



September is Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

Recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month in the United States. At Pennington Biomedical, researchers explore a wide array of scientifically proven causes, treatment, and prevention programs for childhood obesity, including healthy food choices, environmental factors, and community parks and playgrounds.

“Seventy percent of children or adolescents with obesity will have it as adults,” said Dr. John Kirwan, Executive Director of Pennington Biomedical. “At Pennington Biomedical, we are committed to research that improves health across the lifespan. Our dedicated researchers explore ways to prevent and address childhood obesity.”

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 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.
- **It's not funny.** The belittling treatment that children with obesity endure – from children and adults alike – can create scars that last a lifetime.
- **There's good news.** Childhood obesity is preventable. Family members, caregivers, and other role models are integral in helping children make healthy choices. We can reverse the trend.

For more information, visit www.pbrc.edu/pediatrics.

Key Nutrients In Fruits & Vegetables

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans call for all Americans to eat more nutrient-rich food to help reduce the risk of certain diseases. Fruits and vegetables can be great sources of the following important nutrients:

- **Calcium:** It is essential for healthy bones and teeth. It is also needed for the normal functioning of muscles, nerves, and some glands. (collard greens, spinach, edamame, turnip greens)
- **Fiber:** Diets rich in dietary fiber have been shown to have a number of beneficial effects, including decreased risk of coronary heart disease. (apples, raspberries, green beans, sweet potatoes)
- **Folate:** Healthful diets with adequate folate may reduce a woman's risk of having a child with a brain or spinal cord defect. (asparagus, broccoli, spinach, strawberries, cantaloupe, blackberries)
- **Iron:** Needed for healthy blood and normal functioning of all cells. (lentils, spinach, chickpeas, lima beans)
- **Magnesium:** It is necessary for healthy bones and is involved with more than 300 enzymes in your body! Inadequate levels may result in muscle cramps and high blood pressure. (spinach, okra, butternut squash, artichoke hearts)
- **Potassium:** Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain a healthy blood pressure. (bananas, broccoli, cherries sweet potato, tomato)
- **Sodium:** Needed for normal cell function throughout the body. Most diets contain too much sodium, which is associated with high blood pressure. (honeydew, mushrooms, grapes, lettuce)
- **Vitamin A:** Keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps protect against infections. (watermelon, mango, spinach, lettuce)
- **Vitamin C:** Helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy. (orange, pineapple, cabbage, okra)



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 cannot go to a clinic, have your doctor fax a completed Primary Care Provider 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 to be eligible for the 2025 wellness credit!

| Live Better Louisiana Clinics | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Date | Location |
| 09/01 – 06/2024 | Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System (Jackson) |
| | LA Dept. of Environmental Quality - Galvez Building (Baton Rouge) |
| | Nicholls State University (Thibodaux) |
| | LSU Shreveport (Shreveport) |
| | Supreme Court of LA (New Orleans) |
| 09/09 – 13/2024 | LSU AgCenter (Baton Rouge) |
| | Ouachita PSB - West Ridge Middle School (West Monroe) |
| | Northshore TCC Lacombe Campus (Lacombe) |
| | Pinecrest Supports and Services Center (Pineville) |
| | Northshore TCC - Hammond Area Campus (Hammond) |
| | LSU AgCenter (Baton Rouge) |
| 09/16 – 20/2024 | Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System - Main Compound ASSA (Jackson) |
| | 1st Circuit Court of Appeals (Baton Rouge) |
| | Northwestern State University (Natchitoches) |
| | Glencoe Charter School (Franklin) |
| 09/26 – 28/2024 | Special School District (Baton Rouge) |
| | St. Landry PSB - Resource Center (Opelousas) |
| | Claiborne Building (Baton Rouge) |
| 09/26 – 28/2024 | The Port of South Louisiana (Reserve) |

What's in a Name ... Louisiana Blue

Louisianans love a nickname. Now, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana has a new one. If you are a customer of Blue Cross here in Louisiana, you officially do business with the Louisiana Health Service & Indemnity Company, and/or Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, or HMO Louisiana, Inc. Talk about a mouthful!

How about we just boil that all down to what you really WANT to call us anyway: Louisiana Blue. In reality, we get called "Louisiana Blue" all the time. So from now on, we are going to put our Louisiana focus first and embrace that identity. In this edition of Straight Talk, Louisiana Blue Healthcare Economist Mike Bertaut explains why we made the change. But know that no matter what you call us, we are (Louisiana) Blue for YOU.

Read more at:



STRAIGHT TALK



September's Pennington Biomedical Small Shift is Hydration

This month, we'll be focusing on something simple yet incredibly impactful: **hydrating more**. Staying properly hydrated is essential for maintaining our energy levels, improving concentration, and supporting overall health. This month, let's make a conscious effort to increase our water intake throughout the day. Whether it's carrying a reusable water bottle, setting reminders to take a sip, or infusing your water with fresh fruit for added flavor, every small step counts.

Here are a few tips to help you stay hydrated:

- Start your day with a glass of water.
- Keep a water bottle at your desk.
- Substitute one sugary drink with water.
- Add a slice of lemon or cucumber for a refreshing twist.

