

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Health & Welfare Benefits Trust

NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter 2021-22

Key Reasons to Get a Flu Shot - Now!

Based on an article by Fran Kritz for NPR

Experts worry that we could be heading into a big flu season, especially if enough Americans do not get their annual flu shot, which is now widely available. "We are worried the incredibly low influenza rates that we saw last season could create a rebound influenza epidemic this year," says Dr. Mark Roberts, director of the Public Health Dynamics Laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh.

Most years as many as 12,000 to 52,000 people die from the flu in the U.S. - but the unusually mild flu season last year means that fewer people have immunity to strains likely to be circulating this winter. That could lead to anywhere from 100,000 to 400,000 additional hospitalizations for influenza, according to two recent computer modeling studies done by Roberts and his colleagues.

I heard that the flu essentially disappeared last year. Do I really need a flu shot this year?

Yes. Last year saw a record-low number of flu cases, likely thanks to widespread mask wearing, remote work and school, and physical distancing. But this year, experts fear that the reopening of schools, decreased adherence to pandemic precautions and surging delta variant infections could create a double whammy: a very serious flu and COVID-19 season.

When's the best time to get the flu shot?

Why not now? Flu season starts in October in the U.S. While there's some concern that immunity might wane before the end of flu season in May if you get the vaccine too early, there's not enough data to know the optimal time to get the shot, Grohskopf says. The CDC says aim to get your flu vaccine by the end of October. By then, cases will have started to mount, and many people will be just a few weeks away from travel for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Inside this issue

Mental Health Resources for Kaiser Members.....	2
Mental Health Resources for Anthem Members.....	3
Remember the Moment	4
Recipe.....	5
Take a Hike	5
Contact List	6



Mental Health & Wellness Resources for Kaiser Members

Mental health content center on where to access care, self-care assessments and more: <http://www.kp.org/mentalhealth>

Health classes: <https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/southern-california/health-wellness/classes-programs>

Support groups: <https://www.nami.org/Support-Education>

Personalized healthy lifestyle programs: <https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/northern-california/health-wellness/healthy-lifestyle-programs>

Wellness Coaching by Phone for stress and sleep:
<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health-wellness/wellness-coaching>

Prescriptions mailed to your door (requires sign-on):
<https://members.kaiserpermanente.org/kpweb/about/rxrefill.do>

Self-care apps for meditation, mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapy:
<http://www.kp.org/selfcareapps>

Self-care resources with online programs to help manage depression, reduce stress & improve sleep: <http://www.kp.org/selfcare>

Find Your Words stigma, resilience and mental health support center:
<http://www.findyourwords.org/>

24-hour mental health support lines:

Region	Support Line #
California – Southern	800-900-3277
California – Northern	800-464-4000
Colorado	303-471-7700
Colorado – Southern	866-702-9026
Georgia	800-611-1811
Hawaii (Oahu)	808-432-7600
Hawaii (Neighbor Islands)	888-945-7600
Northwest	855-632-8280
Maryland, Virginia, WA DC	866-530-8778
Washington	888-287-2680

Feeling Overwhelmed? Tap into the power of self care...

Adult **Kaiser** members can download 2 popular apps at kp.org/selfcareapps



Calm is an app for daily use that uses meditation and mindfulness to help lower stress, reduce anxiety, and improve sleep quality. With guided meditations, programs taught by world-renowned experts, sleep stories narrated by celebrities, mindful movement videos, and more, Calm offers something for everyone.



myStrength offers personalized programs with interactive activities, daily health trackers to monitor and maintain your progress, in-the-moment coping tools, and more. It's designed to help you set goals and work toward them in ways that work for you — by making positive changes that support your mental, emotional, and overall well-being.

Mental Health & Wellness Resources for **Anthem** Members

LiveHealth Online

- Have a private and secure video visit with a therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist without leaving the privacy and comfort of home. Using your smartphone, tablet, or computer with a camera, you can:
- **Talk with a licensed therapist in seven days or less.** They can help with stress, anxiety, depression, grief, panic attacks, and family issues. Sessions are 45 minutes and cost about the same as an in-office therapy visit.
- **Visit a board-certified psychiatrist within two weeks.** Psychiatrists provide medication support to help you manage a mental health condition. A session usually costs the same as an in-office psychiatrist visit.
- To make an appointment, visit livehealthonline.com or call **888-548-3432**. Appointments are available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week.

myStrength

- myStrength is a digital self-help tool that fosters resilience, mindfulness, and coping skills. You'll find interactive and personalized programs geared toward helping you boost your mood and handle life's challenges, including stress, anxiety, depression, chronic pain, and sleep issues — at no extra cost to you. Log in to anthem.com/ca, go to *My Health Dashboard*, choose **Programs**, and select **myStrength** to begin.

Sydney Health mobile app

- Anthem's secure mobile app serves as an excellent connection point for mental health support. Use Sydney Health to:
 - * Find behavioral health professionals in your plan's network.
 - * Check cost and what your plan covers.
 - * Discover resources that support your well-being.
 - * Connect to LiveHealth Online for a virtual visit with a therapist.

Behavioral Health Resource Center

- Extra support can make a big difference when facing issues such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, or substance use. Our caring experts will work with you at no extra cost to find treatment programs and arrange confidential counseling and support services that meet your individual and family needs. Call **1-866-785-2789**.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Program

- This no-cost, confidential program builds a support system for families of members on the autism spectrum and helps parents understand care options. Our specially trained case managers can coordinate medical and community resources for you, including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy. Call **1-844-269-0538**.

