



Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month

Parkinson's is a progressive condition for which there is currently no cure. It is the second most common neurodegenerative condition in the United States, behind Alzheimer's disease.

Who is at risk for Parkinson's disease?

Anyone can get Parkinson's, but certain groups of people have a higher risk than others.

- **Age** – The primary risk factor for Parkinson's is age. Only 4% of people with the condition are diagnosed before they turn 50. The risks go up with older age. The average age that symptoms begin is 70.
- **Gender** – A person assigned male at birth is twice as likely to receive a Parkinson's diagnosis than someone assigned female at birth.
- **Genetics** – It is estimated that 15–25% of people with Parkinson's have someone in their family with the condition. There are also specific genetic mutations that are linked to Parkinson's.
- **Toxic exposure** – Exposure to certain chemicals may increase your Parkinson's risk. People who live where industrial manufacturing is concentrated are diagnosed at higher rates. This seems to suggest certain manufacturing toxins can activate Parkinson's. People who live in rural areas with high pesticide use may have an elevated risk.
- **Head injuries** – People who have had traumatic brain injuries appear to be more likely to develop Parkinson's later in life.

What are the early symptoms of Parkinson's?

Learning the early symptoms of Parkinson's is a great way to become more aware of what living with the condition can look like. The trademark symptoms of Parkinson's include:

- tremors and trembling
- muscle stiffness
- slowness and loss of balance
- an uneven gait

How is Parkinson's diagnosed?

Getting screened for Parkinson's is a great way to increase your awareness of the condition. Doctors will typically conduct a neurological exam to determine if you have the condition. Diagnostic tools, such as MRIs, may be used to evaluate your symptoms. Parkinson's can resemble several other neurological conditions, so it may take several doctor's visits to confirm a Parkinson's diagnosis.

For more information about Parkinson's Disease, visit the [Parkinson's Foundation](#) website.

APRIL IS
**PARKINSON'S
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MONTH**



Live Better Louisiana

Earn your 2025 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 (PCP) 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 **September 30, 2024** to get your preventive health checkup in order to be eligible for the 2025 wellness credit! (All PCP forms must be received at Catapult by 5:00 PM.)

Live Better Louisiana Clinics	
Date	Location
04/01 - 05/2024	South Louisiana Community College (Morgan City)
	State Archives Building (Baton Rouge)
	South Louisiana Community College (Lafayette)
	Grambling State University (Grambling)
	Ouachita PSB - Boley Elementary (West Monroe)
04/08 – 13/2024	DOTD District 45 (Baton Rouge)
	DOTD District 04 (Bossier City)
	University of New Orleans (New Orleans)
	Fletcher Technical Community College (Schriever)
	South Central LA Human Services Authority (Houma)
	DCFS (Shreveport)
	VFMC (Jackson)
	Regional Transportation Management Center (New Orleans)
	Vernon PSB- Pitkin HS (Pitkin)
	Sabine PSB - Florian High School (Florien)
04/15 – 19/2024	DOTD District 03 (Lafayette)
	Court of Appeals 5th Circuit (Gretna)
	Claiborne Building (Baton Rouge)
	Orleans Parish Civil District Court (New Orleans)
	State Military Department - Camp Beauregard (Pineville)
	Child Support Enforcement Center (Lake Charles)
	State Military Department - Camp Minden (Minden)
	Beauregard PSB - Title 1/Media Center (DeRidder)
	University of New Orleans (New Orleans)
	State Military Department (Carville)
04/22 - 26/2024	University of Louisiana Lafayette (Lafayette)
	Northwestern State University (Natchitoches)
	Tangipahoa Economic Stability Office (Amite)
	Jackson PSB - Central Office (Jonesboro)
	Louisiana Housing Corporation (Baton Rouge)
	Non-Flood Protection Asset Management Authority (New Orleans)
	LSU Shreveport (Shreveport)
	Jackson PSB - Quitman High School (Quitman)
	Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Headquarters (Baton Rouge)
	Jackson PSB - Weston High School (Jonesboro)
04/29/2024 – 05/02/2024	Office of Public Health - Calcasieu Parish Health Unit (Lake Charles)
	Vernon PSB - West Leesville & Optional School (Leesville)
	Ouachita PSB - Central Office (West Monroe)
	Commissioner of Insurance (Baton Rouge)
	Vernon PSB - Central Office (Leesville)
	DOTD District 58 (Chase)
	Sabine PSB - Central Office (Many)
	Acadiana Area Human SVC District (Lafayette)
Vernon PSB - Hicks HS (Leesville)	

