



Alcohol Awareness Month: A Time to Check In

April is Alcohol Awareness Month—a great time to pause and check in with yourself. No pressure, no judgment—just a moment to think about how alcohol fits into your life and overall well-being.

For some, it's social. For others, it may be a way to unwind. But even small habits can add up, and it's worth paying attention to how alcohol makes you feel—both in the moment and the next day.

A few things to keep in mind:

- Alcohol can affect more than you think—sleep, mood, energy and focus
- Regular or heavy drinking may increase the risk of health issues like high blood pressure and liver disease
- It can also impact relationships, productivity and mental well-being

Looking to make a change? Start small:

- Set a personal limit or goal for the week
- Add a few alcohol-free days to your routine
- Alternate with water or non-alcoholic options
- Find other ways to relax—like a walk, music or time with family and friends

Most importantly, know that you're not alone. If you have concerns about your drinking or someone else's, there are resources and professionals ready to help.

Alcohol Awareness Month is all about awareness—not perfection. Small steps can lead to meaningful change, and every positive choice counts.



Stress Awareness Month

April is National Stress Awareness Month—a reminder that managing stress is key to a healthy lifestyle. While the month may end, stress doesn't, making it important to build healthy coping habits year-round.

Stress can affect everyone differently, but it often shows up as physical, mental or emotional strain. Common signs include trouble concentrating, headaches, fatigue, and feeling overwhelmed. Over time, chronic stress can contribute to serious health issues like high blood pressure, heart disease and depression.

While you can't always control what causes stress, you can control how you respond:

- Focus on what you can control and let go of what you can't
- Take breaks and make time for rest and activities you enjoy
- Stay active, eat well and get enough sleep
- Talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling

Avoid relying on unhealthy coping methods like alcohol or drugs, and recognize when it's time to seek additional support from a healthcare provider or counselor.

Taking small, intentional steps can help reduce stress and improve overall well-being.



Live Better Louisiana

Earn your 2027 premium credit in one easy step by completing an Ochsner Wellness Screening. Blue Cross partners with Ochsner Health to offer no-cost to you wellness screenings at convenient locations across the state. During your visit, you'll meet with a Registered Nurse, receive point-of-care tests, and get a personalized health report with results and recommendations.

How to participate:

Review the schedule below and choose a location that works for you. To schedule your appointment, visit Ochsner OGB Screenings and enter the event code for your selected screening site. When registering, please enter your member name exactly as it appears on Louisiana Blue medical insurance card to ensure your screening is scheduled correctly. If you have questions or need assistance, call 1-866-495-6235. If you can't attend a wellness screening, have your doctor fax a completed Primary Care Provider form (available at info.groupbenefits.org/live-better-louisiana) to Ochsner Health.

Important reminder:

To qualify for the 2027 wellness credit, you must complete your wellness screening by September 30, 2026.

| Live Better Louisiana Clinics | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Date (Day) | Location | Participants/Event Code |
| 04/01/2026 | Secretary of State | All Members/ 827145 |
| 04/07/2026 | South LA Community College Department of Transportation - Houma Nicholls State University | Employees& Retirees Only/ 774058 All Members/ 780965 All Members/ 8339A5 |
| 04/08/2026 | South LA Community College | Employees& Retirees Only/ 775FE9 |
| 04/09/2026 | South LA Community College Division of Administration - Claiborne Building | Employees& Retirees Only/ 7764C0 All Members/ 854F2F |
| 04/13/2026 | Department of Health | All Members/ 861CA3 |
| 04/14/2026 | South Central LA Human Services Authority Ouachita Parish SB, Sterlington Middle School | Employees& Retirees Only/ 8166BE All Members/ 864DE3 |
| 04/15/2026 | South Central LA Human Services Authority South Central LA Human Services Authority Ouachita Parish SB, Sterlington Middle School | Employees& Retirees Only/ 81796B Employees& Retirees Only/ 815F94 All Members/ 86507E |
| 04/16/2026 | South Central LA Human Services Authority | Employees& Retirees Only/ 78615B |
| 04/20/2026 | Northwestern State University LA Department of Insurance - Poydras Building | All Members/ 8403D6 All Members/ 860177 |
| 04/21/2026 | Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority Northwestern State University | Employees Only/ 7831E03 All Members/ 841F3A |
| 04/22/2026 | Ouachita Parish School Board | Agency's Employees and Retirees Only/805E93 |
| 04/23/2026 | Ouachita Parish School Board DOTD District 02 | Agency's Employees and Retirees Only/ 806478 Agency's Employees and Retirees Only/ 78569E |
| 04/24/2026 | LSU Shreveport | All Members/ 839F87 |
| 04/27/2026 | Probation and Parole - Alexandria Southeastern Louisiana University | Agency's Employees and Retirees Only/ 7771DF All Members/820E12 |
| 04/28/2026 | Louisiana Housing Corporation Ouachita Parish SB, Drew Elementary School | Agency Employees Only/ 769B09 School employees and OPSB members only/ 863384 |
| 04/29/2026 | Lakefront Management Authority Pinecrest Services & Support Sabine Parish School Board | All Members/ 781EBE All Members/ 835E42 All Members/ 8007B4 |
| 04/30/2026 | Louisiana Tech University | All Members/ 871901 |

