grow it Better

You lock eyes with a particular plant, and it’s love at first sight. You plant it with great hopes, tending to it faithfully. But alas, it is not to be.

Did you know just because a local store sells a certain type of plant, it may not grow well in your area? Before spending another dime, find out what the horticultural professionals have to say about successful gardening in Nevada.

GARDENING IN THE DESERT
Scorching summer days, near-freezing winter nights, blustery desert wind and low rainfall—gardening in Southern Nevada presents challenges. There are two short growing seasons for vegetables in the spring and fall. But it is possible to have colorful plants all year, according to Brandi Eide, botanic garden supervisor at Springs Preserve in Las Vegas.

"Plant for the place where you live," Eide said. "Plants like hydrangea, which have large leaves and use a lot of water, may not perform well here because of high temperatures, and the alkalinity and salt in the soil. Yet roses and pine trees do surprisingly well in Clark County."

Succulents and cacti offer a variety of shapes, colors and textures, she added. They also flower in the heat of summer when little else is blooming.

"Be willing to change your plant palate and experiment," Eide said. "You may achieve the look you want through desert-adapted plants."

BEFORE SHOPPING:
• Think about how you use your landscape.
• Educate yourself about gardening basics.
• Allocate most of your landscape budget to improving soil and installing irrigation.

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“Watering depends on many factors, including the age of the plant, type of plant, and type of soil,” Eide said. “Plants coming directly from a nursery have been babied. They need to be watered carefully and weaned as they adapt to the harsher outdoors.”

But don’t overdo it or water the plants too often.

“Roots need to be encouraged to grow wide and deep to sustain drought-like conditions,” Eide said. “Happy and healthy roots are a happy and healthy plant.”
GARDENING WHERE IT SNOWS

Four hundred miles north is a completely different climate zone. Washoe County has just one growing season, and it is short. To make the most of it, understand the soil, water, sun and shade requirements of each plant, said county horticulturist Bill Carlos, who manages the Wilbur D. May Arboretum in Reno.

“Summer vegetables like tomatoes or squash have a 90-day season because they require warmth,” he said. “Wait until June or the last two weeks of May to plant them to avoid the risk of a late frost.”

Cool vegetable crops, such as peas, cabbage and cauliflower, and flowering perennials have a 120-day growing season and may be planted earlier. But first, prepare your soil. Washoe County soil has only a fraction of organic matter compared to other parts of the country.

Winter-hardy plants include hellebores and several types of junipers. For early spring color, Carlos also recommends common lilac, forsythia, and flowering pear, plum and crabapple trees. For fruit, pears have the advantage over apples, as they set out blooms in stages. This means some crop may survive in the event of a late frost.

Different varieties of California Fuchsia produce colorful blooms into late summer. In fall, plant spring and summer bulbs. Tulips, daffodils, narcissus, hyacinths, gladiolas and alliums prefer cool climates.

"When you plant bulbs, you only plant promises,” Carlos said. "They always come through and fulfill their promise."

FOR INSPIRATION AND ANSWERS

• Springs Preserve: 180 acres of nature walks and displays owned and operated by the Las Vegas Valley Water District. 
  702-822-7700  
  springspreserve.org

• Wilbur D. May Arboretum and Botanical Garden: 23 acres with more than 4,000 native and adapted plant species on display inside Rancho San Rafael Park in Reno. 
  775-785-4153  
  mayarboretumsociety.org

• University of Nevada Cooperative Extension: research-based educational programs for the local community. 
  Clark County: 702-222-3130  
  Washoe County: 775-784-4848  
  www.unce.unr.edu

To make the most of it, understand the soil, water, sun and shade requirements of each plant. - Bill Carlos

“Get a soil test done, and check the PH and salt content,” Carlos said. “Mix in 25 percent organic matter, particularly if you are planting vegetables or perennials. Soil drainage is also important. Breaking up your soil and adding good compost may pay big dividends in the long run.”
“Smart” Speaker Savvy

“Smart” speakers are fun, convenient and offer a helpful extra pair of hands. With a simple voice command, Amazon Echo™, Google Home™, Apple HomePod™ and other devices may turn on your favorite podcast, set an alarm, access your calendar, or even make online purchases.

New “skills” are added constantly to make your life easier. Additionally, they may be connected to other “smart” home devices, such as your television, lights and thermostat. Some are capable of unlocking doors or placing free phone calls to landline and mobile phone numbers in the U.S. and Canada.

But just how private and secure are these “always on” speakers?

THE RISK OF CONVENIENCE

You’re wise to be concerned. There may be ways for others to access your device and personal information. Internet-connected microphones and cameras may be vulnerable to pranks, device flaws, software weaknesses, setup issues and hackers, according to a 2017 Symantec report.

Some of the risks are relatively harmless, such as a visitor setting an alarm to go off in the middle of the night. But did you know it may be possible for strangers to open a “smart” door lock simply by yelling at the device from outside a window?

There have been many reports of devices recording more conversations than their
owners intended. Of growing concern is how hackers may turn these speakers into listening devices.

