



### Holiday Health Hints to Make Your Days Merry & Bright

The holidays are a special time to celebrate, express gratitude and reflect with family and friends. It's also a time to appreciate the greatest of gifts, your health! Stay safe and healthy this holiday season by following these tips:

- **Enjoy Safe Travels** – Take steps to make sure your holiday trip is safe, whether it's just across town or a far off destination. Don't drink and drive and don't allow someone else who has been drinking get behind the wheel. Always wear a seat belt and make sure your passengers are buckled up as well.
- **Prevent Injuries** – There's no time of the year when injuries *can't* happen. When trimming the tree or hanging decorations, use a step stool instead of standing on a chair or furniture. When hanging lights, make sure at least one extra person is present to steady the ladder. Make sure open flames are kept far away from children and flammables such as curtains, blankets and trees.
- **Manage Stress** – The desire for a picture-perfect holiday can lead to excessive demands on your time and wallet. Set realistic goals and expectations. Balance your holiday commitments at work and home. Keep calm and maintain a positive attitude. Help your body recover from stress by making sleep a priority, and try to sleep around 7 to 8 hours most nights.
- **Live a Smoke-Free Life** – If you smoke, make this holiday the day you quit for good. If you know someone who smokes, help them quit. Avoid areas where people smoke because breathing in secondhand smoke increases the risk of heart disease and cancer.
- **Eat Better and Move More** – Moderation is key to healthier holiday eating. Find satisfying food swaps, like choosing a piece of fruit over a piece of candy. Be mindful of the amounts of fat, salt and sugar in each dish. Round out the family dinner with a fun exercise that can be part of a group activity, like dancing to holiday music.
- **Make a Habit of Handwashing** – Unclean hands are a surefire way to spread germs. Keep hands clean by washing often with soap and water. Remember to cover the nose and mouth with a tissue, sleeve or elbow when you feel a cough or sneeze coming on. Don't cough or sneeze into your hands.
- **Prepare and Cook Food Safely** – Protect your loved ones from foodborne illness when preparing their favorite holiday meals. Frequently wash your hands and all food preparation surfaces. To avoid cross-contamination, keep raw food products – and the cutting boards and utensils used to prepare them – well away from cooked foods, ready-to-eat foods, and dining areas.
- **Relieve Loneliness** – Remember that many children and adults feel a sense of loss, sadness, and isolation during the holidays. If you or someone you love are experiencing feelings of seasonal depression or anxiety, be sensitive to those feelings. Reach out to family and friends if the demands of the holidays cause you emotional distress, or be there to support those who may reach out to you.
- **Get Preventive Screenings and Vaccinations** - Regular exams and checkups are essential to early detection of potential health problems. Following recommended vaccination schedules protects against disease and saves lives. The types of exams and vaccinations a person needs depends on their age, medical history, family history, lifestyle and travel plans.
- **Remember the True Spirit of the Holidays** – The holidays are a great time of joy and remembrance. Spend time making memories. Slow down and enjoy the moments. The holiday season is a perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek out ways to make life better for those all around you.

## Live Better Louisiana

Earn your 2020 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](http://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](http://info.groupbenefits.org), to Catapult Health.

## Upcoming Clinics

Below is a list of clinics scheduled throughout the state. Remember, you have until **August 31, 2019** to get your preventive health checkup in order to be eligible for the 2020 wellness credit!

Live Better Louisiana Clinics	
Date	Location
12/03 – 12/07/2018	Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality - Galvez Building (Baton Rouge)
	Northwestern State University (Natchitoches)
	Nicholls State University (Thibodaux)
	Southern University (Baton Rouge)
	East Baton Rouge Housing Authority (Baton Rouge)
12/10 – 12/14/201	DOTD Headquarters (Baton Rouge)
	University of New Orleans (New Orleans)
	Southwest Louisiana War Veterans Home (Jennings)
	Louisiana School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired (Baton Rouge)
	NOCCA (New Orleans)

## Live Better Louisiana Health Capsule – Healthy Holidays

It can be hard to find time for regular exercise during the hustle and bustle of the holidays. But, as Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana's Chief Medical Officer explains, exercise is important to keep stress under control and burn those extra holiday calories. You don't need to do anything extreme. Make some simple adjustments. Try parking farther away from the store entrance when holiday shopping. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. Or take a walk to look at lights in your neighborhood. You can even exercise at the office. Here's our friends from SB Wellness to show you some easy things you can do without squeezing in a trip to the gym.



## Chocolate Peppermint Truffles



These easy chocolate peppermint truffles are a healthier take on the classic chocolate truffle and the addition of peppermint makes them perfect for the season!

### Ingredients: Truffles

- ¼ cup cocoa powder
- ½ cup pitted dates
- ½ cup unsalted cashews
- ¼ teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup

### Instructions: Chocolate Peppermint Truffles

1. Place cocoa powder, dates, cashews, peppermint extract, and maple syrup in bowl of food processor. Pulse until fully blended.
2. Taste. Add additional peppermint extract as needed, ¼ teaspoon at a time, pulsing between additions.
3. Portion out into 10 tablespoon-size truffles and roll into balls. Place in refrigerator on parchment-lined baking sheet for 30 minutes.

### Notes:

- If you can't find unsalted cashews, rinse and dry salted cashews.
- Pour any unused chocolate into an airtight container and use for another recipe.
- Store the chocolate peppermint truffles in the refrigerator in an airtight container.
- Place crushed candy cane in a mesh strainer and shake to remove peppermint dust.

### Ingredients: Chocolate Coating

- 1 peppermint stick (crushed)
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 2 teaspoons coconut oil (melted)

### Instructions: Chocolate Coating

1. Place peppermint stick in a resealable bag. Crush with rolling pin.
2. Melt chocolate chips in microwave for 3 minutes at 50% power, stirring every 30 seconds. Cook until chocolate has fully melted.
3. Stir in coconut oil.
4. Drop one chocolate ball into the mixture and flip a few times until it is fully coated.
5. When chocolate has dried a little, top each with a sprinkle of crushed peppermint stick.

\*\*\*Makes 10, 1 truffle servings\*\*\*

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