

MENTAL HEALTH



It's never too late to prevent cancer

As you get older, your chances of getting cancer go up. But that doesn't mean you will get cancer. And there are things you can do to reduce your risk. Take these steps to stay healthy and cancer-free.

Get regular cancer screenings

Screenings or tests can find cancer early, when it's easier to treat. Talk to your provider about your cancer risk and what screenings you need. Common screenings include:

- **Breast cancer:** Women should get a mammogram (breast

X-ray) every two years (or more often) until they are 74.

- **Colorectal cancer:** All adults should get screened regularly with an at-home stool test or colonoscopy until they are 75.
- **Prostate cancer:** Men aged 55 to 69 should talk to their provider about whether or not to get screened.

Don't smoke

Smoking is a major cause of cancer. If you smoke, it's never too late to stop, and help is available. Talk to your provider or care team if you need help quitting, and if you should be screened for lung cancer.

Drink less alcohol






Drinking too much can raise your risk for cancer. If you do drink, stick to less than one or two drinks a day.

Protect your skin

Wear sunscreen, hats and long sleeves when you're outside to help prevent skin cancer. Check your skin for any changes, or have a provider check for you.

Stay safe at home

Falls are a common cause of injury, especially for older adults. And they often happen at home. But with a few simple changes, you can make your home safer. Here are some ideas to fall-proof each area of your home.

ROOM	FALL-PREVENTION TIPS
 Living room	Lay down non-slip rugs: Make sure rugs are secure or non-slip. Use supportive furniture: Chairs with sturdy armrests can help you stand.
 Bedroom	Clear the floors: Remove clutter and keep pathways open. Use bright lighting: Use nightlights and make sure rooms are well-lit.
 Bathroom	Install grab bars: Place near the toilet and inside the shower. Use non-slip mats: Put non-skid mats in the shower and on the floor. Try a raised toilet seat: A higher toilet seat with handles can make it easier to sit and stand.
 Kitchen	Organize your cabinets: Keep everyday items on lower shelves. Use a sturdy step stool: Use a stable step stool with a handle if you need to reach high shelves.
 Stairs & hallways	Add handrails: Install handrails on both sides of the stairs. Use good lighting: Keep stairs and hallways well-lit. Try motion-sensor lights. They turn on automatically when you walk by them. Mark the steps: Use bright tape on stair edges for visibility. Also, try adding stair pads for extra traction.



Your doctor can help you understand your risk for falls. They can check your strength, balance and other factors that might make falls more likely. Your plan may offer tips, resources or even equipment to help you make your home safer. Reach out to your care team for support.

We want to hear from you. Join our Community Health Education and Advisory Committee to share your feedback and help us improve our services. Visit [AetnaBetterHealth.com/newjersey/member-advisory-committee.html](https://www.aetna.com/newjersey/member-advisory-committee.html) for more info.

Simple tips to ease caregiver burnout

Being a caregiver to a loved one may be hard. The demands, emotional stress and physical strain can lead to burnout. But there are ways to cope and even thrive in this challenging role. Use these tips to manage the top causes of caregiver burnout.

Get enough sleep

Too little sleep can make you grumpy, less focused and more likely to get sick. Try to stick to a set bed time to get 6 to 8 hours of sleep each night.

Prepare essential documents ahead of time

To take care of your loved one smoothly, you need to have the right documents ready. Having easy access to these documents will help to reduce your stress:

- Power of attorney
- Medical authorization
- Emergency contacts

Keep up with your appointments

When you're managing a loved one's medical care, it's easy to forget about your own. Set up appointments, like an annual checkup or regular dentist visits ahead of time. Set reminders on your phone so you don't forget.

Take breaks

Caring for a loved one can be a 24/7 job. But everyone needs a break to recharge. Ask other family or friends if they can help with things like errands, meal prep or rides to appointments. Or talk to your loved one's care team about options for professional help. Adult day care or a home health aide — even just a day or two a week — can be a huge help.



What is an advance directive?

A time may come when you're too sick to talk to your primary care provider, family or friends about the type of health care you want. That's why you need an advance directive. It's a legal document that spells out what care you want — and don't want. There are two main types of advance directives:

- **Living will:** This gives legal instructions for your care.
- **Health care power of attorney:** This lets you name someone you trust to make health care decisions for you if you aren't able to do so.

