

Healthy Connections

The Oklahoma Health Initiatives ACO Beneficiary Newsletter

Welcome to Healthy Connections, the Oklahoma Health Initiatives newsletter for Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Medicare beneficiaries. Inside this newsletter you will find information about your healthcare and healthcare providers.

Don't forget to schedule your annual wellness visit

The annual wellness visit is a conversation between you and your primary care doctor. Come prepared to discuss your health history, goals and concerns. Bring a list of medications you're currently taking. We'll work with you to create a health plan based on your current health and your goals to keep you happy and healthy. You can schedule online anytime at healthcare.ascension.org or call the PulseLine to find a provider at **918-744-0123**

www.ascension.org/StJohnCare



Go online to schedule or call to ask about same-day, next-day, or online visits. Primary care doctors and pediatricians start with a conversation to deliver the right care for minor illnesses and injuries. And if you need more advanced care, they will connect you with specialists and other services close to home, and part of our network of Ascension sites of care.

3 Physical Benefits of Gardening for Seniors

#1: Dexterity Maintenance

As we age, it's not uncommon for our dexterity to decline. This can make everyday tasks more difficult and can even lead to a loss of independence.

Gardening is a great way to help maintain your dexterity, as it requires the use of both fine and gross motor skills.

A study published by The American Society for Horticulture Science found that older adults who were active gardeners had greater hand strength and dexterity than non-gardeners. The study's participants were aged 58 to 86, and the research showed that those who gardened had "significantly higher" grip strength than those who didn't.

#2: Daily Light Exercise

Seniors need to get regular exercise, but it's difficult to find an activity that is both easy on the joints and enjoyable. Gardening is a perfect solution, as it provides a daily dose of light exercise without being too strenuous. But how can you be sure seniors are not overdoing it?

Check with a doctor before starting any new physical activity, including gardening. Start slowly and gradually increase the time spent gardening as tolerated. Stop gardening if you feel short of breath, have chest pain, or experience any other symptoms that concern you.

Tip: Seniors should ask for help if needed, especially with tasks that require lifting or bending.



#3: Overall Health Improvement

Some of the most well-known benefits of gardening are the improvements it can provide regarding health, including:

Heart health: A 2017 study shows that gardening can lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Bone health: Gardening, as a low-intensity activity, can also be beneficial for bone health by reducing the risk of osteoporosis and improving bone density.

Mental health: Another study found that seniors with dementia who participated in indoor gardening saw improved cognition than those who did not garden. Gardening can also help to reduce stress levels and improve mood.

For seniors, these benefits can be especially important in maintaining overall health and well-being.

**Senior Services of America*

Not feeling well? Not sure where to go?

Find the care you need now — we connect the dots on the rest



Care right away: 24/7 emergency care

Ascension ER care teams are here when you need us most. Our teams work quickly to listen and understand your needs during a major illness or injury. After your visit, we'll connect you to the follow-up care that's right for you. Visit an Ascension ER if you or a loved one has a life-threatening illness or injury, such as:

- Severe allergic reactions
- Extreme stomach pain
- Sudden and severe back pain
- Major trauma
- Chest pain
- Sudden weakness, difficulty speaking, numbness, difficulty walking, or loss of consciousness



Care today: urgent care/express care/immediate care

When it's less of an emergency, but you still need care now. Get same-day walk in care for minor illness and injury, such as:

- Moderate allergic reaction
- Bites
- Moderate burns
- Mild asthma
- Sinus, upper respiratory conditions
- Seasonal allergies
- Sore throat/strep/cold/flu/fever
- Urinary tract infections
- Sudden, but moderate back pain
- High fever
- Sprains and strains
- Cuts that require stitches



Care any time: primary care and specialty care

When it's not an emergency and your doctor's office is open, talk to your doctor about your minor illness or injuries. Ask about same-day, next-day, walk-in or virtual visits.