Mental health is as important as physical health when caring for your overall well-being. !

The first step in protecting your overall well-being is to learn about these common mental health topics:

Stress: Long-term stress can damage your health, so watch for warning signs and manage your response to stressful situations before you feel overwhelmed.

Managing emotions:

Expressing your emotions effectively is important to your health and well-being. Pent-up emotions can be harmful to your mind, body, and relationships with others.

Sleep: When you sleep, your mind and body are hard at work on your overall health. Sleep builds up your immune system and strengthens your mind.

Anxiety: Uncontrolled anxiety can be a burden that affects your work and relationships. Severe and constant anxiety may cause medical problems or make them worse, but there are effective ways to control your anxiety and protect your mental health.

Suicide: Intervention and support are key to suicide prevention. If you know someone who is thinking of harming themselves, take the threat of suicide seriously. Call a doctor or suicide line or take the person to an ER. Contact the confidential and free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 24/7: **800-273-TALK (8255)**.

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To Remember The Moment, Try Taking Fewer Photos

Adapted from an article for NPR by Daryl Austin

As the holidays approach, many families spend more time together. You reach for your phone because you want to remember those special moments. But before you do, here's a bit of surprising science that avid photo-takers need to know: Taking photos is not the perfect memory-retention tool you think it is.

Snapping too many pictures could actually harm the brain's ability to retain memories, says Elizabeth Loftus, a psychological science professor at the University of California, Irvine. It works in one of two ways, Loftus explains: We either offload the responsibility of remembering moments when we take pictures of them, or we're so distracted by the process of taking a photo that we miss the moment altogether. "As with information, when we take pictures we're offloading the responsibility of remembering onto an external device," says Julia Soares, an assistant psychology professor at Mississippi State University.

Photography "outsources" memories

When people rely on technology to remember something for them, they're essentially outsourcing their memory," says Linda Henkel, a psychology professor at Fairfield University. "They know their camera is capturing that moment for them, so they don't pay full attention to it in a way that might help them remember."

How purposeful photo-taking can aid memory

There are, however, some memory retention advantages to taking photos - when done mindfully. "We know from many studies that photos are good memory cues," Soares says, "so the story isn't quite so simple as 'taking photos is bad.' "

Another benefit of photos is that they can help us recall moments more accurately since our memories are fallible. "Memories fade and can become contaminated without a visual record backing them up," Loftus says. "A photo is an excellent vehicle to bring you back to a moment."

Tips: how to make photography help — not harm — your memories

- **Have someone else take photos** - especially at important events so you can be fully engaged with the event itself.
- **Be intentional with the photos you're taking.** Consider why you're taking the photo. If we more mindfully think about our goals in taking photos, we can improve our memories from our experiences.
- **Focus in on details.** If you immerse yourself in the details of a scene as you prepare to take a photo, that process can help anchor memories.
- **Take a few good pictures; then put down the phone.**
- **Look at your photos regularly and organize them into albums or print them out.** The best way to make sure you look at your photos regularly is to "make them manageable and accessible."



**Did you eat too much stuffing
and pumpkin pie this
Thanksgiving?**

**Here's a wonderful way to use
up any of that leftover turkey if
you're looking for a meal that
will be filling yet light.**

Turkey Cobb Salad

466 Cals, 28 Protein, 37 Carbs, 26 Fats
Prep Time: 30 mins, Yield: 2 servings

Ingredients

- 3 slices center cut bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 6 oz cooked turkey breast
- 2 cups cubes butternut squash, 3/4 inch dice
- olive oil spray
- 1/8 tsp kosher salt
- black pepper, to taste
- 3 cups spring mix lettuce
- 3/4 oz crumbled feta
- 1/4 cup pecan halves
- 2 tbsp raisins

For the vinaigrette:

- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 4 tsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp plus 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons chopped red onion

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 425F. Place the butternut on a large nonstick baking sheet, spray with oil, season with salt and pepper and bake 15 minutes, turn then cook an additional 10 minutes, or until tender. Let cool a few minutes.
- Meanwhile combine the dressing ingredients in a small bowl and whisk.
- Divide the lettuce between two plates, top each with half of the remaining ingredients and dressing.



Fall & winter can be a perfect time to start hiking.

The hot temps of summer have cooled off and the fall colors can be amazing.

Hiking burns about 370 calories per hour for a 154-pound person, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

You're working several different muscle groups and possibly fighting off seasonal affective disorder, It's just a great way to get that sunshine that you need to keep your mood high.

There are websites and apps that will help you find hiking trails near you - for example, check out the site www.alltrails.com.

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Contact List

Company	Website	Phone	Group #
Anthem Blue Cross	www.anthem.com/ca	(800) 282-4993	1800Q-A
Kaiser	www.kp.org	(800) 464-4000	101895
Delta Dental	www.deltadental.com	(888) 335-8227	07158-02301
Express Scripts	www.express-scripts.com	(800) 501-7162	CTARX333
Vision Service Plan	www.vsp.com	(800) 877-7195	12309884
BeneSys (Pension)	www.ctapension.org	(833) 265-2277	
Empower Retirement	www.empower-retirement.com	(866) 467-7756	

The William C. Earhart Company is available to answer your health benefits questions (claims, billing, eligibility) from 8-5, Monday thru Friday.

CTA Only Phone: (503) 460-5242/Toll Free (877) 396-2942

Pam Howard (Claims Advocate)

Kathrine Walker (Eligibility)

Website: www.wcearthart.com

There's an App for that! Most of our benefit providers have an app for your mobile device. Check it out!