



### Mental Health Awareness Month: Why it Matters

Each May, Mental Health Awareness Month reminds us to check in on something we often overlook—our mental well-being. Mental health shapes how we think, feel, and respond to everyday challenges. Just like physical health, it's something everyone has, and it deserves regular attention.

Despite growing awareness, stigma still prevents many people from speaking up. Some worry they'll be judged or not taken seriously, so they keep their struggles to themselves. Changing that starts with normalizing conversation. Talking to a friend, family member, or trusted adult can make a real difference.

Here are a few simple ways to support your mental health and others':

- **Talk about it:** Open up to someone you trust, even if it feels uncomfortable at first.
- **Take care of your body:** Sleep, movement, and regular meals all impact your mood.
- **Limit screen time:** Give yourself breaks from social media and constant notifications.
- **Check in on others:** A quick message or conversation can mean more than you think.
- **Practice small resets:** Deep breathing, going outside, or listening to music can help you recharge.

Mental Health Awareness Month is about more than awareness—it's about action. By being open, informed, and supportive, we can help create a culture where mental health is treated with the same care and importance as physical health, not just in May, but all year long.



### 12 Exercise Benefits (That Aren't About Weight Loss)

Exercise is often framed around burning calories—but its real value goes far beyond the scale. Regular movement supports your brain, body, and overall well-being in ways that show up every day.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, adults should aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity (or 75 minutes of vigorous activity) each week, plus two days of strength training.

Here's what you gain from staying active:

- 1. Less stress.** Movement helps regulate your body's stress response and can ease anxiety.
- 2. Sharper thinking.** Exercise supports memory and long-term brain health.
- 3. Better confidence.** Finishing a workout can boost mood and self-image.
- 4. A stronger heart.** Physical activity improves circulation and energy levels.
- 5. Healthier bones.** Strength and weight-bearing exercises support bone density.
- 6. Improved sleep.** Regular activity can help you fall asleep faster and rest more deeply.
- 7. Social connection.** Workouts can double as quality time with others.
- 8. Brighter mood.** Outdoor movement may boost vitamin D and emotional well-being.
- 9. More efficient metabolism.** Muscle burns more energy, even at rest.
- 10. Better digestion.** Exercise supports gut health and regularity.
- 11. Lower disease risk.** Staying active reduces the risk of chronic conditions.
- 12. Balanced appetite.** Exercise can help regulate hunger.

You don't need intense workouts—just consistency. Even short, regular sessions can make a real difference.

**Note:** Check with a healthcare professional before starting a new exercise routine.



## 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 click on the link for the 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 <https://info.groupbenefits.org/live-better-louisiana-2/>) 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	Registration
05/01/2026	Nicholls State University	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/04/2026	Dept. Public Safety & Corrections, Day 1	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/05/2026	Dept. Public Safety & Corrections, Day 2	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/05/2026	DOTD District 58 – Chase	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/06/2026	Northeast Louisiana Veterans Home, Day 1	Agency eligible employees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/06/2026	Varnado High School	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/06/2026	DCFS—Lake Charles	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/07/2026	Sabine River Authority	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/08/2026	Northeast Louisiana Veterans Home, Day 2	Agency eligible employees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/08/2026	Louisiana Public Broadcasting	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/08/2026	St. Bernard Port Harbor & Terminal District	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/11/2026	DOTD District 5—Monroe	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/12/2026	University of Louisiana at Monroe	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/12/2026	Judicial Administrator's Office	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/12/2026	DOTD District 08 – Alexandria	Agency eligible employees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/13/2026	Judicial Administrator's Office	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/13/2026	University of Louisiana at Monroe	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/14/2026	Washington Parish School Board, Day 1	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/14/2026	Mt. Hermon High School	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/14/2026	University of Louisiana at Monroe	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/15/2026	Washington Parish School Board, Day 2	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/18/2026	Sabine Parish School Board – Negreet HS	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/19/2026	LDH Economic Independence	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/19/2029	Vernon Parish School Board, Pickering ES & HS	Agency eligible employees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/20/2026	LA School Employee Retirement System	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/20/2026	Supreme Court	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/21/2026	Delgado Community College – Main Campus	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/21/2026	Teacher's Retirement System of Louisiana	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/26/2026	St. Bernard Parish School Board	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/26/2026	DOTD District 07	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/27/2026	GOHSEP	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/27/2026	St. Bernard Parish School Board	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/28/2026	Division of Administration – Claiborne Building	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/29/2026	Secretary of State	All eligible employees & retirees	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
05/29/2026	St. Bernard Parish School Board	Agency eligible employees & retirees only	<a href="#">Click Here</a>

## Spring in Louisiana: Why Allergies Are Starting Earlier, and What It Means for You

If allergy season feels like it arrived ahead of schedule this year, you're not alone, and there's a reason for it.

Across Louisiana, warmer temperatures and environmental changes are causing pollen levels to rise sooner and linger longer. For many residents, that means earlier symptoms and a longer season of dealing with congestion, sneezing, and breathing issues.

