



### Fall Allergies

Fall finds us thinking about cooler weather, changing leaves, and football games. After enduring a hot and humid summer, you may look forward to spending more time outdoors enjoying cooler temperatures. For those of us suffering from mold and ragweed pollen allergies, fall brings seasonal symptoms which can include sneezing, sniffing, runny nose, and nasal congestion.

Ragweed pollen is spread through the air and is highest during the morning hours, on windy days, or shortly after a rainstorm when the plant is drying out. Symptoms caused by a ragweed pollen allergy usually start around the middle of August/September and last until October/November. Follow the tips below to tackle your fall allergies:

1. **Reduce your pollen exposure** - Keep your windows closed (house and car), air conditioner on, and make sure to change the filters frequently.
2. **Monitor pollen and mold counts** – Check the local newspapers and TV news weather reports to get a daily pollen update and stay indoors as much as possible when the pollen count is high (usually mid-morning to early afternoon).
3. **Time your outdoor workouts** – It’s much better to exercise early in the morning before the winds pick up.
4. **Avoid yard work (raking leaves and mowing lawns)** – If you must do it yourself, wear a face mask and goggles.
5. **Shower off pollen** – When you come inside, shower and change into fresh clothes to keep from bringing pollen in the house and the bed.
6. **Take medicine** – It’s much better to start taking medicine before you start experiencing symptoms (runny nose, itchy eyes, etc.).

If you suffer from fall allergies, you don’t have to dread autumn’s arrival. Knowing how to reduce your exposure to mold and pollen can make a big difference.

### Live Better Louisiana Health Capsule

#### October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Screening can save your life! Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Director Dr. Emily Vincent explains why it's important to talk to your doctor.

YOU CAN BE **STRONGER THAN**  BREAST CANCER

## Better Health Bingo

Play better health bingo for a chance to spin the wheel and claim your prize. Call 225-298-7667 or email [ClaiborneNurse@bcbsla.com](mailto:ClaiborneNurse@bcbsla.com) to make an appointment with your onsite health coach.

**Location:** Claiborne Building OGB Suite G-159.

You must be eligible for one of BCBS's Care Management programs that support these needs: Diabetes, COPD, Coronary artery disease, Asthma, Heart failure, or hypertension.

## Live Better Louisiana

October means a new program year for the Live Better Louisiana wellness program. Earn your 2021 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 [www.bcbsla.com/PCPform](http://www.bcbsla.com/PCPform), to Catapult Health.

## Upcoming Clinics

Below is a list of clinics scheduled throughout the state. Remember, you have until **August 31, 2020** to get your preventive health checkup in order to be eligible for the 2021 wellness credit!

Live Better Louisiana Clinics	
Date	Location
10/02/2019	Fletcher Technical Community College (Schriever)
10/09 - 10/2019	Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System (Jackson, LA)
10/21/2019	Livingston PSB Central Office (Livingston, LA)
10/30/2019	DOTD District 02 CCC Division (New Orleans, LA)

## Get the Facts on Seasonal Flu!

Thousands of people will get the flu this year in the United States. The flu can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. By knowing the steps to avoid getting sick, we can have a safer flu season – and you and your family can stay healthy.

### How the Flu Spreads

The flu spreads in respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing and close contact. It usually spreads from person to person, though occasionally a person may become infected by touching something with virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Adults may be able to infect others 1 day before getting symptoms and up to 7 days after getting sick. So it is possible to give someone the flu before you know you're sick as well as while you are sick.

### How to prevent the flu

The best way to avoid the flu is by getting your flu vaccination every year. Just because you got a flu shot last year doesn't mean you're protected this year. Flu vaccinations protect you from several kinds of flu. Please remember: You can't catch the flu from a flu shot. Vaccines are available by a nasal spray or injection. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone 6 months or older get a flu shot each year. Ask your doctor if a flu vaccination is safe for you.

### Other measures that can help protect against the flu:

- **Avoid close contact.**  
Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

- **Stay home when you are sick.**

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

- **Cover your mouth and nose.**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

- **Clean your hands.**

Wash your hands with soap and water and scrub for at least 20 seconds, which is about how long it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

### **When to Get Vaccinated**

October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but you can still get vaccinated in December and later. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May.

### **Classic Stuffed Peppers**



#### **Ingredients:**

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1/2 c. uncooked rice        | 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling |
| 1 medium onion, chopped     | 1 tbsp. tomato paste                                    |
| 3/4 lb. carrots, peeled     | 1 lb. ground beef                                       |
| 3 cloves garlic, minced     | 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes                         |
| 1 tsp. dried oregano        | Kosher salt   |
| Freshly ground black pepper | 6 bell peppers, tops and cores removed                  |
| 1 c. shredded Monterey jack |   |

#### **Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 400°. In a small saucepan, prepare rice according to package instructions. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Cook onion until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute more. Add ground beef and cook, breaking up meat with a wooden spoon, until no longer pink, 6 minutes. Drain fat.
2. Return beef mixture to skillet, then stir in cooked rice and diced tomatoes. Season with oregano, salt, and pepper. Let simmer until liquid has reduced slightly, about 5 minutes.
3. Place peppers cut side-up in a 9"-x-13" baking dish and drizzle with oil. Spoon beef mixture into each pepper and top with Monterey jack, then cover baking dish with foil.
4. Bake until peppers are tender, about 35 minutes. Uncover and bake until cheese is bubbly, 10 minutes more.

For more information, visit us at [www.bcbsla.com/ogb](http://www.bcbsla.com/ogb)

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