- Annual checkups
- Screenings
- New symptoms or chronic conditions
- Emotional health
- Scheduling imaging and lab tests
- Prescriptions through Ascension Rx

If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, go directly to the ER or call 911.

Call to schedule, check in online or walk in any time.
ascension.org



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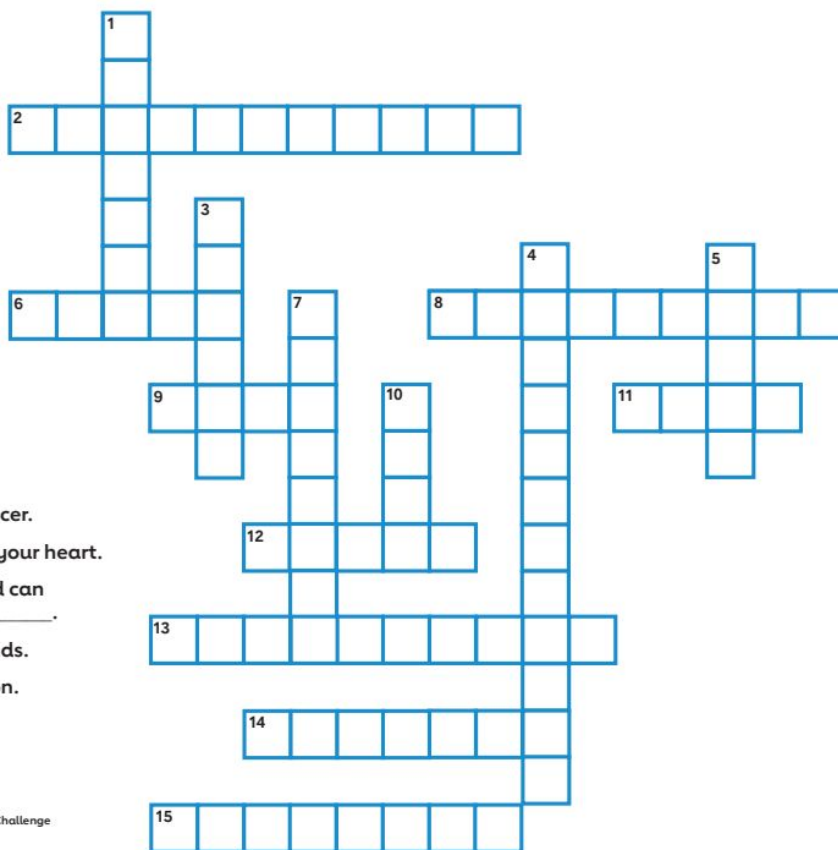
HEART-HEALTHY CROSSWORD

ACROSS:

2. Foods high in _____ are bad for the heart.
6. Controlling blood _____ will help prevent diabetes.
8. Most common symptom of a heart attack.
9. How many servings of fruits and vegetables a day?
11. The average heart is approximately the size of what?
12. We have approx 60,000 _____ of blood vessels.
13. Eating colorful _____ is part of a heart-healthy diet.
14. The heart pumps about 2,000 _____ of blood per day.
15. Blood _____ needs to be below 120/80.

DOWN:

1. A bad habit that contributes to heart disease and lung cancer.
3. The higher your blood pressure, the more _____ is put on your heart.
4. Not getting enough sleep can be harmful to your body and can cause health problems including high blood pressure and _____.
5. True or False: The average heart weighs between 7-15 pounds.
7. 30min of _____ a day can greatly improve heart function.
10. True or False: heart disease is preventable.



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This free issue of Healthy Connections is for Medicare beneficiaries whose doctors participate in Oklahoma Health Initiatives, an Accountable Care Organization (ACO). It provides information about ACO programs, tools and resources to help beneficiaries stay healthy and engaged in their healthcare. Medicare beneficiaries have the option to decline data sharing. Please contact OKHI with questions.

For general questions or additional information about Accountable Care Organizations, please visit [medicare.gov/acos.html](https://www.medicare.gov/acos.html) or call 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227). TTY users should call 877-486-2048.



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