



Arthritis Awareness Month

Did you know arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the U.S.? Over 50 million adults and 300,000 children live with joint pain or disease. This month is a chance to learn more about arthritis, how to manage it, and support those affected.

Key Facts:

- There are 100+ types of arthritis, including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, fibromyalgia, and gout.
- Early signs include swelling and stiffness, especially in the morning.
- Heat or cold therapy can offer quick relief — but limit use to 20 minutes.

Why It Matters:

- **Awareness:** Knowing symptoms helps with early diagnosis.
- **Relief:** Try safe, doctor-approved treatments like creams or electrical therapy.
- **Support:** The Arthritis Foundation offers helpful resources and events.

How to Help Yourself:

- **Stay active:** Gentle exercise can ease stiffness and strengthen joints.
- **Explore non-pill options:** Topical treatments or devices may offer relief without medication.

5 Arthritis-Friendly Foods:

1. **Tart cherries:** Reduce inflammation and gout flares.
2. **Colorful veggies:** Like peppers and sweet potatoes, rich in vitamin C.
3. **Fatty fish:** Salmon and sardines help with inflammation and heart health.
4. **Walnuts:** Packed with omega-3s to lower cholesterol and blood pressure.
5. **Garlic:** Fights inflammation and may help protect joints.



Access2day: Breathe Easy this May – It's Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month

Over 25 million Americans have asthma, and even more deal with seasonal allergies. If spring pollen, dust, or weather changes make breathing harder, you're not alone. The good news? **Access2day Health offers expert respiratory care at no cost to you.**

Know the Difference:

- **Allergies** cause sneezing, itchy eyes, and congestion, often triggered by pollen or dust.
- **Asthma** is a chronic condition with wheezing, chest tightness, and coughing.
- Many experience **allergy-induced asthma**, where allergens trigger breathing problems.

Tips to Stay Ahead:

- Check daily pollen counts and stay indoors on high days.
- Keep indoor air clean with purifiers and regular filter changes.
- Know your triggers and avoid them when possible.
- Visit **Access2day Health clinics** for care — no appointments or costs required.

Want more expert advice?

Watch our latest ["2 Steps Ahead" video](#) for tips on managing asthma and allergies.

Find a nearby clinic at access2dayhealth.com/locations

Or download the **Clinic Finder app** to stay connected to care anytime.



Live Better Louisiana

Earn your 2026 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**.

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, 2025** to get your preventive health checkup in order to be eligible for the 2026 wellness credit!

Live Better Louisiana Clinics

Date (Week)	Location
05/01 – 02/2025	Lallie Kemp Charity Hospital (Independence)
	ULL New Iberia Research Center (New Iberia)
	Commissioner of Insurance (Baton Rouge)
	Vernon PSB - Parkway Elementary School (Leesville)
	Vernon PSB - Vernon Middle School (Leesville)
05/05 – 09/2025	Imperial Calcasieu Admin/DD Office (Lake Charles)
	Washington PSB - Mt. Hermon School (Mt. Hermon)
	St. Bernard Port - Harbor & Terminal (Chalmette)
	Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (Baker)
	Nicholls State University (Thibodaux)
	Louisiana Tech University (Ruston)
	Northshore Technical Community College (Lacombe)
	DOTD Houma/D02 Administration Office (Houma)
	Acadiana Area Human SVC District (Lafayette)
	Raymond Laborde Correctional Center (Cottonport)
05/12 – 16/2025	Orleans Parish Civil District Court (New Orleans)
	DOTD District 05 (Monroe)
	Delgado CC City Park (New Orleans)
	Nicholls State University (Thibodaux)
	Grambling State University (Grambling)
	DOTD District 61 (Baton Rouge)
	DOC Headquarters (Baton Rouge)
	Probation and Parole (Monroe)
	DOTD District 62 (Hammond)
	Northeast Delta Human Services Authority (Monroe)
	Sabine PSB - Zwolle Elementary School (Zwolle)
	Vernon PSB - Hornbeck High School (Hornbeck)
	Dept of Wildlife and Fisheries (Baton Rouge)
	Southwest Louisiana War Veterans Home (Jennings)
	Probation and Parole (Covington)
05/19 – 23/2025	Vernon PSB - Simpson High School (Simpson)
	Pinecrest Supports and Services Center (Pineville)
	Jefferson PSB - Emenes Building (Harahan)
	Child Support Enforcement Center (Lake Charles)
	Bienville Building (Baton Rouge)
	Sabine PSB - Negreet High School (Negreet, LA)
	Claiborne Building (Baton Rouge)
	Sabine PSB - Ebarb High School (Noble)
	Vernon PSB - Pickering HS & ES (Leesville)
	Delgado CC City Park (New Orleans)
05/27 – 30/2025	Livingston PSB - Denham Springs ES (Denham Springs)
	Sabine PSB - Many Elementary School (Many)
	Probation and Parole (Baton Rouge)
	University of Louisiana Lafayette (Lafayette)
	St. Bernard PSB (Chalmette)
	Delgado CC West Bank Campus (New Orleans)
	River Parishes Community College (Gonzales)
	DCFS (Gonzales)
	State Archives Building (Baton Rouge)
	State Military Department (New Orleans)

