



Fighting the “Winter Blues”

As days get shorter and the temperature drops, it's not uncommon for the “winter blues” to set in. The “winter blues” are characterized by the mild depression, lack of motivation, and low energy that many people experience during the cold months. Luckily, there are things you can do to both prevent the blues from coming on and get yourself back to normal if they're already here:

- **Watch what you eat** – You might crave junk food and greasy comforting things like pizza and mac ‘n’ cheese during the sluggish, cold winter months, but stuffing yourself with sugar and refined flours lead to a crash in energy. Instead, stick to energy foods like nuts, fruits, vegetables and lean meats. While you are at it, add more vitamin D rich foods — like salmon, shrimp, orange juice and milk — to your diet.
- **Exercise** – Moving your body stimulates feel-good endorphins in the brain and can lift your mood – while burning away those calories for the extra carbohydrates! The effects of a good workout can last for several hours meaning you’ll have more energy throughout the day, and your metabolism will stay elevated too.
- **Get some sun** – Even on cloudy days, UV rays will stimulate your body to make vitamin D. Similar to exercise, sunlight exposure releases neurotransmitters in the brain that affect mood. Try keeping your shades up during the day to let more light in.
- **Get enough sleep** – Lack of sleep causes all sorts of problems — including craving carbohydrates. Exercising and a regular bedtime routine will help you fall asleep. Try not to oversleep — those 12-hour snoozes on the weekend can actually make you MORE tired.
- **Go out with friends** – Though it’s tempting to hibernate and avoid going out completely in the winter, force yourself to go to parties and maintain your favorite social activities. Social interaction is a huge deterrent to depression and being around your friends and /or family will brighten your mood.
- **Learn something new** – Try a new hobby or craft. Shaking up your routine is a great way to bring your energy levels up.

Live Better Louisiana Health Capsule

Don’t let a runny nose, scratchy throat, and sneezing keep you from spending time with family & friends this holiday season—learn how to prevent and help your body recover.



Live Better Louisiana

Earn your 2019 premium credit in just one step: by completing your preventive health checkup. Blue Cross works with an industry leader, Catapult Health, to bring preventive checkups to a **site near you**. You can schedule a free checkup with a licensed nurse practitioner and health technician through the online scheduler. 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 **August 31, 2018** to get your preventive health checkup in order to be eligible for the 2019 wellness credit!

Live Better Louisiana Clinics	
Date	Location
12/1 /2017	Southwest Louisiana War Veterans Home (Jennings)
	East Baton Rouge Housing Authority (Baton Rouge)
	Southeastern Louisiana University Pennington Center (Hammond)
12/4 – 12/9/2017	DOTD District 08 (Alexandria)
	Baton Rouge Marriott (Baton Rouge)
	West Monroe Convention Center (West Monroe)
	Southern University (Baton Rouge)
	Student Service Center - Morehouse PSB (Bastrop)
12/11 – 12/15/2017	DOTD District 58 (Chase)
	Nicholls State University (Thibodaux)
	Livingston PSB - Central Office (Livingston)
	Northwestern State University (Natchitoches)
	DOTD Headquarters (Baton Rouge)
	University of New Orleans (New Orleans)
	Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System (Jackson)
	Vernon Parish School Board - Simpson High School (Simpson)
Ouachita Parish School Board Central Office (Monroe)	
12/19/2017	Louisiana School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired (Baton Rouge)
	Houma-Terrebonne Civic Center (Houma)

Healthy Year-end Reminders

As this year comes to a close, it's the perfect time to review and make sure you are up-to-date on important screenings that will keep you healthy. Some of those screenings include:

- **Mammogram** – Women over 40 should get a mammogram screening each year.
- **Colonoscopy** – Recommended for both men and women every 10 years, starting at age 50. If you have a family history of colon cancer, your doctor may recommend early screening.
- **Skin check** – Ask your doctor to perform a screening for skin cancer at your next appointment, and each year after that. Do an at home scan monthly to be sure that there haven't been any changes to the shape or color of moles.
- **Blood work** – It's important to "know your numbers" and how they affect your health. Routine blood work is recommended annually.

If you haven't seen your doctor recently or had your regular screenings, make it an end-of-year goal for good health.

December is Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness Month

When it comes to toys and gifts, the excitement and desire to get your children their favorite toys may cause shoppers to forget about safety factors associated with them. Before you make these purchases, it is critical to remember to consider the safety and age range of the toys.

This holiday season (and beyond), please consider the following guidelines for choosing safe toys for all ages:

- Inspect all toys before purchasing. Avoid those that shoot or include parts that fly off. The toy should have no sharp edges or points and should be sturdy enough to withstand impact without breaking, being crushed, or being pulled apart easily.
- When purchasing **toys for children with special needs** try to: Choose toys that may appeal to different senses such as sound, movement, and texture; consider interactive toys to allow the child to play with others; and think about the size of the toy and the position a child would need to be in to play with it.
- Be diligent about inspecting toys your child has received. Check them for age, skill level, and developmental appropriateness before allowing them to be played with.
- Look for labels that assure you the toys have passed a safety inspection – “ATSM” means the toy has met the American Society for Testing and Materials standards.
- Gifts of sports equipment should always be accompanied by protective gear (give a helmet with the skateboard)
- Do **NOT** give toys with small parts (including magnets and “button” batteries which can cause serious injury or death if ingested) to young children as they tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of choking. If the piece can fit inside a toilet paper roll, it is not appropriate for kids under age three.
- Do **NOT** give toys with ropes and cords or heating elements
- Do **NOT** give crayons and markers unless they are labeled “nontoxic”.

For more information, visit us at www.bcbsla.com/ogb

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