



delaware  
first health

# WHOLE you

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## Welcome!

*Soon we will say goodbye to 2023 and hello to 2024. A whole new year is ahead of us. So it's a pleasure to bring you a new edition of **Whole You**, a newsletter from Delaware First Health.*

We at Delaware First Health hope this letter finds you well. In this issue, we're bringing you plenty of useful articles. You'll learn about how healthy teeth can keep all of you healthy and some tips on how to use opioid medicines safely. We'll look at things like high blood pressure and prostate cancer. And we'll have some fun too with free gift ideas and tips for a safe and Happy Halloween.



We also want to pass along an important reminder about your Medicaid redetermination. It's the eligibility process you must go through to keep your Medicaid coverage. You will get a notice from the state about the steps you need to take to renew your coverage. (You may not need to do anything at all.) You can visit [de.gov/medicaidrenewals](https://de.gov/medicaidrenewals) to see if you still qualify for Medicaid. If you no longer qualify, our [AmbetterHealthofDelaware.com](https://AmbetterHealthofDelaware.com) plans may be an option.

And be sure to look at the events calendar on our website so you can keep up on all things happening in your community. Did you miss our last issue? Take a look here [\*\*WHOLE YOU Newsletters\*\*](#).

We really hope you enjoy this latest edition and that it helps you take care of the whole you.



# A healthy smile means a healthy you

## *Taking care of your teeth does more than give you a great smile.*

Of course, it can keep you from getting bad breath, gum disease and tooth decay. But did you know taking care of your teeth can affect the health of your whole body? When your mouth isn't healthy, it can increase your risk for stroke and heart disease.

### **TWICE A DAY, EVERY DAY.**

The good news — brushing your teeth is one of the best and easiest ways to keep your mouth healthy. Brush your teeth twice a day, and get all sides of your teeth and your tongue. This will get rid of germs and leftover food. Use a toothbrush with soft bristles. Brush for two minutes each time, using gentle, circular strokes.

To keep your toothbrush clean, don't lay it on a sink counter or in a closed space where germs can grow. Keep it in a toothbrush holder or small jar or vase. Get a new toothbrush every three to four months and right away after you have been sick.

Flossing is an important step too. It helps clean between your teeth, where cavities usually start. Slide the floss between your teeth and gently move it between each tooth all the way to your gum line.

### **TAKE A SEAT IN YOUR DENTIST'S CHAIR.**

Regular visits to your dentist will include an exam and cleaning to get rid of plaque that can build up in any spaces you miss when brushing and flossing. Your dentist will check for any tooth decay and gum disease as well as signs of other health issues like vitamin deficiencies and even diabetes. And they'll make sure any dental work is still holding up and doing its job.

### **HAVE A TOOTH-HEALTHY DIET.**

Certain foods and drinks are great for your teeth — others are not so great. Drinking water is great. It washes away food and germs during the day. Foods that have lots of calcium and protein are also good choices — like carrots, almonds and cheese. On the other hand, chewy, sticky, sugary foods and sweet drinks can damage the enamel surface of your teeth. They can cause decay, so avoid them when you can, and when you can't, rinse your mouth with water or brush your teeth. If you chew gum, choose sugar free.





# Your Opinion Matters

*We want to hear from you.*



Delaware First Health wants you to be happy with your healthcare. That is why we want to hear from you. Soon, you may receive an important survey in the mail called the **Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) Survey**.

The CAHPS survey is a way for you to provide feedback on the healthcare and services you receive. If you are selected to take this survey, please complete and return it to the vendor by the date requested on the survey. Your answers will help us continue to improve as your health plan.

Here is what to expect:

- If you are selected, you will receive a survey in the mail
- Fill out the survey and return it by the requested date
- Tell us how we are doing and if there is anything we can do to serve you better

When you take a CAHPS survey, you can help us be an even better health plan for you. Tell us how we're doing in the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Rating of health plan
- Getting care quickly
- Rating of healthcare
- Getting needed care
- Rating of personal doctor
- Rating of specialist

# 7 tips for an un-scary Halloween

## *Ah, the treasured tradition of Halloween.*

When children run through the dark, door to door, taking candy from strangers. What could possibly go wrong? While we all love Halloween, it does have its dangers. These safety tips will help keep the big night fun for all.

### **1 MAKEUP CHECK.**

If makeup is part of the costume, test it early on the arm or wrist before putting it all over. This helps make sure it won't cause any skin reactions. When the night is over, remove it all with a gentle cleanser and soft cloth.

### **2 DRESS REHEARSAL.**

Have your kids try on their costumes, makeup and footwear before the big night. They'll love getting to dress up more than once, and it will help you spot possible problems, like masks they can't see out of or things that could make them fall. Make sure they have flashlights or glow sticks, and add reflective tape on their costumes so drivers can see them.

### **3 STAY TOGETHER.**

Have yourself or another parent that you know go with your group of kids on their adventure. If older kids insist on going it alone, give them some boundaries on their route and a time to be home. Consider making sure they have a mobile phone in case of an emergency.

### **4 STICK TO THE PLAN.**

The kids will be excited. It will be hard for them not to run from house to house, cutting across streets to take the shortest way. Make sure they stay on well-lit pathways or streets and know simple traffic rules.



### **5 EYES ON THE ROAD.**

If you're the one driving, be careful and go extra slow. Keep distractions like your phone out of sight. Watch for excited trick-or-treaters who may run into the street.

