



# February Is Cancer Prevention Month

The latest health and wellness news, tips, and updates from the Lay Benefits Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston.

## LOOKING AHEAD...

### Supporting Loved Ones with Cancer

Being an emotional support can help improve not only their outlook, but their quality of life.

### Over-the-Counter COVID-19 Test Reimbursement

Find out how to get reimbursed for up to eight tests every month.

### Wellness Webinars

This month we focus on evaluating our mental health, eating more antioxidants, improving our gut health, and strength training.

### The RCAB Health Benefit Trust Wellness Program

Did you know you could be leaving **FREE** money on the table? Earning wellness incentives is easy.

### The Wellness Corner

This month we're adding antioxidants to our diet with a Triple Berry Smoothie.



## Preventing Cancer One Lifestyle Change at A Time

According to the [American Association of Cancer Research](#) (AACR), more than 40% of all diagnosed cancers and almost 50% of the deaths related to cancer in this country can be linked to a cause that is nearly always preventable. Some examples include cigarette smoking, sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and exposure to the sun. These preventable causes make up 1 out of 4 cases in the 1.8 million new cancer diagnoses every year. The AACR [reports](#) that quitting or deciding to never smoke decreases your likelihood of developing 18 types of cancers that are linked to tobacco. Using sun protection and avoiding tanning beds help decrease your risk of developing skin cancers, like basal cell carcinoma and melanoma. For more information on recognizing skin cancer and protecting your skin from the sun, please visit this [link](#) to our August 2021 Newsletter.

Getting exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, and eating a nutritious diet can help decrease the [risk](#) of developing cancers as well. Twenty percent of all cancer cases in the United States are attributable to a bad diet, sedentary lifestyle, and obesity. [Free radicals](#), or molecules made in our bodies that are missing an electron (a negative charge), can reach dangerous levels within our cells and cause damage to other surrounding molecules. This damage may affect DNA strands, proteins, and lipids, causing an increase in the risk of developing cancer and other diseases. Limiting [free radicals](#) is important to help decrease the risk of cancer and incorporating [antioxidants](#) into our diet can help reduce this risk. Antioxidants found in healthy foods like fruits and vegetables counterbalance free radicals in our bodies. Check out our All About Antioxidants & Cancer Prevention webinar on February 9<sup>th</sup> to discover new ways to incorporate antioxidants into your diet.

Don't forget! If you and your spouse attend an annual well visit or cancer screening, you could **each** earn \$200 in wellness incentives into your HealthEquity HRA or HSA. To earn points, employees and spouses need to be enrolled in Blue Cross Blue Shield's *ahealthyme* program. Visit [ahealthyme.com/login](https://ahealthyme.com/login) to sign up or access your account today!

## Supporting Loved Ones with Cancer

Finding out that a loved one has cancer can be a difficult conversation for both you and your loved one. However your loved one chooses to respond to the diagnosis, you can offer support in various ways, as recommended by the [American Cancer Society](#).



### Visiting Hours

- Always call to ask if they are available for, or receptive, to a visit.
- Offer to bring food or drinks with you while you're there to help alleviate some stress for them and/or the caregiver.
- Share things you both enjoy or bring projects or a book to read in case they just want your company but don't want to engage.
- Make scheduled, short visits instead of infrequent or long ones.

### Listening Ears

- Loved ones may not be looking for answers, but just want you to listen.
- Keep them in an active role in your life! Ask them about their opinions or ideas.
- Give them honest compliments.
- Support their feelings.
- Don't offer medical advice.
- Don't pressure them to fight the cancer if they're finding it too difficult.

### Helping Out

- Don't be surprised or frustrated that your loved ones may not ask for help. They may want to be as independent as possible.
- If finances are tight and they need equipment or treatment, help them find ways to receive a donation or start a fundraiser to support their needs.
- If you're looking to surprise them with a gift, consider new comfortable clothes, self-care items, funny movies, and other things that will make them smile!

### At Your Service

- Offer to run errands or do chores around the house.
- Offer to help them on a regular basis.
- Include them in projects or usual plans if they're interested and encourage them to communicate if they are overwhelmed.
- Check in with them and their caregiver before you do something and only start after they've given the "okay".

### **\*RCAB HEALTH PLANS UPDATE\***

You can use HRA, HSA, and FSA dollars to pay for at-home, over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 tests. In addition, OTC COVID-19 tests purchased January 15, 2022, or later are eligible for reimbursement through insurance, without the need for a prescription. Reimbursement is available through either Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA or CVS/Caremark for employees/dependents enrolled in the RCAB Health Plans. Up to **eight** OTC COVID-19 tests per enrolled employee/dependent per 30-day period are covered. Each test in a package counts as a single test. Please note that once you have submitted a claim for reimbursement for an OTC COVID-19 test from your HRA, HSA, or FSA account(s), you cannot also receive reimbursement from CVS/Caremark or BCBS. Likewise, if you have received reimbursement from CVS/Caremark, you cannot then seek *additional* reimbursement from BCBS for the same test, and vice versa. For more information on this federal requirement and instructions on how to request reimbursement, visit [catholicbenefits.org/PDF/health/covid\\_test\\_coverage.pdf](https://catholicbenefits.org/PDF/health/covid_test_coverage.pdf).

