

ConnectiCare

# HEALTH MATTERS

2023, Volume 2





# Get Back to Basics With Fitness and Health

We've made fitness and health too complicated. It seems every day there's a new fitness fad, diet, or supplement coming out that is going to make us healthier.

According to the academic journal *The Lancet*, Americans rank 143rd globally for actual participation in physical activity. There are many reasons for this, but one is that the wellness industry makes things more complex than they need to be — mainly to sell products and services.

**It's time to go back to basics.** Writer Michael Pollan famously offered this nutrition advice: "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants." Writer and performance coach Brad Stulberg offered up something similar for fitness: "Move your body often, sometimes hard, every bit counts."

With this advice in mind, here are five science-backed principles that you can use to keep healthy and active through the winter:

**Walk for overall fitness.** Recent research from the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* that examined nearly 140,000 people in the United States found that doing at least 150 minutes per week of brisk walking was linked to a 20% reduction in all-cause death. Walking is a simple exercise that can be done almost anywhere. It also provides opportunities for social connections.

**Connect with your friends.** Evidence has shown that hanging out with friends and family is good for long-term health. Social connections are associated with improved sleep quality and reduced risk of heart disease and stroke.

**Avoid restrictive diets.** Diets usually don't work and rarely work well long term. Past dieting is one of the strongest predictors for future weight gain, according to a 2013 study published in *Frontiers in Psychology*. Focus on eating a balanced, nutritious diet with few processed foods and plenty of fruits and vegetables.

**Say no to supplements.** Most of them don't work and may even cause harm. A 2016 article published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* referred to more than 20 years of research and found that studies evaluating dietary supplements hadn't found many health benefits.

**Build a strength training routine.** In addition to cardio exercise, incorporate some strength training into your fitness routine to keep your muscles strong. You can do a simple set of exercises right in your home or office that includes pushups, squats, planks, and mountain climbers, to name a few. Talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise routine.

# Teladoc® Primary360

Some ConnectiCare plans can receive digital primary care provider (PCP) services through



Teladoc® Primary360. Teladoc's network of PCPs will create a personalized care plan, help manage conditions, and prescribe the medicines you need. They can also refer you to doctors in the ConnectiCare network, like specialists or mental health professionals, and options for lab work, imaging, and testing. With Teladoc Primary360, you can:

- Choose a PCP.
- Schedule video or phone visits with your PCP Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Discuss your medical history, health challenges, and goals, and schedule annual wellness exams, lab work, and prescriptions – all in one place.
- Have a dedicated Care Team, available to you 24/7, that can help you stay on track and answer follow-up questions after wellness visits.

## For More Information

Visit the Teladoc Primary360 website at [teladoc.com/ways-we-help/primary-care](https://teladoc.com/ways-we-help/primary-care) or call **855-617-2082**.

# Care for Your Smile

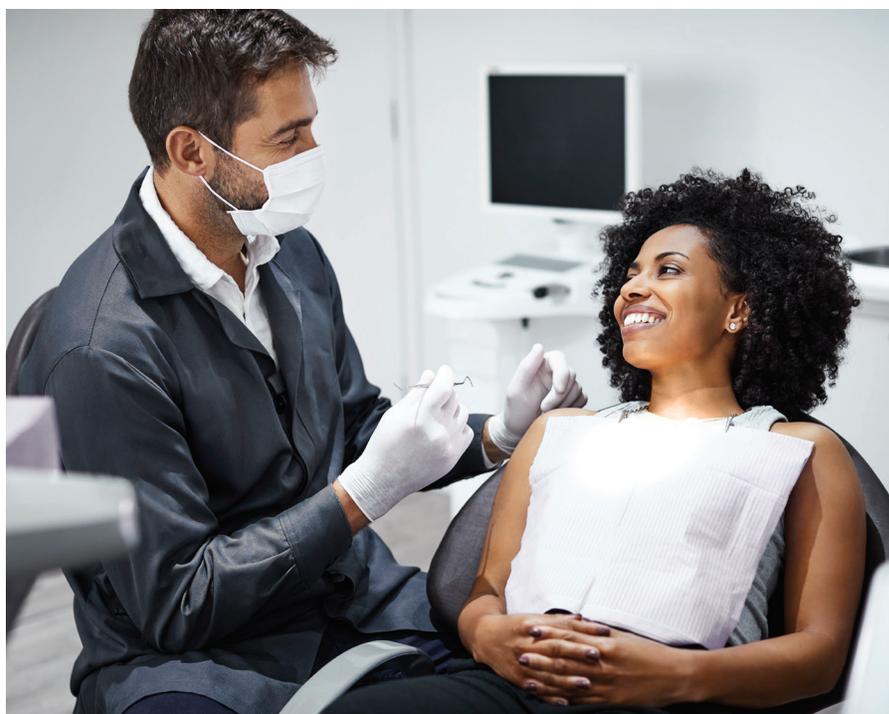
Oral (mouth) health is a doorway to overall health and wellness. How well you care for your teeth, and your entire mouth, can affect more than you may realize.

Tooth decay and gum disease are two common conditions that, if left untreated, can lead to tooth loss. This can drastically affect your mental and physical health, as well as your quality of life. Care for your smile and your health by practicing good oral hygiene. That means brushing your teeth, flossing, and visiting your dentist regularly (at least once a year).