Spring Allergies Are Starting Early in Louisiana

Here's What You Need to Know

Believe it or not, allergy season is back again already.

Louisiana natives may not be surprised to hear that it's a hotbed for seasonal allergy irritants. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), cities in the Southeast are among the most challenging places to live with seasonal allergies because of the high levels of tree, grass, and weed pollen.

Why Spring Allergies Hit Louisiana So Hard

Weather conditions like mild winters and high humidity create the perfect environment for pollen and mold spores.

The CDC reports that nearly 1 in 4 adults and almost 1 in 5 children in the U.S. experience seasonal allergies each year. In Louisiana, asthma affects families at rates comparable to the national average, with spring pollen making symptom management especially important this time of year.

Is It Allergies, a Cold, or Asthma?

Varying spring respiratory symptoms can overlap, which can make it difficult to determine the underlying cause. Here's a quick symptom comparison for a few common culprits.

| Is It Allergies, a Cold, or Asthma? | | |
|---|---|--|
| Seasonal Allergies | Common Cold | Asthma Flare-Ups |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sneezing• Itchy and/or watery eyes• Clear runny nose• Symptoms that last for weeks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sore throat• Body aches• Low-grade fever• Symptoms that typically improve within 7–10 days | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wheezing• Tightness in the chest• Shortness of breath• Persistent cough |

If you have asthma, pollen can trigger flare-ups and increase the risk of complications, making proper management key during high-pollen months.

Tips to Reduce Spring Allergy Symptoms

- Check the weather for daily pollen counts before spending time outside
- Shower and change clothes after being outside
- Keep windows closed during days with high pollen counts
- Use air purifiers and replace filters regularly
- Stay consistent with prescribed allergy or asthma medications

When to Seek Care

If your symptoms get worse or interfere with sleep or daily activities, it may be time to see a healthcare provider. Early treatment can help prevent more serious complications.

OGB members can visit their local Access2day Health clinic for preventative and urgent care with zero copay and no out-of-pocket costs.

Need to locate a clinic nearby? Visit: access2dayhealth.com/locations.

This spring, take control of your respiratory health so you can spend more time enjoying everything Louisiana outdoors has to offer.



Pennington Biomedical Small Shift: Physical Wellness Month

April is Physical Wellness Month, and this month's Small Shift is all about moving more, even during the workday.

Your challenge: Take a break from your desk! A few minutes of stretching, walking, or standing can do wonders for your energy, focus and overall health.

Research from Pennington Biomedical shows that breaking up long periods of sitting helps improve blood flow, supports metabolism and reduces fatigue. The best part? It doesn't take much. Just a few minutes here and there can make a big difference.

Try this:

- Take a quick walk after lunch or between meetings.
- Stand during phone calls or virtual meetings.
- Stretch your shoulders, neck, and legs every hour.

Small breaks lead to big benefits. Step away from your desk and give yourself an energy boost today!

Share your favorite ways to recharge during the day on social media — tag us on and use #PBRCsmallshifts.



5 Tips for Healthy Easter Eating

Easter is a time for celebration, family gatherings and enjoying your favorite seasonal foods. From hearty casseroles to sweet treats, it's easy to overindulge if you're not careful. The good news is you don't have to skip the foods you love. With a few mindful choices, you can enjoy the holiday while still feeling your best.

- **Start your day strong.** Begin with a balanced breakfast like eggs, Greek yogurt or a smoothie. Starting your day with protein and nutrients can help curb hunger and prevent overeating later.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drinking water before and during your meal can help you feel fuller and more satisfied. Try adding lemon or cucumber for a refreshing twist.
- **Fill up on veggies first.** Start with a salad or fresh vegetables to boost fiber and help control portions of heavier, richer foods.
- **Watch your portions.** With so many options on the table, it's easy to take too much. Aim for half your plate with vegetables, and the rest split between protein and grains.
- **Enjoy sweets mindfully.** Easter candy is part of the fun, so don't skip it—just save it for last and take time to enjoy each bite.

Easter is about more than just the food—it's about time with family and making memories. By keeping balance in mind, you can enjoy all the flavors of the holiday without overdoing it.



