



Suicide Prevention Month

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

Thoughts of suicide can be frightening. Comments or thoughts about suicide, also known as suicidal ideation, can begin small — for example, “I wish I wasn’t here” or “Nothing matters.” But over time, they can become more explicit and dangerous.

Warning Signs

Here are a few other warning signs of suicide:

- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Aggressive behavior
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Dramatic mood swings
- Impulsive or reckless behavior

Risk Factors

Research has found that 46% of people who die by suicide had a known mental health condition. Several other factors may put a person at risk of suicide, including but not limited to:

- A family history of suicide
- Substance use: Drugs can create mental highs and lows that worsen suicidal thoughts.
- Intoxication: Analysis from the CDC indicates around 1 in 5 people who die by suicide had alcohol in their system at the time of death.
- Access to firearms
- A serious or chronic medical illness
- Gender: Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are 4x more likely to die by suicide.
- A history of trauma or abuse
- Prolonged stress
- A recent tragedy or loss

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.



Cold or Flu? Know the Difference!

With flu season just around the corner, we not only want to remind you to stop by your local Access2day clinic for your seasonal flu shot, but to also help you be most prepared by knowing the differences *and* similarities between the common cold and influenza.

Cold vs. Flu Symptoms

COLD	COLD & FLU	FLU
Mild Symptoms	Caused by Viruses	Severe Symptoms
Mild Fatigue	Respiratory Infection	Muscle or Body Aches
Gradual Onset	Stuffy nose, Coughing, Sore Throat	Rapid Onset
Felt Mostly in Head and Nose		Fever, Exhaustion, Loss of Appetite

Prevention Tips

- Keep hands clean by washing them with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer
- Don’t touch your face with unwashed hands, as it’s the easiest way for germs to enter your body
- Exercise and eat healthy to strengthen your immune system
- And as one of the only respiratory viruses preventable by vaccination, the **most** important thing you can do is get your flu shot!

Stop by your local Access2day clinic today – and remember, your membership is 100% prepaid by the Office of Group Benefits, giving you convenient access to primary and urgent care services – all at no cost to you! Find your clinic today at access2dayhealth.com/locations.



Live Better Louisiana

Earn your 2023 premium credit in just one step: by completing your preventive health checkup. Blue Cross works with Catapult Health, to bring preventive checkups to a **site near you**. You'll get **lab-accurate diagnostic tests** and receive a full **Personal Health Report** with checkup results and recommendations.

What do you do? Schedule your appointment online at www.TimeConfirm.com/OGB or call **1-877-841-3058**. Complete your clinic to get the credit. If you are not able to go to a clinic, have your doctor fax a completed Primary Care Provider form, found at info.groupbenefits.org, to Catapult Health.

Upcoming Clinics

Below is a list of clinics scheduled throughout the state. Remember, you have until **September 30, 2022** to get your preventive health checkup in order to be eligible for the 2023 wellness credit!

Live Better Louisiana Clinics	
Date (Week)	Location
09/01 – 02/2022	Central LA Technical Community College (Alexandria)
09/05 – 09/2022	Supreme Court of LA (New Orleans)
09/12 – 16/2022	LDH - Office of Public Health (New Orleans) University of New Orleans (New Orleans) Red River Parish School Board
09/19 – 23/2022	Bienville Building (Baton Rouge) Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality - Galvez Building (Baton Rouge) Northwestern State University (Natchitoches) University of New Orleans (New Orleans)
09/26 – 30/2022	LDH - Office of Public Health (New Orleans)

Managing Lower-Back Pain

Lower-back pain is one of the most common reasons people seek medical treatment. The video (1:22) below shares some healthy habits you can adopt to improve or avoid lower-back pain. Remember, if you have ongoing or severe pain, see your health care provider.



BCBS Livestreams:

September 28 – Medicare Made Easy

Access livestreaming on the Blue Cross Blue Shield of LA [Facebook page](#) or later in our Videos section on the BCBSLA Facebook page or on the BCBSLA YouTube channel.



Stay Healthy This Tailgating Season!