If your plan includes dental coverage, schedule an appointment with your dentist today. Don't have a dentist? You can find one by signing in to your member portal at [my.connecticare.com](https://my.connecticare.com). Click "Find Care" and choose your plan name in the drop-down menu. Choose "Dental" as your service type. The results of your search will only include providers available in your selected plan or network. For help finding a dentist or understanding your benefits, you can also call our dental provider, Healthplex, at **855-999-2329** (TTY: **800-662-1220**), available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Not sure if your plan includes dental coverage? Check your summary of benefits or call the Member Services number on your ID card.

*Source: CDC*



# Schedule Your Flu Vaccine Now!

This winter, you may have a greater risk of catching and spreading seasonal flu. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the 2022-23 flu season infection rates were back to pre-COVID-19 levels. The 2023-24 seasonal flu vaccine limits your risk of hospitalization if you or a family member catches the flu. Visit your doctor or go to a local pharmacy to get your vaccination.

Don't have a doctor? You can find a primary care provider (PCP) by signing in to your **myConnectiCare** member portal at **my.connecticare.com**. Click "Find Care" and choose your plan name from the drop-down menu. Choose "Primary Care Provider" as your service type. The results of your search will only include providers available in your selected plan or network.



## Put Your Health in Your Hands With myConnectiCare

This holiday season, give yourself the gift of staying on top of your health! It's easier than ever to put your health care in your hands by registering for our member portal, **myConnectiCare**. Simply head to **my.connecticare.com**. Select "Register" at the bottom of the screen and fill in the required information. Then, explore all the features of our member portal, where you can:

- Find in-network hospitals and doctors.
- Download a virtual member ID card.
- View your plan benefits.
- Go paperless.
- And more!

**GO PAPERLESS** Once you're signed in to the portal, go paperless to view your documents and plan materials as soon as they are available. You will be notified of new communications by email or text message, based on your preferences. Click "My Profile" and select "Go Paperless" under "Communication Preferences."



# Put Prevention First This Winter

Preventive care is one of the keys to good health. Routine health screenings and annual checkups can help you identify potentially serious health conditions and get treatment.

Work with your primary care provider (PCP) to discuss other yearly appointments you may need such as a visit to a dermatologist (for a skin check) or a gynecologist (for women's routine health checkups). Your PCP can help coordinate your care to make sure you are scheduling the right services and appointments.

Ask your PCP about important screenings for common conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, as well as other important screenings, like those for certain cancers. If you're age 50 or over, ask your doctor about the shingles and pneumonia vaccines. Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information on screenings and be sure to go for your annual checkup.

You can also visit [connecticare.com/live-well/preventive-care](https://connecticare.com/live-well/preventive-care) to access online tools and programs that make it easier for you to take care of yourself and the people you love most.



*Health Matters is published by ConnectiCare to inform members of current health issues and improve the use of services. This publication should not replace the care and advice of your doctor. Always talk to your doctor about your personal health needs. This is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, cost-sharing, and restrictions may apply. They may change each year. Our network may change at any time. You will receive notice when necessary.*

## Build Deep Community

This year, the U.S. Surgeon General released an advisory calling attention to the public health crisis of loneliness and isolation in the United States.

Loneliness is an unfortunate reality for many. But how do we overcome it? One answer is to build community. You can start small by connecting with a friend each month to have a conversation. You might also consider starting a small club or common interest group. Or, get involved in your community by joining a club, volunteering, or being active in local politics.

You can even connect with us in the community. Through our Be Human program, ConnectiCare employees volunteer their time at organizations across Connecticut. Follow us on social media to see our latest efforts throughout the state.

If you ever feel depressed or lonely, speak with your doctor or a licensed professional and get help.



## A Head's Up on Health Assessments

You may have recently been contacted for an in-home or telehealth wellness visit — a no-cost, optional benefit for certain members that is managed by our partners **Signify Health**, **Matrix Medical Network**, and **Care Connectors**. It doesn't impact your health coverage in any way.

Our partners are leading providers of comprehensive wellness visits and care management services that assess health and safety and educate members on managing their own wellness.

During a wellness visit, members can ask questions and discuss any potential concerns.\* If you are selected to participate, they will reach out to you to schedule an assessment. There's no need to contact them.

*\*Wellness visits do not replace care received from a provider. Speak with your doctor about follow-up and further health care decisions. Services not available to large group commercial members.*





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## Don't Hibernate: Stay Active During Winter With ConnectiCare Wellness Classes

Do you go into hibernation mode when it is cold outside? It can be hard to stay motivated to exercise in the winter, and a gym membership is not always an option. But you can join our ConnectiCare virtual classes every week. Just because it's cold, doesn't mean you need to stop moving.

Meditation and yoga can be great for relaxation and improved physical health, but they may also improve your mental health. The mindful meditation class will incorporate breathing and guided imagery exercises to help you relax, reduce stress, control anxiety, and promote emotional health. The yoga class will be a moving meditation to foster mental calmness, reduce stress, increase flexibility, and more. ConnectiCare also sponsors virtual Yoga In Our City, where you can enjoy on-demand yoga classes from the comfort of your home. Yoga In Our City classes are led by independent local yoga instructors and designed for all levels of practice. Visit [yogainourcity.com](http://yogainourcity.com) to learn more. Speak to your doctor about incorporating mindful-based therapy into your life.

All events are free and open to the public, but registration is required. ConnectiCare will continue to offer virtual events to bring health and wellness to you and others, regardless of location. For more information, visit [connecticare.com/events](http://connecticare.com/events).