Your provider can tell you more about advance directives. You can change your decisions at any time. Be sure to give copies to your family, your provider and the person you name as your health care agent.



7 tips to get a better blood pressure reading

Nearly half of adults have high blood pressure. And it can lead to serious health problems like heart attack or stroke.

High blood pressure has no symptoms. The only way to know is to get your blood pressure checked.

Your providers will likely check your blood pressure any time you see them. But you can also check your blood pressure between doctor visits with a home blood pressure monitor.

Don't have a blood pressure monitor? Talk to your provider or care team for recommendations on how to get one.

Whether you're checking your blood pressure at home or the

doctor's office, there are ways to get a more accurate reading. Follow these tips from the American Heart Association:

- Avoid smoking, exercise, caffeine and alcohol for at least 30 minutes before taking your blood pressure.
- If you can, empty your bladder before taking your blood pressure.
- Put the cuff on your bare arm, not over clothing.
- Sit upright with your back supported and your feet flat on the ground. Don't cross your legs.
- Rest your arm on a flat surface at heart level.
- Relax and sit calmly for a few minutes without talking before you start your measurement.
- Take at least two readings, waiting a minute or two between each measurement.

Your provider can guide you on how often to check your blood pressure at home. Be sure to write down all your measurements so you can share them with your provider when you see them.

Ready to meet a healthier you?

With MyActiveHealth you can get coaching and track progress toward your health goals. You can register for MyActiveHealth online through your member portal, or by visiting **MyActiveHealth.com/newjersey**

Got a medical bill? Most members do not have to pay to get benefits. You should not get a bill for the services you receive unless your benefit package has copays. If you get a bill that you think you should not have gotten, call Member Services for help.

5 ways to deal with loneliness

Social connections are important for your mental and physical health. Try these strategies to foster relationships with family, friends and community.

If you're struggling with feelings of loneliness, here are some simple steps you can take to build community.

1 Start small

You don't have to go on new adventures to meet new people. Instead, look for ways to connect with the people around you. That could be members of your group fitness class or a neighbor you see regularly.

Strike up a conversation next time you see them. It will help you feel more connected to the people around you.



2 Focus on health

If you're struggling to take care of your own health, you may have a harder time finding the energy to socialize. Focus on yourself first by getting enough sleep, exercising and keeping up with doctor visits. When your physical needs are met, you may find it easier to start reaching out to other people.

3 Consider therapy

Loneliness could be a symptom of another disorder, like social anxiety. A therapist can help you notice negative thought patterns that might be making you feel lonely.

4 Limit social media

Connecting with friends and family online can help foster those relationships. But too much time on social media can also make you feel more isolated. In fact, one study found that people who limited their time on Facebook and Instagram reported fewer feelings of depression and loneliness.

If you use social media, use it to interact with people directly. Maybe it's an opening for a phone call or an in-person visit.

5 Be open about loneliness

You're not alone in feeling lonely. A 2023 poll found that about 1 in 3 older adults feel isolated at least some of the time. Talk to friends and family about your feelings of loneliness. There's a good chance they can relate. Then, find ways to help each other feel less lonely.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text **988** or go to **988lifeline.org** to chat.

Learn more about your plan with your Member Handbook. Visit **AetnaBetterHealth.com/newjersey/member-materials-forms.html** to view your handbook online. Or call Member Services at **1-855-232-3596 (TTY: 711)** to have one mailed to you.

Take advantage of these New Jersey state resources

The Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving (JACC) Program

People who are at risk of nursing facility placement but meet certain income and resource requirements may be able to remain in their homes, thanks to the JACC program. By providing in-home service packages tailored to individuals, JACC can delay or even prevent placement in a nursing facility.

Call toll-free at **1-877-222-3737** or visit **nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/a-k/jacc**.

Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers

This nine-week program consists of weekly 90-minute sessions with a small group of caregivers. Participants learn about the disease process, develop stress management techniques, and gain further knowledge and skills. The series is designed to improve the quality of life of family caregivers who provide care for persons with chronic diseases and to help caregivers manage their stress and cope better with their lives.

To find a class in your area, call the Division of Aging Services at **1-609-438-4797** or visit **[CaregiverStressBusters.org](https://www.caregiverstressbusters.org)**.

Statewide Respite Care Program

This program provides respite care services for elderly and functionally impaired persons ages 18 and older. It helps unpaid caregivers find relief from stress related to providing daily care. A secondary goal of the program is to provide the support necessary to help families avoid placing their loved ones in nursing homes.