Football season is upon us and that means tailgating for a lot of sports fans. Spending time with family and friends before, during, and after a game can be lots of fun. By following a few simple tips, you can eat healthy while cheering on your favorite team:

- Eat low calorie, low fat foods during the week to give room for a little splurge on Saturday or Sunday.
- Before the tailgating begins, have a small snack that contains protein and fiber (like cereal and yogurt) so you'll be less tempted to overeat.
- Eat from a plate instead of continually grazing from the buffet. This will help you keep track of how much you're eating.
- Take a good look at what's being served before fixing your plate, and then select plenty of fruits, vegetables, and lean dairy and protein.
- Remember that alcohol has plenty of calories. One tactic is to alternate drinks with zero-calorie beverages throughout the day. Remember that too much alcohol can lead to increased hunger.

If you're hosting the tailgate party, be sure to include healthy choices such as:

- Fresh fruit, sliced or in salads or kabobs
- Assorted vegetables with low-fat dips and salsas
- Low-fat snacks such as popcorn, pretzels, and baked chips
- Lean meats and seafood and low-fat cheeses
- Whole-grain breads and crackers

Food Safety Tailgating Tips!

Football season is upon us and it offers a great opportunity for tailgating with family and friends. Whether the tailgate serves as a chance to grill some food, or enjoy a cold drink, it's the perfect pre-game tradition. But it can also expose you to some risk. Here are some tailgating safety tips to keep your family and friends safe while they're getting ready for the big game.

- **Maintain Proper Food Temperatures** – Pack coolers just before you leave for the game, and use ice packs to maintain temperatures. Keep coolers out of the sun (a shaded area). Do not leave food unrefrigerated for more than two hours. In hot weather (90 degrees or above), the time limit is one hour.
- **Bring Fire Extinguisher, First Aid Kit** – A hot grill, wind and debris can lead to sudden fires or accidents, so be prepared with a fire extinguisher and a first aid kit.
- **Use Gas Grills Safely** – Loose gas hoses and improper lighting can cause a host of problems that put you and neighboring fans in danger. An all-too-common mistake is lighting a gas grill while the top is closed, which can result in an explosion.
- **Check If Coals Have Cooled** - After grilling an assortment of meat, some people leave the air and wind to cool down the coals as head over to the game. But this is one way that banners, tents and even cars may catch fire. Instead, grill early on when you tailgate and make sure you completely put out the embers. Dispose of trash and hot coals in the appropriate containers.
- **Hide Valuables** – While you're inside watching the game, criminals could be winning a game of their own by breaking into fans' vehicles. Leaving valuables at home is never a bad policy when going to a large public forum. If you have valuables in your car, hide them from plain sight and keep doors locked and alarms on.
- **Protect Yourself from the Sun** – Too much of a good thing can be bad, and when you're in the sun all afternoon, dehydration, sunburn and even sun poisoning can quickly set in. Drinking plenty of water and coming equipped with sunscreen and your favorite sports team's hat can keep you protected from the effects of harmful rays.
- **Designate a Driver** – Some people may walk out of a game not realizing that they've had one too many. Designating a driver who will avoid alcohol is a small action that may end up saving someone's life.



Buffalo Chicken Meatballs



Add these Buffalo Chicken Meatballs to your weeknight dinner menu, weekend meal prep rotation, or enjoy them as a tasty and fun appetizer! A recipe the entire family will love!

Ingredients:

- 2 TSP olive oil
- ¼ cup minced carrots
- ¼ cup minced celery
- ¼ cup minced yellow onion
- 3 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
- 1 lb. ground chicken or turkey
- ¼ cup flour
- ¾ cup + 2TBSP Buffalo Sauce, divided
- Ranch dressing

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a non-stick skillet on medium-high heat, add the oil, celery, carrots, onion, and garlic cloves. Sauté until onions are translucent and vegetables are cooked through. Remove from the skillet and let cool slightly.
3. Next in a bowl, combine and mix together the chicken, flour, 2 Tbsp. buffalo sauce, and sautéed veggies.
4. Form into 16-20 golf ball-sized meatballs. The meat will be sticky but dampening hands a little with water will help to prevent the meat from sticking to hands. Place them on a large baking sheet.
5. Bake in a preheated oven for 14-18 minutes or until meatballs are cooked through and insides are no longer pink. Flip meatballs after about 10 minutes of baking. Total baking time will depend on the size of the meatballs.
6. Pro tip: This step is optional but if you'd like to brown up the meatballs a little bit, simply turn your oven to broil to finish. Watch closely so they do not burn.
7. Return the meatballs to the skillet over medium-high heat. Add ¾ cup of buffalo sauce (more if you wish). Toss gently. Allow the sauce to simmer for about 2-3 minutes.
8. Serve with a side ranch.

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