Coping Skills for De-stressing

Take a few minutes to get comfortable, relax and unplug from your daily tasks to enjoy completing this word search. All the words are related to coping with stress.

It's simple fun!



- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| stress free | cope | coping skills | be positive |
| aromatherapy | journal | give a hug | draw |
| watch a movie | listen to music | do a puzzle | eat |
| garden | pray | hug a stuffed animal | punch a pillow |
| cook | meditate | clean something | talk to an adult |
| exercise | Petting an animal | take a bath | watch TV |
| stress ball | walk away | playing a game | deep breathing |

Find calm, one breath at a time

Discover how simple breathing techniques can help you stress less and feel your best. Stress is an inevitable part of life, but learning to manage it can transform your well-being. Incorporating deep breathing exercises into your daily routine can help lower your heart rate, improve focus, and boost resilience.

With Omada®, we help you breathe easier—mentally and physically—through personalized support that fits into your lifestyle.

5 simple steps for deeper breathing:

1. Relax your body: Find somewhere comfortable to sit or lie down.
2. Inhale slowly: Close your eyes and inhale through your nose, feeling your belly expand.
3. Pause: Hold your breath for a few seconds at the top of the inhale.
4. Exhale slowly: Release your breath through your mouth, feeling your body relax.
5. Refocus: If your mind wanders, gently return your focus to your breath.

Take small steps toward better mental health with Omada.

Claim your benefit today at omadahealth.com/ogb—at no cost to you, if eligible.



Scam-Proof Your Life | With Louisiana Blue

Fraud and scams are more sophisticated than ever—and they're targeting people of all ages, especially during high-stakes times like holiday seasons, tax season and health plan enrollment. In this video (6:41), we break down the latest tactics scammers are using and give you practical, easy-to-follow steps to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Steps You Can Take to Stay Safe:

- Trust your instincts—if something feels off, don't engage.
- Verify requests—especially those involving money, gift cards, or sensitive data.
- Use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) and strong, unique passwords.
- Check your Explanation of Benefits (EOB) for phantom billing or suspicious charges.
- Be cautious with cold calls, emails, and texts—especially if they ask for personal or financial information.

Healthcare fraud alone costs billions annually and can lead to identity theft, financial loss, and even health risks. Scammers are increasingly using AI to mimic voices, generate fake medical records, and create convincing phishing messages. Awareness is your first line of defense.

Report suspicious activity to the Louisiana Blue Fraud Hotline at 1-800-392-9249, or to the FBI at <https://IC3.gov>.

Blue Cross Members: Call our Fraud Hotline at 1-800-392-9249 to report suspicious activity.



Time for a Fresh Perspective on Your Financial Life?



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.

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 | • How to maneuver market swings |
| • Understanding the benefits of compounding | • And more |

[Option 1] Tuesday, April 14th | 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CT

[Option 2] Wednesday, April 15th | 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CT

Virtual – Zoom

[Click Here to Register](#)

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Bananas Foster French Toast





This lighter, make-ahead overnight baked French toast casserole with Bananas Foster is guaranteed to impress—perfect for Easter morning or any special brunch!

| Ingredients: | For Banana Topping: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 oz Challah or Brioche bread, sliced 1" thick • 7 large eggs • 1 1/2 cups fat-free milk • 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract • 1/2 tsp cinnamon • 1/4 cup sugar or sugar substitute • 1 tsp rum or rum extract (optional) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 tbsp whipped butter • 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed • 1 tsp vanilla extract • 1 tsp cinnamon • 1 tbsp rum or rum extract (optional) • 4 medium ripe bananas, sliced |

Instructions:

1. Spray a 13 x 9-inch baking dish with oil spray.
2. Arrange bread slices in one layer in baking dish, squeezing them slightly to fit.
3. In a large bowl whisk together eggs, milk, vanilla, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, monk fruit or sugar, salt and rum extract, if using until combined well and pour evenly over bread. Cover and refrigerate at least 8 hours or overnight for best results.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F and bring bread to room temperature.
5. Bake uncovered, in middle of oven until puffed and edges are pale golden, 40 to 45 minutes.
6. Meanwhile while it's baking, in a large deep skillet melt the butter over low heat.
7. Add the brown sugar or sugar-free brown sugar, cinnamon, vanilla and rum extract, if using and stir until sugar is dissolved. Add a few drops of water if needed and let sauce simmer about 2 minutes to thicken.
8. Add sliced bananas and simmer 1 minute, remove from heat.
9. Keep covered until french toast comes out of the oven. When french toast is cooked, divide among 8 plates and top with bananas. Enjoy!!

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

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