



Give the Perfect Gift for the Holidays – Healthy Meals

There are many ways to lower the fat content and make traditional foods healthier without changing the entire recipe. The following are healthier alternatives:

- Use skim milk or evaporated skim milk to make mashed potatoes (no one will know the difference).
- Instead of butter or brown sugar, use small amounts of pineapple juice or apple juice to drizzle into sweet potatoes.
- Serve turkey, chicken and roasts in their own juices instead of fat-laden gravies (or prepare gravies without fat).
- Make pies without the crust. You will be saving a whopping 17 grams of fat!
- Prepare a limited number of desserts. You probably don't need to prepare six kinds of pie, even if it is tradition. Pumpkin or sweet potato is the healthiest flavor of pie.
- For appetizers, serve raw vegetables with interesting dips instead of high-fat nuts and cheeses. It is easy to overindulge in nuts and cheeses, and you need a lot to feel satisfied.



Live Better Louisiana

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Live Better Louisiana program this year. The deadline for the 2022 premium credit discount has passed and we are working with Blue Cross and Catapult to notify those of you who qualified. If you did not participate this year, we are in the process of scheduling clinics for the 2023 plan year credit. Stay tuned for more information!



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 – “ASTM” 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”.

New Access2day Clinics Open Near You!

Did you know there are 8 new Access2day Clinics now open in Louisiana in the last two months?

Your Access2day Health benefit is designed to give you and your covered dependents convenient access to the care you need. With the new clinic locations across Louisiana, getting care is easier than ever. Visit your local clinic to receive primary and urgent care with no co-pay, no out-of-pocket expenses, no appointment necessary and a short wait time!

New Clinics added October – December 2021:

COVINGTON

LCMC Health Urgent Care

70340 Highway 21
Covington, LA

NEW ORLEANS

LCMC Health Urgent Care – Clearview

1105 S. Clearview Parkway
New Orleans, LA

NEW ORLEANS

LCMC Health Urgent Care – Uptown

5800 Magazine Street, Suite A
New Orleans, LA

BRUSLY

Patient Plus Urgent Care Brusly

409 Oak Plaza Blvd.
Brusly, LA

GRETNA

LCMC Urgent Care

2600 Belle Chasse Highway
Suite B-2
Gretna, LA

NEW ORLEANS

LCMC Health Urgent Care – Clearview

1105 S. Clearview Parkway
New Orleans, LA

JENA

The Clinics at Jena

12051 Hwy 84 W.
Jena, LA

HOUMA

Thibodaux Regional Urgent Care

1411 Saint Charles Street
Houma, LA

To stay up-to-date on new clinic openings in your area, download the free Access2day Health Clinic Finder App available in either the Apple App or Google Play stores. You can visit <https://access2dayhealth.com/locations> or check the app for clinic hours and other information specific to your clinic location.

Your Access2day Health membership provides primary and urgent care to you and your dependents covered on the Magnolia Local, Magnolia Local Plus, Magnolia Open Access and Pelican HRA1000 health plans.

Mix and Mingle Without Mucus

We all love to gather with family and friends for the holidays. And with COVID-19 vaccines, it will be much easier this year! Unfortunately, coronavirus is not the only germs we can spread this time of year. Blue Cross Medical Director Dr. Larry Simon gives tips for effective germ control. Most important: STAY HOME if you're sick!



Louisiana Marathon – 2022

- When:** January 15-16, 2022
Where: The State Capitol
Downtown Baton Rouge, LA
Times: Saturday: 8 am – 5k and Quarter Marathon
10 am – Kids Marathon
Sunday: 7 am – Full and Half Marathon

Louisiana is well known for its festivals, where we celebrate with food, music and dancing. The Louisiana Marathon adds running to that mix for a truly unforgettable weekend. Come run a fast, flat, and fun race course with runners from 50 states and over 36 countries. Then enjoy a true Louisiana Festival featuring local musicians and some of the best southern cuisine around. Participants can choose from a full, half, a quarter marathon, a 5K, and kid's marathon, click [here](#) to register.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana members can receive a 20% discount by entering BCBSLA20 when registering.

Managing Stress Over the Holidays

For many, the holidays represent parties, family gatherings, and social activities. But for those of us with lived experience and mental health challenges, the holiday season can be stressful and unfulfilling.

At least 64% of Americans are affected by the “Holiday Blues,” with 24% having significant challenges. In most cases, the holiday blues are temporary. But holiday stress can trigger difficulties for those who have anxiety, depression, PTSD, or other mental health conditions. If anxiety or feelings of depression continue for several weeks into January, then it may be necessary to consult your doctor.

Use the season as an opportunity to engage in strength & resilience! Look out for one another and be strong for others! Know your local mental health resources!

- NAMI Help Line – 1-800-950-NAMI or Crisis Text NAMI to 741741
- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Admin. (SAMHSA): 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- VETERANS – LIFELINE FOR VETS – 1-888-777-4443



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.



Stay healthy during the holidays

In less than 10 minutes a day, get a healthier you from anywhere at any time. All at no cost to you.

Learn more at: omadahealth.com/ogb

No-Bake S'mores Pie



This easy No-Bake S'mores pie is perfect for your holiday parties. Layers with a toasty graham cracker crust, rich chocolate avocado pudding and whipped marshmallow Greek yogurt, it's the ultimate sweet treat!

Ingredients:

1 ½ graham cracker crumbs	4 Tbsp. maple syrup
5 Tbsp. melted butter or coconut oil	1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ cup granulated sugar	1 cup plain full-fat Greek yogurt
2 medium ripe avocados	1 cup marshmallow fluff
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder	Optional topping: mini marshmallows
1/3 cup milk of choice	

Instructions:

1. **Prepare Graham Cracker Crust:** Use a food processor to pulverize graham cracker into fine crumbs, or crush them in a zip top bag with a rolling pin. Mix the graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, and granulated sugar together with a rubber spatula in a large bowl until combined. Press the mixture into the bottom of a 9" pie plate and slightly up the sides. Use the bottom of a flat measuring cup to make sure it's tight and compact. Refrigerate while you prepare the avocado pudding.
2. **Prepare Avocado Chocolate Filling:** Wipe food processor clean and add avocado, cocoa powder, milk, maple syrup and vanilla. Blend until smooth and creamy, stopping to scrape down the sides of the food processor as needed. Dollop the chocolate avocado pudding over the graham cracker crust and smooth to the edges. Refrigerate while you prepare topping.
3. **Prepare Marshmallow Yogurt Topping:** Combine Greek yogurt and marshmallow fluff in a large bowl. Use an electric hand mixer to beat mixture for 1 to 2 minutes, until smooth and creamy. Very gently dollop mixture over chocolate pudding and smooth to all edges. If desired, place mini marshmallows over the marshmallow yogurt topping. For more of a campfire experience, broil s'mores pie on the top oven rack under the LOW broil setting for 1 to 2 minutes, watching closely not to burn.
4. Chill pie for a minimum of 4 hours (or ideally overnight) before slicing into.

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

Follow us on Twitter



Follow us on YouTube



Follow us on Facebook