Be aware that plugging a “smart” speaker or other Internet-connected device into an unsecured network may also expose your sensitive information to hackers. Cybercriminals recently stole data from a casino by hacking in through a thermostat on a “smart” fish tank. Once inside your network, hackers may change privacy preferences, access data, and do who knows what with it.

LOCK IT DOWN

Here are some ways to maximize your privacy on “smart” devices:

Secure your Wi-Fi network — Use WPA2 encryption and a strong password instead of an open “hotspot” at home. Install automatic security updates.

Set up a guest Wi-Fi network for visitors and older, less secure devices — Avoid sharing your password.

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Establish your boundaries — Change default passwords and privacy settings as you set up your device and install skills:

• Use two-factor authentication.
• Avoid storing private information, passwords or credit card numbers on devices.
• Train the device to recognize your voice, if possible.

Make it work for you — If your device offers features outside your personal comfort zone, adjust your privacy settings or do not enable them. Be especially careful with:

• “Drop-in” features that turn your device into an intercom your contacts may access at any time.
• Online purchasing that someone else, such as a child or even a parrot may use.
• “Smart” door locks and other security devices. Many security experts advise against connecting these functions to voice-activated “smart” speakers.
• Services you do not plan to use.
• Any “skill” that asks for information unrelated to what it is supposed to do.

Go into your device’s app regularly to review and delete recorded information. Keep in mind, however, that this may impact the user-friendliness of your device. Yes, it’s a tradeoff.

If you still have privacy concerns, press the mute button or turn it off when you’re not using it. And if your speaker has a screen, put a piece of tape over the camera. We won’t tell.

For a detailed look at “smart” speakers, download “A guide to the security of voice-activated smart speakers” at Symantec.com.

ABOUT THE INTERNET OF THINGS

The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to wireless devices other than computers, smartphones and tablets that transmit data, and may be remotely monitored and controlled. This includes fitness trackers, household appliances, alarm systems and even children’s toys.

Anything connected to the Internet may be vulnerable to cyberattack. Security experts are concerned that the technology may be developing more quickly than security and privacy safeguards. Older “smart” devices no longer receiving security updates from the manufacturer may be particularly at risk.

In 2017, Consumer Reports created digital privacy and security standards to help consumers make better-informed choices. For information, visit thedigitalstandard.org. Another helpful resource is the Electronic Privacy Information Center at epic.org.
12 TIPS

Make the most of your health plan.

1. Know your rights and learn about the health plan’s quality program.
2. Read your benefit information to find out what is and what isn’t covered.
3. Learn how to use your pharmacy benefit.
4. Find out about copayments and other charges you may be responsible for and how to submit a claim.
5. Know what to do if you have an issue and how to submit a complaint.
6. Know where to get information, such as how to select a provider and make an appointment, how to get specialty and behavioral healthcare services and find a list of hospitals contracted with your health plan.
7. Know that we research new medical technology.
8. Ask for help if you speak another language.
9. Know that the health plan does not offer incentives for prior authorization denials.
10. Learn about internal and external review for denial of benefits.
11. Know that we have special medical programs available for members.
12. Find out what to do if you have an emergency, are out of the area, or need care after hours, and if you have any benefit limitations or additional costs.

Get to know more about your health plan. Take a look at the full version of 12 tips on your plan’s website. If you would like a printed copy, please call Member Services at the toll-free number on the back of your health plan ID card.
Your favorite electronic devices may be sabotaging your sleep.

If your nightly bedtime routine includes screen time just before switching off the light, it may be time to reconsider. The blue light from your phone, tablet, computer, video game or television may be interfering with your shut-eye.

Looking at artificial light between dusk and bedtime suppresses your body’s production of melatonin, a hormone that promotes sleep. Instead you become more alert and your body’s sleep/wake cycle postpones sleepiness until later.

About 95 percent of those surveyed by the National Sleep Foundation reported using electronic devices within an hour before bed. More than half also said they were not getting enough sleep.

Sleep specialists advise limiting screen time two to three hours before bed. Dim the screen so the light is not as bright. An app that warms up the color of your screen from a cool blue to a warm red may help. Using warm-hued light bulbs in your bedroom may also improve your rest.
Good Morning, Sunshine!

A few simple changes may help you seize the day:

• **Keep regular hours**—Get up and go to bed at the same time every day, even on weekends.

• **Avoid daytime naps**—But if you are exhausted from the previous night’s poor sleep, 20 to 30 minutes may help you get through the day.

• **Go outside each morning**—Natural sunlight helps maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.

• **Exercise daily**—Even 10 minutes of aerobic exercise may help you sleep better. Avoid vigorous activities just before bedtime.

• **Have a relaxing bedtime ritual**—A warm bath or shower, book or magazine, light stretches or listening to soothing music may help you wind down from the day.

• **Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine shortly before bedtime.**

• **Avoid heavy meals, fatty or spicy foods, citrus juices and carbonated beverages right before bedtime**—These may increase your chance of heartburn.