In a state like Louisiana, those symptoms can hit harder.

### What's Driving Symptoms Right Now?

Louisiana's environment plays a big role in how your body reacts during spring:

- Tree pollen peaks early in the season
- High humidity fuels mold growth
- Windy days spread allergens quickly
- Air quality changes can irritate the lungs

Even if you don't usually struggle with seasonal allergies, you may notice new or stronger symptoms this year.

### When Allergies Turn into Something More

It's easy to dismiss symptoms like congestion or sneezing, but for some people, allergies can affect breathing. If you experience tightness in your chest, shortness of breath, wheezing, or coughing that won't go away, it could be a sign that your airways are reacting more seriously. Understanding how your body responds is key to managing symptoms before they escalate.

### Simple Ways to Stay Ahead This Season

Instead of reacting to symptoms, try getting ahead of them.

#### Start your routine early.

Don't wait until symptoms peak; begin prevention habits now.

#### Create a "clean air" space at home.

Limit open windows on high pollen days and change air filters regularly.

#### Rethink your outdoor timing.

Pollen counts are usually highest in the morning and on dry, windy days.

#### Pay attention to patterns.

Notice when and where symptoms get worse so you can adjust your routine.

### A Season to Stay Proactive

Spring in Louisiana is meant to be enjoyed, but it's easier to do that when you can breathe comfortably. By recognizing triggers and making small adjustments, you can reduce symptoms and stay active throughout the season.

#### The earlier you act, the better you feel.

### Access2day Health Is Here for You

If allergy symptoms are disrupting your day-to-day life, you don't have to manage them alone. Access2day Health clinics are available to help members get the care they need, whether it's evaluating symptoms, managing flare-ups, or getting guidance on treatment options.

With convenient locations across Louisiana and \$0 cost visits, getting care is simple and accessible, so you can get back to feeling your best this spring.



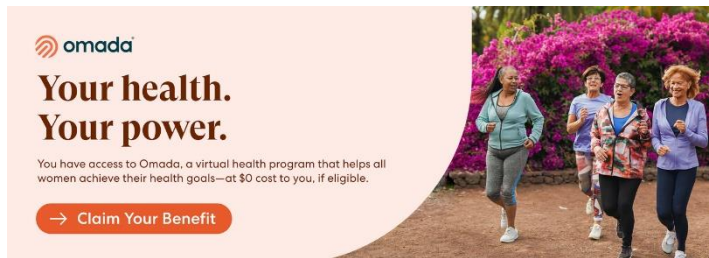
## Your Health. Your Power

Step into a healthier future with small steps that make a big impact. Your health isn't just about today—it's about every moment you share with those who rely on you. Omada provides you with tools, expert guidance, and a dedicated care team to help you feel your best and live life on your terms. Whether it's nutrition, movement, or building new habits, we're here to make the process simple and achievable.

With Omada, you'll receive:

- Personalized support from a certified health coach, and for specific programs like diabetes and hypertension, access to a clinical specialist.
- A custom care plan that improves eating habits without cutting out your favorite meals or counting every calorie.
- A welcome kit with connected smart devices to monitor your progress—yours to keep at no additional cost (if eligible).

Over 60 million women in the U.S. live with some form of heart disease. Make your health a priority and take small steps toward long-term well-being. Claim your benefit today at [omadahealth.com/ogb](https://omadahealth.com/ogb)—at no cost to you, if eligible.



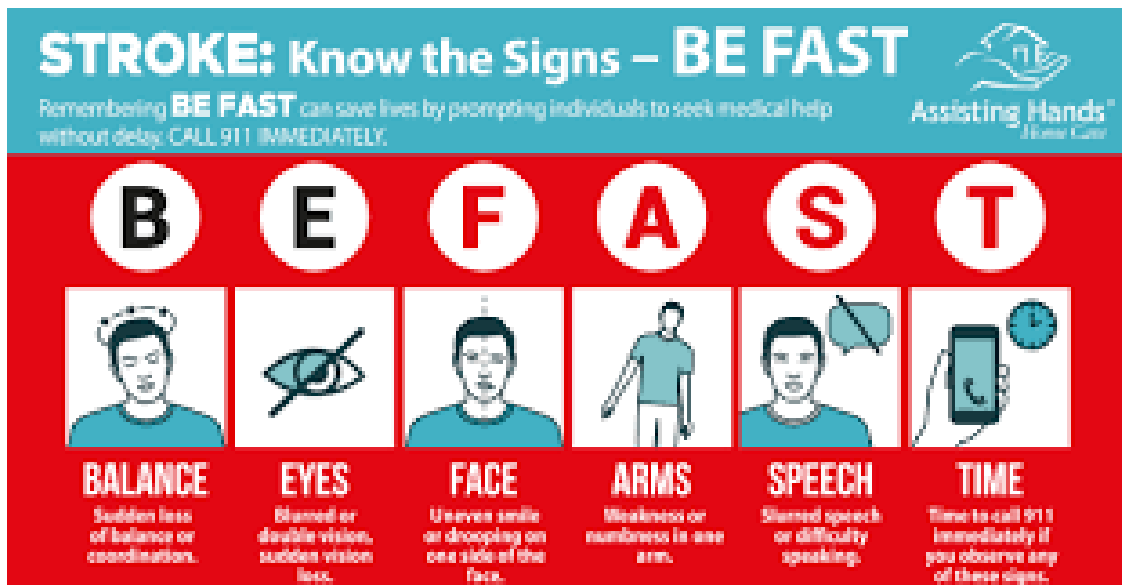
**omada**  
**Your health.  
Your power.**

