



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.



Stay Ahead of Halloween Health Scars with Access2day

Got big plans for Halloween this year? Whether you'll be out trick-or-treating, prepping for a costume party, or hosting a spooky movie marathon, health scares probably aren't part of those plans. Yet, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates an average of 3,200 Halloween-related doctor visits every year. So, what can you and your family do to stay safe this Halloween?

Keep Clear of Halloween Hazards

The most common minor injuries that occur on or around October 31st are caused by careless pumpkin carving, decorating-related falls or slips, a lack of fire safety, and costume malfunctions.

When jumping into jack-o-lantern fun, it's recommended that you and your family carve carefully and slowly, and kids should be supervised. Never use a knife without proper lighting or good visibility, and don't try to carve your pumpkin on an uneven surface, cluttered table, or your own lap. When your homemade Halloween decoration is complete, remember to put away any potentially unsafe tools.

It's recommended to keep a clean and level floor space- and that applies to wires and strings, too. With guests wearing poor-visibility costumes or the lights being low, the risk of unexpected falls is greater. While indoor and outdoor decorations can make your Halloween home pop, wires running across your floor, porch, or lawn can easily snag costumes and shoes.

Finally, fire safety should be at the top of mind during Halloween. Before plugging in your décor, make sure to check your outlets and wires for potential hazards. To avoid unnecessary electrical scares all together, try substituting plug-in scares for battery-powered ones.

Stay Covered with Access2day Health

If you find yourself headed for a doctor's office visit during trick-or-treat season, remember that Access2day Health has you covered with \$0 copay with no-appointment-required for primary and urgent care services. Your membership is 100% prepaid by the Office of Group Benefits (OGB) – providing you with a spooktacular pass to high-quality care at any Access2day clinic.

Find your closest Access2day clinic:

<https://access2dayhealth.com/locations.php>

Live Better Louisiana

The 2024 Wellness campaign has come to a close. We thank everyone who has participated in the Live Better Louisiana program. Catapult is currently scheduling clinics for the 2025 wellness credit. We will share those dates as we get them. Additionally, there is a new Primary Care Provider form for the 2025 wellness credit. You can access that form on the OGB website by clicking [here](#).

If you have not received a confirmation from Catapult Health that you earned your 2024 credit, please follow the steps below to reach out to Catapult for that confirmation:

1. **Confirmation of receipt:** You must provide an email address on your form to receive confirmation. Catapult Health will send you an email to let you know that we have received and processed your form. Please print clearly. If you have not received an email within 14 business days after submission stating Catapult Health has processed your form, please contact our Customer Care team at support@catapulthealth.com, or you can call them at 214.785.2200 (Business Hours Mon-Fri; 8am-5pm CST)
2. **Incomplete forms:** If any information is missing from your form, your form will not be processed. Catapult Health will make one attempt to contact you via the phone number or email address provided on your form to allow you to resubmit the form.
3. **Questions:** Contact the Catapult Health Customer Care team at support@catapulthealth.com.

Screenings Save Lives

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Mammograms are effective at catching breast cancer in its earliest stages, when treatment is most likely to be successful. Talk to your healthcare provider about when you should begin having mammograms. If you've been diagnosed with cancer, you can get support and encouragement (at no cost!) from our team of Blue Cross health coaches. Learn more:

<https://www.bcbsla.com/Stronger>.



BCBS Livestreams:

October 25 – 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](#).



What you should know about childhood obesity

- **It's not a character flaw.** It's a disease. Children with obesity have brains and bodies that are wired to gain weight and keep it on. They also live in a world that surrounds them with unhealthy foods and activities 24/7/365.
- **It's not inevitable.** Scientists have proven that realistic strategies, like limiting consumption of sugar sweetened beverages, increasing regular physical activity, and reducing sedentary activity, can decrease the risk of children developing obesity.
- **It's not harmless.** Seven out of 10 children with obesity grow up to be adults with obesity. Those adults go on to have a higher risk of type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart disease, dementia and stroke.
- **There's good news.** Childhood obesity is preventable. Family members, caregivers and other role models play an integral part in helping children make healthy choices.
- To learn if your child has obesity, go to this web page: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/bmi/calculator.html>.

Good food and exercise can make a difference to your well-being! Join the MOTIVATE research study.

The purpose of the MOTIVATE research study is to find out how a certain diet and exercise program affects your blood sugar and how that might change your mood and energy levels.

To qualify for this research study, you should:

- Be in the age range of 50 to 75 years
- Have a BMI of 30 or greater [[Calculate your BMI here](#)]
- Feel that you have low energy levels or lack motivation

Compensation of up to \$660 is offered for the completion of the study. All meals are provided at no cost while enrolled in the 12-week study.

Screen online at <https://www.pbrc.edu/research-trials/>. If you need further assistance, you can contact Pennington Biomedical at 225-763-3000 or clinicaltrials@pbrc.edu.



Recharge your mind and body

At Omada®, healthier bodies happen by building healthier minds.

Studies show a powerful link between the body and mind.¹ When one isn't at its best, the other often struggles too, which can lead to more serious health risks. **Omada is here to help.**

Build a stronger bond between physical and mental well-being

Omada is a virtual care program, led by real people, who can help improve your physical health by supporting your mental health on your own time. Each member gets a highly-trained, dedicated care team, which includes a personal health coach who will:

- Take time to understand current concerns and challenges.
- Share personalized advice, lessons and techniques to help reduce stress.
- Help direct to other mental health services, as needed.

¹ "About Mental Health." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 25 Apr. 2023.

Images, including apps, do not reflect real members or information about a specific person. Testimonials are based on members' real experiences and individual results. We do not claim that these are typical results that members will achieve. Results may vary.



Hey, this mindfulness exercise could be helpful the next time you start feeling tense.

“

Omada has helped improve my mood and mental health.

I feel I have a more positive outlook on life...I am more resilient to stress and struggles. I am more patient and forgiving with myself and others. My cup is full more often.”

—

SARAH, OMADA MEMBER



Get started with Omada today.

Loaded Baked Potato Soup



This healthy loaded baked potato soup recipe is comforting, delicious, and so easy to make! Made with hidden veggies

Ingredients:

- 2 medium russet potatoes, washed & dried
- 1 ½ c chicken broth
- ½ c sour cream
- 6 tbsp chopped chives, divided
- Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
- 3 ½ c cauliflower florets
- 1 ½ c 1% reduced fat milk
- 10 tbsp reduced fat sharp cheddar cheese
- 3 slices center cut bacon, cooked and crumbled

Instructions:

1. Pierce potatoes with a fork; microwave on high for 5 minutes turn over and microwave another 3 – 5 minutes, until tender. Or if you prefer to use your oven, bake at 400F for 1 hour or until tender. Cool. Peel potatoes.
2. Meanwhile, steam cauliflower with water in a large covered pot until tender. Drain and return to pot.
3. On medium heat, add chicken broth, milk, potatoes and bring to a boil.
4. Use an immersion blender to puree until smooth. Add sour cream, half the chives, salt and pepper and cook on low another 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Remove from heat. Ladle 1 cup soup into each bowl.
6. Top each serving with 2 tbsp cheese, remaining chives, and bacon.

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