## Wellness Webinars

Employees and spouses enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans and registered in the Blue Cross *ahealthyme* program can earn \$20 into their HealthEquity HRA or HSA accounts for attending a wellness webinar. Points are awarded for a maximum of five wellness webinars/family activities per Plan Year.

### What is Mental Health? From the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation & Parish Support **AVAILABLE ANYTIME**

Dr. Greg helps us to consider the question "what does it mean to be healthy?" Using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM-5), Dr. Greg helps us discover the diagnostic criteria for mental health and offers insight into how we should approach this topic.

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#). Use password *MentalHealth2021* to access the recording.

### Mastering Your Gut Health with Health and Harmony **AVAILABLE ANYTIME**

Are you struggling with digestive issues (such as irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, or bloating), UTIs or yeast infections, skin rashes and allergies, or unexplained fatigue or sluggishness? If you experience one or more of these symptoms, you could have a gut imbalance. In this workshop, you will learn how to boost your immune system, restore your gut, and feel healthier than ever.

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

### All About Antioxidants & Cancer Prevention **February 9<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm**

Webinar attendees will learn about the important role of antioxidants found in both food and supplements, the best sources of antioxidants, and the nutritional benefits of consuming local and seasonal fruits and vegetables. Attendees will also learn about organic foods and tips to improve overall wellness.

[Click Here to Register](#)

### James Parker-Ashley Strength Training Fitness Class **February 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 6pm**

Grab your dumbbells and come join James for a strength training class. Strength training strengthens bones, improves heart health, and increases your mobility!

[Click Here to Register](#)



## In Case You Missed It...

You can still view the recorded webinars from last month below. **After viewing these webinars, please self-report your viewing to Amanda Gately, Benefits Associate, at [agately@rcab.org](mailto:agately@rcab.org)** and you can earn 20 HRA/HSA dollars. Points are awarded for a maximum of five wellness webinars/family activities per Plan Year. **You can access webinars for 60 days following their live recording date.**

#### James Parker-Ashley Fitness Class

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

#### Biohacking Your Health

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

#### Metabolism Makeovers for Wellness & Weight Loss

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

#### Anxiety During Unprecedented Times

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

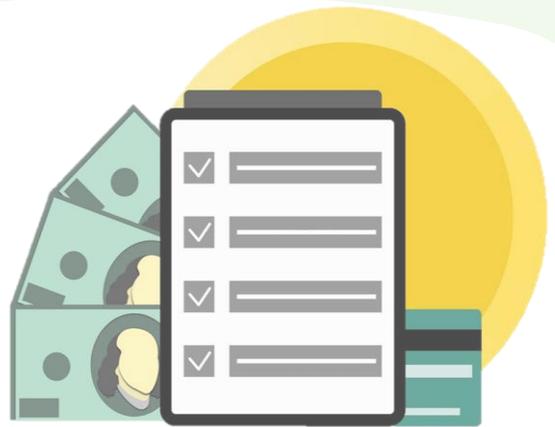


Let us know what you want to see!  
Please email Kara Lavertu at [klavertu@rcab.org](mailto:klavertu@rcab.org) with your webinar topic ideas or requests.

## Get Involved in the RCAB Health Benefit Trust Wellness Program

You're enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans, but are you getting the most out of your enrollment? The RCAB Health Benefit Trust offers a [Wellness Program](#) to help you earn **FREE** money for things you may already do, like attending your annual Well Visit with your primary care physician or viewing monthly webinars. These funds help pay for co-pays, prescriptions, dental visits, vision expenses, certain over-the-counter products, PPE (like hand sanitizer and face masks), and so much more! For a full list of IRS qualified medical expenses, click this [link](#).

Ready to get started? Sign up for the RCAB Health Benefit Trust Wellness Program today! Watch [this short video](#) for more information.



## Don't Forget to Submit Your Wellness Rewards Form!

Employees and spouses enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans can be reimbursed for up to \$150 in HRA or HSA dollars for wellness purchases! Eligible expenses include:

- ✓ Gym membership costs
- ✓ Personal and group fitness memberships
- ✓ Fitness Trackers (FitBit, Apple Watch, Garmin, etc.)
- ✓ Online class memberships (FitBit Premium, Peloton, etc.)
- ✓ Exercise equipment (treadmills, spinning bikes, dumbbells, resistance bands, etc.)
- ✓ Sports Team membership fees
- ✓ COVID-19 Related PPE (hand sanitizer, face masks, etc.)
- ✓ Weight management memberships

Please download the Wellness Rewards form [here](#) and email the form and receipt to Kara Lavertu at [klavertu@rcab.org](mailto:klavertu@rcab.org).

THE  
WELLNESS  
CORNER

New health and wellness topics covering exercise routines, recipes, tips, and tricks to spark motivation in your life every month!

# Triple Berry Smoothie

## INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup of strawberries, cut into quarters
- 1/2 cup of blueberries
- 1/2 cup of raspberries
- 1/2 cup of vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup of skim milk
- 1/2 a banana
- 4 ice cubes
- 2 TBS of honey or agave nectar

## DIRECTIONS

1. Add strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, milk, yogurt, and honey or agave nectar into a blender.
2. Purée until smooth.
3. Add in the ice cubes and blend until the mixture is smooth.  
Enjoy!

Recipe from Driscoll's website: <https://www.driscolls.com/recipes/antioxidant-triple-berry-smoothie>

In good health,  
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Benefits Department