You have access to Omada, a virtual health program that helps all women achieve their health goals—at \$0 cost to you, if eligible.

→ Claim Your Benefit

## Know the Signs




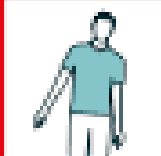


Strokes can happen suddenly and require immediate action. Knowing the warning signs can make all the difference in getting life-saving care quickly. Take a moment to review the signs below—you could help save a life.



### STROKE: Know the Signs – BE FAST

Remembering **BE FAST** can save lives by prompting individuals to seek medical help without delay. CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

Assisting Hands® Home Care

B	E	F	A	S	T
					
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>EYES</b>	<b>FACE</b>	<b>ARMS</b>	<b>SPEECH</b>	<b>TIME</b>
Sudden loss of balance or coordination.	Blurred or double vision, sudden vision loss.	Uneven smile or drooping on one side of the face.	Weakness or numbness in one arm.	Slurred speech or difficulty speaking.	Time to call 911 immediately if you observe any of these signs.

## What's it really like to work with a Louisiana Blue registered dietitian?

Take a peek behind-the-scenes in [this 11:48 minute video](#) to see how our registered dietitians partner with you to support healthier habits — without judgment, strict rules or one-size-fits-all plans. From listening to your goals and challenges to offering practical, realistic guidance that fits your lifestyle, our dietitians are here to help you make confident, sustainable choices around food and nutrition. Whether you're managing a health condition, looking to eat better or just want trusted support, this is what personalized nutrition care looks like. ✓ Real conversations ✓ Practical, easy-to-use tips ✓ Support tailored to you 🗨 because healthy eating shouldn't be stressful — and you don't have to figure it out alone. Learn more and explore additional healthy eating resources on the [Louisiana Blue YouTube Healthy Eating playlist](#).



**Romaine Calm and CARROT ON**

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO WORK WITH A DIETITIAN

with Katherine and Chelsey

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

Prudential  
**PATHWAYS**



When it comes to estate and tax planning strategies, it's all about your long-term goals. If you are looking to navigate planning pitfalls or leave your loved ones more than memories, make sure your strategy stays focused on your goals. If you are just starting the process or wish to fine-tune your strategy, join us for this 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.

## **Fundamentals of Wills, Trusts, & Powers of Attorney**

This seminar will cover important topics like these:

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

**[Option 1] Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> | 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CT**

**[Option 2] Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> | 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CT**

**Virtual – Zoom**

[Click Here to Register](#)

Make sure to add the event to your calendar!

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for an individual.

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# Mental Health May

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Intellectual  
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Water Wednesday  
Activities  
Spiritual  
Physical  
Therapy  
Anxiety  
Brain  
Yoga

Eating Healthy  
Green Tea  
Socialize  
Exercise  
Jogging  
Coping  
Laugh

Wellness Works  
Nutrition  
Happiness  
Peoples  
Running  
Health  
Mind

## Mexican Pizza



*A crust of flour tortillas and a filling of refried beans, shredded rotisserie chicken and salsa. Top it off with a little enchilada sauce and cheese and you got yourself an incredible Mexican Pizza for dinner!*

### Ingredients:


- 1 16oz can low-fat refried beans
- ½ cup salsa
- 8 flour tortillas (fajita or taco size)
- 8 oz shredded Mexican blend cheese
- 2 Roma tomatoes (diced)
- 2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
- Vegetable oil or cooking spray
- 1 10 oz can red enchilada sauce
- 2 green onions (thinly sliced)

### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Warm up beans in a small bowl in the microwave. Combine chicken and salsa in another bowl and warm it up in the microwave.
3. To toast the tortillas, either heat oil in a skillet and fry both sides of the tortilla, or spray both sides of tortilla with cooking spray and heat on skillet (my preferred method).
4. Lay four of the toasted tortillas on a large baking sheet. Spread with about 2 tablespoons of refried beans on each tortilla. Top with the salsa/chicken mixture, evenly dividing it among the four tortillas. Top with another toasted tortilla.
5. Spread a thin layer of enchilada sauce on the top of each tortilla. Sprinkle with shredded cheese, evenly dividing it among the four pizzas. Bake in preheated oven for 5-7 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.
6. Cut into triangles and serve immediately. Enjoy!

For more information, visit us at [www.lablue.com/ogb](http://www.lablue.com/ogb)

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