Volunteering Can Benefit Your Health

Excerpted from *Happiness.com*

Volunteering is a great way to make a difference in other people's lives. According to Happiness.com, the health benefits of volunteering can improve your physical and mental health. Studies over the past 25 years show that people who give their time to others might benefit from lower blood pressure and a longer lifespan. Volunteering can also improve your stress levels and reduce depression and anxiety.

1. **Volunteering connects you with others** | If you're feeling lonely, isolated or simply want to widen your social circle, volunteering in your local community is an important – and often fun – way to meet new people.
2. **Volunteering builds self-confidence and self-esteem** | Doing good for others and the community helps to create a natural sense of accomplishment. In addition, working as a volunteer can give you a sense of pride and identity, helping to boost your self-confidence further by taking you out of your natural comfort zone and environment.
3. **Volunteering is important for physical health...** | Volunteering has distinct health benefits that can boost your physical health. Indeed, a growing body of evidence suggests that people who give their time to others might benefit from lower blood pressure and a longer lifespan.
4. **...and mental health** | Volunteering can help counteract the effects of stress, depression and anxiety. Indeed, the social contact aspect of helping others can have a profound effect on your overall psychological well-being.
5. **Volunteering is important for a sense of purpose** | Because volunteering means choosing to work without receiving monetary compensation, people often choose to give their time to issues or organizations they feel are important or have a special connection to.
6. **Volunteering helps you forget your own problems** | Focusing on others can give us a deeper sense of perspective; distract us from negative thoughts and help stop rumination.
7. **Volunteering is important for your career** | In an increasingly competitive job market, volunteering experience can be incredibly useful. It shows potential employers that you can take initiative and that you are willing to give your own time to improve the world for other people.

Read the full article by clicking on the picture below:



Love the Boot Week is April 20-28, 2024

This is Louisiana's largest litter cleanup and beautification event! In 2023, 12,777 individuals volunteered a total of 61,493 hours, removing 313 tons of litter in all 64 parishes.

In addition to litter removal, volunteers focused on community beautification, planting 370 trees and 3,542 plants, and refurbishing 146 gardens. Join Love the Boot Week efforts in April to bring awareness to our state's litter problem and promote litter prevention.

Volunteer or organize an event: <https://keeploouisianabeautiful.org/love-the-boot/>



Navigating Spring Allergies, Colds and Asthma

As the world awakens from the winter slumber, spring breathes new life into the air. However, for many, this revitalization comes hand in hand with seasonal allergies, colds, and asthma exacerbations. As the symptoms of these respiratory ailments often overlap, understanding their nuances is crucial, especially when considering a visit to urgent care for respiratory concerns.

Spring Allergies: Nature's Annual Visitor

Spring allergies, also known as allergic rhinitis or hay fever, are the body's immune system reacting to allergens like pollen, grass, or mold spores. Symptoms can include sneezing, itchy or watery eyes, nasal congestion, and a scratchy throat.

The Common Cold: A Seasonal Foe

The common cold is another frequent visitor during the spring months. Caused by various viruses, colds can lead to symptoms similar to allergies, such as sneezing, congestion, runny nose, and sore throat.