### **6 STAY OUTSIDE.**

That house that tries to get kids to come inside for candy? It's a no-go. Make sure kids know they should never go inside someone's house, no matter what kind of candy they say they are offering. If a house won't give treats unless kids go inside, tell your kids to leave and head to the next spot.

### **7 CHECK YOUR TREATS.**

Kids are going to want to dig into their loot right away. So make this rule in advance: You'll need check it all first. Look for choking hazards and packages that look broken or torn open. Discard any homemade treats from strangers.

## *It's Movember — time to talk about prostate cancer.*

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer found in men in America. Each year, about 1 in 9 men will find out they have prostate cancer.

In honor of National Men's Health Month we have put together some simple dietary changes that may help lower your risk of prostate cancer

Good food choices might lower your risk for prostate cancer.

**1. Choose low-fat meats.** Avoid fatty meats like beef, bacon and sausage. When you can, choose lower-fat meats like chicken or fish. You can also choose veggie burgers.

**2. Eat lots of broccoli.** Choose vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, turnips and kale. These have vitamins C, E and K and can help curb cancer.

**3. Enjoy omega-3s.** Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids can lower your risk of prostate cancer. These include salmon, tuna, mackerel, flaxseed, chia seeds and leafy dark green vegetables.

**4. Here's to tomatoes.** Tomatoes can help fight prostate cancer and other forms of cancer. Put tomato slices on your sandwich or in your salad. You can also drink tomato juice when you're thirsty or add salsa on top your favorite foods. You can also have pasta with tomato-based sauce or a bowl of tomato soup.



**5. Have a cup of green tea.** The leaves that make green tea can also help reduce prostate cancer risk. A cup of green tea can also do other good things, like lower stress and blood pressure and protect against heart disease. When you drink tea, make sure to keep the sugar at a minimum.

# Opioid Medicine safety

Opioids are medicines that may be used to treat pain. Opioids also are called “opiates” or “narcotics.” Opioids can be dangerous, even when prescribed and taken responsibly. Taking opioids at any dose may be harmful. Talk with your healthcare team about a pain care plan that will most effectively reduce pain. Treatments may include self-care activities, non-medication treatments or therapies, medicines that do not contain opioids and, in some instances, opioid-containing medicines.

For your health and safety, it’s important to take opioid medicine exactly as directed. This helps make sure the medicine works as it should. It lowers the risk of side effects and it lowers the risk of taking too high a dose (overdose). Each opioid medicine is different and has its own directions for use. Your healthcare provider will explain what medicine you are prescribed. Your healthcare provider will also tell you how to take it. If you have questions or concerns, talk with your healthcare provider.

## Opioid Medicine Safety tips

- Make sure you know if you should take the medicine on a regular basis or only as needed.
- Tell all your healthcare providers and pharmacies about the medicines you're taking. This includes opioid medicine.
- Ask your providers about the cautions and side effects to be aware of. Follow their directions.
- If you should take the medicine on a regular basis, take it on time and at the right dose. If you miss a dose, don't double up the next dose.
- Use a medicine log, app, or calendar to keep track of when you take your medicine. This helps you stay on schedule and not miss doses or take extra doses.
- When taking liquid doses, use a measuring spoon or dropper. This way you can be sure you take the correct dose.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects.
- Don't cut, crush, or change your medicine in any way.
- Don't take someone else's opioid medicines. Don't or share yours with other people.
- Don't drive while taking opioid medicine.
- Don't use dangerous equipment or power tools while taking opioid medicine.
- Check expiration dates regularly. Throw out any expired medicines correctly.



# Gifts from the heart

## *You don't have to spend a lot of money to show someone you care.*

In fact, some of the most thoughtful and meaningful gifts can be things you create. They're often much nicer than something you just grab at the mall. Here are some ideas.

**Share Memories.** If you and a loved one have done lots of fun things together, write down some of your best memories or make a little box filled with mementos of those times, like ticket stubs and pictures. You could



even attach a note to each item that says how you got it or why you saved it.

**Make a game.** Create a “winter bingo” game. On four cards or more, draw a block of 25 squares. In each square, write or draw something that makes winter special. Make sure each card has the pictures or words in a different order. You could also create a family “guess who” game, making cards with fun facts or sayings from each family member.

### **Make hand warmers or heating pads.**

Get two pieces of fabric. Put them on top of each other and cut them together into a simple shape, like a circle or square. You can make them small, for hand warmers, or large, for a heating pad to help with back pain. Choose what side will be the outside of each fabric. Then flip each fabric so the outside is now on the inside. Sew the pieces together about a quarter inch from the outside edge. Leave a two-inch opening. Flip the fabric right side out again. Using a funnel, fill the pouch with dry, uncooked rice, and sew the opening shut. To heat them, microwave for about one minute.

**Make a happiness jar.** Pick a jar. It can be a pretty mason jar or any used jar — just wash off the label. Cut small strips of paper, and write encouraging notes on each piece. It could be things you like about that person, good thoughts or any ideas you think the person would like. Put the notes in the jar then decorate the jar with ribbon.

**Give your time.** Are you good at organizing? Cleaning? Cooking? Or would your loved one just want you to come over and read to them or go for a walk? Make a coupon and give them the gift of something you're really good at.