Let's encourage each other to embrace this Small Shift and make hydration a healthy habit. Visit www.pbrc.edu/smallshifts for more information.





Ready to put your financial wellness in **focus?**

Prudential
PATHWAYS

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.

HSA Fundamentals

This seminar will cover important topics like these:

- Who qualifies for a Health Savings Account (HSA)?
- Annual contribution and deduction limits
- Benefits of participation
- And more

Tuesday, September 10 from 11:30am-12:30pm (CT)

Wednesday, September 18 from 2:00pm-3:00pm (CT)

via Zoom

[Click Here to Register](#)

Make sure to add the event to your calendar!

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Prepare for Cold & Flu Season with Access2day

As the seasons change and children head back to school, it's crucial to prepare for the upcoming cold and flu season. As a provider of high quality, \$0 care to employees and their covered dependents, our goal is to ensure you and your family stay healthy and protected throughout the colder months.

Cold and flu viruses spread rapidly in school and work environments, making it essential to understand the differences between these illnesses and how to prevent them. The common cold typically causes milder symptoms such as a stuffy nose, sore throat, and gradual onset of fatigue, primarily affecting the head and sinuses. In contrast, the flu hits harder and faster, with severe muscle aches, high fever, and intense exhaustion. Recognizing these symptoms early can help in seeking appropriate care and preventing the spread of these viruses.

Access2day offers an easy solution to keep you and your family healthy this season. As an Access2day member, you can receive a \$0 flu shot at any of our clinic locations, with no appointment necessary. Simply identify yourself as an Access2day Health member to activate your benefit. In addition to getting your flu shot, practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently and sanitizing surfaces.

Remember, your membership is 100% prepaid by the Office of Group Benefits, providing you with a fast pass to \$0 care and a healthy, illness-free season.

Visit any Access2day clinic to get started:

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



Stay Healthy This Cold & Flu Season!

Visit any Access2day clinic for \$0, high-quality care, including flu shots!



Sickle Cell Awareness Month

Sickle cell is an inherited condition that is passed down from your parents the same way people get the color of their eyes, skin, and hair. There is no way to catch sickle cell – it is not contagious.

- Sickle cell begins with hemoglobin, the part of the red blood cell that carries oxygen. People with sickle cell have a type of hemoglobin that when it releases oxygen, it clumps together on one side of the red blood cell, causing the cell to sickle or become banana-shaped.
- Sickle cell affects about 100,000 people in the United States alone. People of African descent make up 90% of the population with sickle cell in the U.S. It also affects people of Hispanic, South Asian, Southern European, and Middle Eastern ancestry.

How Do Sickled Cells Affect the Body

- Sickled red blood cells are stiff and sticky and don't move freely throughout the blood vessels.
- Sickled red blood cells can pile up and block blood flow like a traffic jam, keeping healthy red blood cells carrying oxygen from getting where they need to go. This may prevent your organs from getting the oxygen they need.
- Because sickled red blood cells break down, there are fewer and fewer in the body to carry oxygen. When there are too few red blood cells carrying oxygen, anemia can result, which causes people to feel weak and tired.

Understanding the Long-Term Impact of Chronic Conditions

Chronic diseases, such as sickle cell disease, can affect overall health continuously, even in the absence of noticeable symptoms. These conditions often have a progressive effect on the body around the clock, throughout the entire year.

It is important to recognize that the impact of these diseases can persist regardless of daily symptoms. Therefore, early education about the condition and proactive management with healthcare professionals are crucial. Adopting healthy and preventative practices from a young age can help in managing the disease and maintaining overall well-being.

Staying informed and proactive is key to effectively managing chronic conditions.



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL
SICKLE CELL
AWARENESS MONTH

JALAPEÑO POPPER WONTON CUPS



If you want to be a hit at the tailgate, try these **Jalapeño Popper Wonton Cups**! The wonton crust is nice and crunchy and the filling is loaded with creamy cheese that melts in your mouth. Then the extra spice from the jalapeños takes these poppers to the next level! These are also **SUPER** easy to make and they travel well to the game!

Ingredients:


- 24 wonton wrappers
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup chives, chopped
- 1/4 cup scallions, chopped
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped jalapeños, plus extra slices to top each popper

Instructions:

1. Start by preheating your oven to 350 F.
2. Next, grease a muffin tin with avocado oil and place a wonton wrapper inside. You may want to use two wrappers per cavity, for a thicker “crust”.
3. Brush each wonton with more oil (or a little bit of butter) and bake them in the oven for approximately 6 minutes, or until the wonton wrappers turn slightly golden.
4. While the wontons are baking, prepare the filling: in a medium bowl, add in the cream cheese, cheddar cheese, mozzarella cheese, chives, scallions, black pepper, and the jalapeños, and mix until well combined.
5. Once the wontons are done, let them sit for a few minutes to cool.
6. Then, scoop some of the cream cheese mixture into each wonton cup.
7. Add a little more shredded cheese on top of each cup, and a slice of jalapeño (if desired).
8. Bake for 20 minutes, serve immediately, and enjoy!

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