• **Think twice about that night cap.** Alcohol may help you nod off, but you may be awake a few hours later as your body begins to process it.

**WHAT ARE COMPUTER GLASSES AND COULD YOU BENEFIT FROM THEM?**

The Vision Council found 80 percent of American adults use digital devices for more than two hours a day and nearly 60 percent report experiencing symptoms of eye strain (including blurred vision and headaches). “Computer” glasses may reduce digital eye strain and eliminate blue light and computer glare. If staring at a screen hurts your eyes, talk with your vision provider about your digital habits. Learn more at thevisioncouncil.org.

• **Banish work, computers and televisions from the bedroom.**

• **Create a relaxed sleeping environment**—This may include earplugs, sleeping masks, blackout curtains, “white noise,” fan or humidifier. Keep your bedroom temperature between 60 and 67 degrees, if possible.

• **Replace mattresses, pillows and bedding that have seen better days**—Many mattresses need replacement after 10 years.

• **Keep a worry book next to your bed**—Write down any anxious thoughts keeping you awake, and then go back to sleep.

• **Get up for awhile**—If sleep eludes you, do something else in dim light until you feel more tired.

Some medications may interfere with sleep, but alternatives may be available. For more information about getting a good night’s sleep, contact your primary care provider.
Preventive screenings may save lives. Are you due for your mammogram?

The American Cancer Society recommends screening mammograms to help detect breast cancer in its earliest stages. Exactly when screening should begin depends on each woman’s personal risk factors.

Generally, most women may choose to begin annual mammograms between the ages of 40 and 44. After that, the American Cancer Society recommends screening mammograms:

- Every year for women ages 45 to 54.
- Every other year, for women ages 55 and older.

To schedule one, talk to your primary care provider.

Under the Women’s Health and Cancer Rights Act, also known as "Janet’s Law," health plan members are entitled to benefits for medically necessary mastectomy and elective breast reconstruction surgeries. This includes prostheses and treatment for any related conditions, such as lymphedema.
WE PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY
Your privacy is very important to us. Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life have a Notice of Privacy Practices, and you may ask for a copy of this notice at any time by contacting Member Services at the number on your health plan ID or by visiting us online.

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!
We are working very hard to improve our service to you.
You may receive a satisfaction survey in the mail after visiting a provider or using one of our programs and services. Or, you may receive a phone call asking if there is anything else we may do to help you.
Your answers are very important to us. We appreciate you taking the time to answer these surveys. We are using your comments to improve the services you receive, and to make our health plan even better for you and your family!

NOW YOU CAN FIND A PROVIDER FASTER!
We recently launched a new provider search tool to make it easier for you to find a contracted provider. The new search tool is available on our websites and in the online member center.
When signed into the online member center, you’ll see a direct link to your specific plan’s provider directory. No online account? Visit HealthPlanofNevada.com or SierraHealthandLife.com, select FIND A DOCTOR and continue as a guest by answering some basic plan and service area questions.

GET ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS IN OUR MEMBER GUIDE
Our Member Guide provides a comprehensive overview about your health plan, tools and resources to help you feel your best, plus tips to help you get the most value from your benefits. Visit HealthPlanofNevada.com or SierraHealthandLife.com to download your copy.

Colon cancer is the most preventable, but least prevented cancer. Get the facts.

60% of all colon cancer deaths could be prevented with regular screening.

1 in 20 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in their lifetime.

1 in 3 adults, age 50 to 75, are not up-to-date with recommended colon cancer screening.

25% of people diagnosed with colon cancer have a family history.

There are currently more than one million colon cancer survivors in the U.S.

Why risk it? Ask your doctor about a colonoscopy. If you have a family history of colon cancer, tell your doctor.

Statistic Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention and American Cancer Society.

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Flu season is here.

No one wants to get the flu. It causes fever, body aches, coughing and other symptoms. It can lead to days of missed work or school. And, in some cases, days in the hospital.

The good news is that getting a flu shot can reduce your chance of getting (and spreading) the flu. Plus, it’s part of your health plan coverage, at no extra cost to you. So don’t wait. To get your yearly flu shot, visit your primary care provider (PCP) or a participating pharmacy.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot every year, usually starting in September. So schedule yours today.

GET THE FACTS AT CDC.GOV

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in health programs and activities.

We provide free services to help you communicate with us. Such as, letters in other languages or large print. Or, you can ask for an interpreter. To ask for help, please call the toll-free phone number listed on your health plan ID card or plan documents.

Español (Spanish)
Tiene derecho a recibir ayuda e información en su idioma sin costo. Para solicitar un intérprete, llame al número de teléfono gratuito para miembros que se encuentra en su tarjeta de identificación del plan o los documentos de su plan.

Tagalog (Tagalog)
May karapatan kang makakuha ng tulong at impormasyon sa sinasalita mong wika nang libre. Upang humiling ng interpreter, tawagan ang toll-free na numero ng telepono para sa miyembro na nakalista sa iyong ID card sa planong pangkalusugan o sa mga dokumento ng plano.

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