Protect Your Eyes

May is Healthy Vision Month. Make your eye health a priority this month. The National Institutes of Health has these tips to keep your eyes safe.

Get a dilated eye exam: This can detect eye diseases at an early stage when you have no symptoms. During a dilated eye exam, your eye care professional puts drops in your eyes to widen your pupils so he or she can get a good look at the back of the eyes. Early treatment of eye diseases like glaucoma can slow or stop vision loss and reduce your risk of blindness.

Use protective eyewear: Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. A hat offers great sun protection too!

Healthy lifestyle: Eat a nutritious diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and omega-3 fatty acids. Limit drinks with a lot of caffeine and foods with a lot of salt. Drinking too much alcohol can also hurt your vision. Don't smoke.

Screen time: Follow the 20-20-20 rule to reduce eye strain. Every 20 minutes, shift your focus to an object at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Exercise and rest: Regular exercise improves blood flow to the eyes. Meanwhile, getting enough rest helps soothe tired eyes.



May is Better Sleep Month

Better Sleep Month is a reminder to build healthier sleep habits for improved well-being. Quality sleep supports mental clarity, physical health, emotional balance, and, for children and teens, growth and development.

Common Sleep Struggles Include:

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Feeling tired even after a full night's sleep
- Daytime fatigue or mood swings
- Headaches or low appetite
- Itchy skin at night

Tips to Improve Sleep:

- **Create a consistent bedtime routine.** Doing the same, relaxing activities each night helps signal your brain that it's time to wind down.
- **Avoid late-night eating and caffeine.** Set a "cutoff time" in the evening to give your body time to settle.
- **Make your sleep space calm and distraction-free.** Remove TVs, work materials, or anything that keeps your brain active.
- **Limit daytime naps.** If needed, nap earlier in the day and keep it under one hour.
- **Clear your mind before bed.** Journaling, meditation, or quiet reading can help reduce mental clutter.
- **Exercise regularly.** Even light daily activity can improve sleep quality.

This May, take small steps to improve your sleep routine — your body and mind will thank you.




A Healthy Mind Starts with a Healthy Body

Feel your best by creating balance in your mind and body. Your mental and physical health are connected in more ways than you think. Omada® gives you the tools and personalized support you need to build daily habits that improve your mood, boost energy, and nurture your overall well-being.

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



A healthy mind starts with a healthy body

Get the tools and resources you need to help balance your body and mind with Omada—at no additional cost to you.

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May Small Shift: Deep, Meaningful Breathing

In a world where the pace of life can feel relentless and the demands on mental health ever-growing, it's crucial to carve out moments of calm to reset our nervous system and our perspective. While the topic of mental health is vast and multifaceted, the Small Shifts team believes that embracing small, manageable behavior shifts can serve as powerful stepping stones towards greater well-being. That's why deep breathing has been chosen as the bite-sized portion of support for this month.

Here are a few simple ways to incorporate deep breathing into your daily routine:

- **Morning Mindfulness:** Start your day with a few minutes of deep breathing as soon as you wake up. Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and focus on inhaling deeply through your nose, allowing your belly to expand, then exhaling slowly through your mouth. This sets a peaceful tone for the day ahead.
- **Midday Reset:** Take short breaks throughout the day to pause and recalibrate with a few rounds of deep breathing. Whether you're at your desk, in a meeting, or running errands, a moment of mindful breathing can refresh your mind and enhance your productivity.
- **Evening Relaxation:** Wind down in the evening with a gentle breathing exercise to ease tension and promote restful sleep. Incorporate slow, deep breaths into a bedtime ritual, such as gentle stretching or journaling, to signal to your body that it's time to unwind.

Throughout this month, Small Shifts will be sharing resources and tips to inspire and support you on your journey towards mental wellness. Keep an eye out for weekly emails and social media updates for encouragement.

Remember, it's the small changes that lead to big results. Let's embrace this small shift together and prioritize mental well-being one breath at a time. Sign up for the Small Shift emails at www.pbrc.edu/smallshifts.