To reach the Statewide Respite Care Program in your county, call toll-free at **1-877-222-3737** or visit **[ADRCNJ.org](https://www.adrcnj.org)**.

Project Healthy Bones

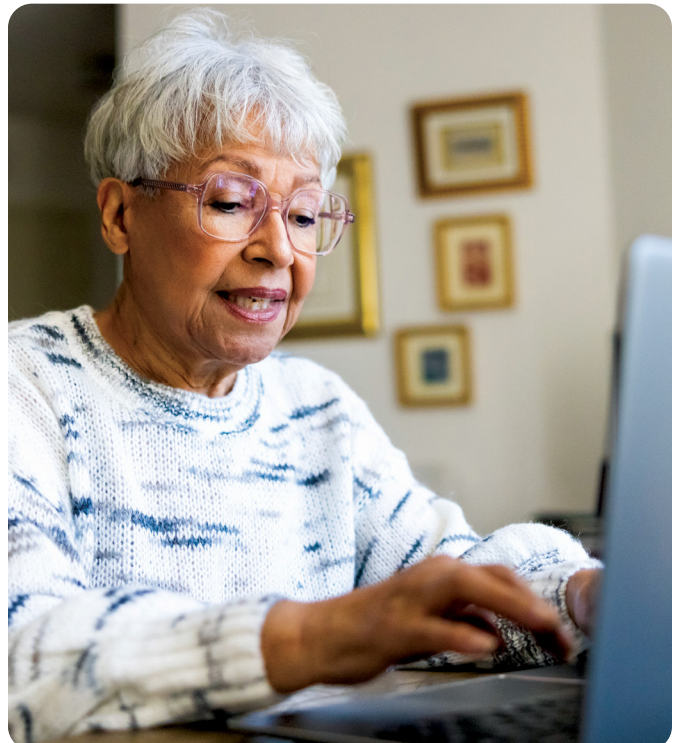
This 24-week exercise and education program for people with, or at risk of, osteoporosis includes exercises that target the body's larger muscle groups to improve strength, balance and flexibility.

Call **1-609-438-4797** or visit **nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/l-p/healthy-bones**.

Move Today

Move Today is a 30- to 45-minute nonaerobic exercise class designed to improve flexibility, balance and stamina. Participants assess their health, physical well-being and intent to make behavior changes before and upon completion of the program. The exercises and guidelines are based on current nationally recognized standards and science.

Call **1-609-438-4797** or visit **nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/l-p/move-today**.





Know the signs of elder abuse

Older adults deserve to feel safe and cared for. But each year, hundreds of thousands of adults over 60 are victims of elder abuse.

Elder abuse is when someone hurts, scares or takes advantage of an older adult. It can

happen at home, in a nursing home or anywhere. The person causing harm could be a caregiver, family member or even a stranger.

Sometimes elder abuse is hard to see, but there are signs you can look for:

- Bruises, burns or cuts that can't be explained
- Changes in behavior, like fear, sadness or confusion
- Dirty clothes, poor hygiene or not enough food
- Money missing or strange bank activity
- Being left alone too long or locked in a room
- A caregiver not letting you see or talk to the person
- The person seems afraid of someone

Noticing these signs doesn't always mean abuse is happening, but it's important to pay attention. If you think someone is being abused, speak up.

You can talk to another family member or a provider. You can also call Adult Protective Services (APS) in your area. If you think someone is in urgent danger, call **911**.

Visit nia.nih.gov/health/elder-abuse for more info.

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ENGLISH: ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call the number on the back of your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

SPANISH: ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número que aparece en el reverso de su tarjeta de identificación o al **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

CHINESE: 注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電您的 ID 卡背面的電話號碼或 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**。



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Boost your memory

Try these tips for staying sharp well into your golden years.

Do jigsaw puzzles

Solving puzzles regularly can help keep your mind sharp.

Stay social

Join a book club, go to local events or set up regular phone calls with friends or family.

Get creative

Try painting, drawing or coloring in an adult coloring book.

Quiz yourself

Think of a few personal questions. Then spend a few minutes trying to come up with the answer. A few examples you can try:

- What's your best friend's phone number?
- When are your grandchildren's or loved ones' birthdays?
- How many actors can you name from your favorite movie?
- What are the lyrics to a hit song from your high school years?