Asthma: Breathing Challenges

For individuals with asthma, spring can pose additional challenges. Asthma is a chronic respiratory condition characterized by inflammation and narrowing of the airways, leading to symptoms such as wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath.

Navigating Respiratory Concerns with Access2day Health

Breathe easy this allergy season - we encourage you to stop by your local Access2day Health clinic today for your FREE primary and urgent care needs, or if you need help getting your respiratory condition properly diagnosed. And remember, your membership is 100% prepaid by the Office of Group Benefits, so there's always zero co-pay and no out-of-pocket expense for care! Find your clinic today at access2dayhealth.com/locations.

Need more information on Spring Allergies, Colds, and Asthma? View our special webinar to learn more!



ACCESS2day
HEALTH

Access2day Health Presents
Best Practices for Allergies, Colds, and Asthma.

Watch the video to learn more!

Watch Video

Pennington Biomedical Encourages Smart Swaps

This past month, Pennington Biomedical focused on ways to incorporate "Smart Swaps" into your routine. In our busy lives, it's often the small changes that make the biggest differences. With "Smart Swaps," focus on the little adjustments to your choices that can lead to significant health benefits over time.

Here are three smart and simple "swaps" that you can add in to your diet:

- **Swap Out Sugary Drinks for Infused Water:** Instead of reaching for sugary sodas or fruit juices, try infusing your water with fresh fruits like lemon, berries, or cucumber. Not only does this add a burst of flavor, but it also keeps you hydrated without the added sugars and calories.
- **Replace White Bread with Whole Grain Bread:** Opt for whole grain bread instead of white bread in your sandwiches or toast. Whole grain varieties are higher in fiber and nutrients, which can help keep you feeling full longer and support better digestive health.
- **Choose Greek Yogurt over Regular Yogurt:** Greek yogurt is higher in protein compared to regular yogurts. To reduce added sugars for an additional health benefit, instead of pre-sweetened options, try plain Greek yogurt and add your own natural sweeteners like honey or fresh fruit.

But the Pennington Biomedical Small Shifts campaign isn't just about individual change—it's about community and support. We encourage you to join the conversation by sharing your own smart swaps, success stories, and challenges faced. Be sure to use the hashtag #smallshifts and tag us on social or sign up at www.pbrc.edu/smallshifts. Together, we can learn from each other and create a supportive environment where everyone can thrive.



Looking to **take the next step** towards your financial wellness?

Prudential
PATHWAYS



Are you ready to take steps towards your financial goals today for a better tomorrow? When it comes to investing in your future, there is no better time to act than the present.

Want to make sense of your financial life, but not sure where to start? Let us show you how.

Join us for a financial wellness educational seminar hosted by industry innovator, Prudential Pathways. Prudential Pathways aims to make building a financial planning strategy less intimidating and more empowering through easy-to-understand educational programs.

Investing for a Solid Financial Future

This seminar will cover important topics like these:

- Dispel investing myths and review terms
- Understanding the benefits of compounding
- How to maneuver market swings
- And more

Tuesday, April 16 from 11:30am-12:30pm (CT)

Wednesday, April 24 from 2:00pm-3:00pm (CT)

via Zoom

[Click Here to Register](#)

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PBRC Small Shifts: Try our Cookie Dough Dip, made with Hummus!



Looking for an easy dessert "smart swap"? Look no further than our cookie dough dip, made with hummus!

Ingredients:

- 1 (15 oz.) can of chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- ½ cup almond butter or natural creamy peanut butter
- ¼ cup agave nectar or maple syrup
- ½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Directions:

1. Drain and rinse the can of chickpeas.
2. In a food processor or blender, combine the chickpeas, almond butter or peanut butter, and the agave nectar or maple syrup.
3. Blend until smooth, scraping down the sides as needed.
4. Fold in the chocolate chips.
5. Transfer to a bowl and serve with apple slices, baby carrots, graham crackers, or fruit kabobs.
- 6.

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