EDS Awareness Month

Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS) is a group of over 13 genetic connective tissue disorders, often linked to joint hypermobility. Some individuals may also be diagnosed with Hypermobility Spectrum Disorder (HSD). Living with EDS can be physically and emotionally difficult for both patients and caregivers.

This month is about raising awareness, offering support, and helping more people understand this often misunderstood condition.

Quick FAQs:

- **Is EDS genetic?** Often, yes — but it can also occur without a family history.
- **When does it start?** EDS is typically present from birth.

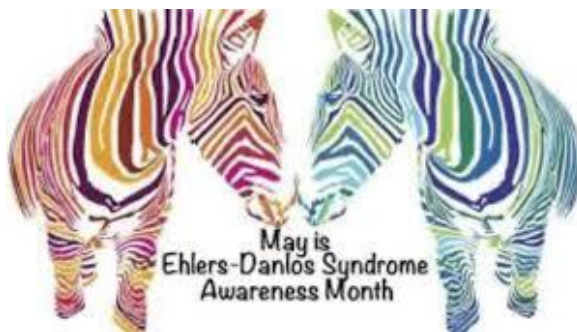
Common Symptoms:

- Joint hypermobility (joints move beyond normal range)
- Fragile, stretchy skin that bruises easily
- Chronic joint and muscle pain
- Ongoing fatigue
- Digestive issues like nausea and bloating
- Autonomic dysfunction (irregular heart rate, blood pressure, or temperature)
- Dizziness and heart palpitations

5 Things to Know About EDS:

1. Stretching can still help, even with hypermobility.
2. EDS is underdiagnosed — it's not as rare as it seems.
3. It can affect mental health — empathy is essential.
4. Healing takes time, but with care, progress is possible.
5. People with EDS bruise easily due to fragile connective tissue.

Let's take this month to learn more, spread awareness, and support those living with EDS.



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

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

Join us for financial wellness educational seminars 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.

Fundamentals of Wills, Trusts, and Powers of Attorney

Wednesday, May 7 | 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CT | Virtual – Zoom

- Importance of estate planning
- How assets are transferred at death
- Legal Documents
- And more

Roadmap to Retirement

Friday, May 9 | 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. CT | Virtual – Zoom

- Longevity risks
- Pros and cons of rollover IRAs
- Healthcare and long-term costs
- And more

[Click Here to Register](#)

Make sure to add the event to your calendar!

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Slow-cooker Beef Birria



This Beef Birria recipe is flavorful, versatile, and can be easily made in the slow cooker! With a few simple steps, you can have one of the most deliciously rich meats on hand for tacos, quesadillas, stews, pizza, or even for just adding to a bowl of rice with avocado. This is the kind of recipe you can make a big batch of and enjoy for weeks to come!

Ingredients:

- 2 whole dried ancho chilies
- 2 whole dried guajillo chilies
- ¼ large white onion
- 4 cloves minced garlic
- 1 TBSP avocado oil
- 1 14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1 small can chipoltes in adobo sauce (you only need 1 chipolte)
- 1 ½ cups water (or beef broth)
- ¼ TSP cumin
- ¼ TSP ground ginger
- 1 medium bay leaf
- 1 medium cinnamon stick (or 2 TSP cinnamon powder)
- 1 TSP clove
- ½ TBSP dried thyme
- 1 TBSP dried oregano
- ½ TSP salt
- 4 TSP pepper
- 1 LB. beef chuck roast
- 1 LB. short ribs (bone in)

Instructions:

1. Remove seeds and stems from the chilies and set aside.
2. Quarter the onion.
3. In a large skillet with tall sides, heat the avocado oil over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, diced tomatoes, and 1 chipotle in adobo sauce; cook for 5 – 10 minutes.
4. In a small pot (on a separate burner), bring the water or broth to a boil. Add the dried chilies and reduce the heat to a simmer for 10 minutes.
5. In the large skillet, add in the cumin, ginger, bay leaf, cinnamon, clove, thyme, oregano, salt and pepper.
6. Pour the cooked pot of chilies into the large skillet and mix, cooking for another 10 minutes.
7. Remove skillet from heat and let cool for 5 – 10 minutes.
8. Generously salt all sides of the meat and place it in the slow cooker.
9. Using a strainer, strain the birria sauce mixture into the slow cooker over the meat. (It helps to press the sauce with a spoon to get as much of the flavorful broth as possible.)
10. Cook on low for 4-6 hours, checking the meat to make sure it is done.
11. Once the meat is cooked, separate the beef and broth, remove and discard the bones, then shred the meat.
12. Combine Shredded meat with the broth again and enjoy any way you want or save for later.

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