

Winter 2025

✓ MetroPlus
HealthGold

Health NEWS

Four holiday health myths

PAGE 3

Take control of your cancer risk

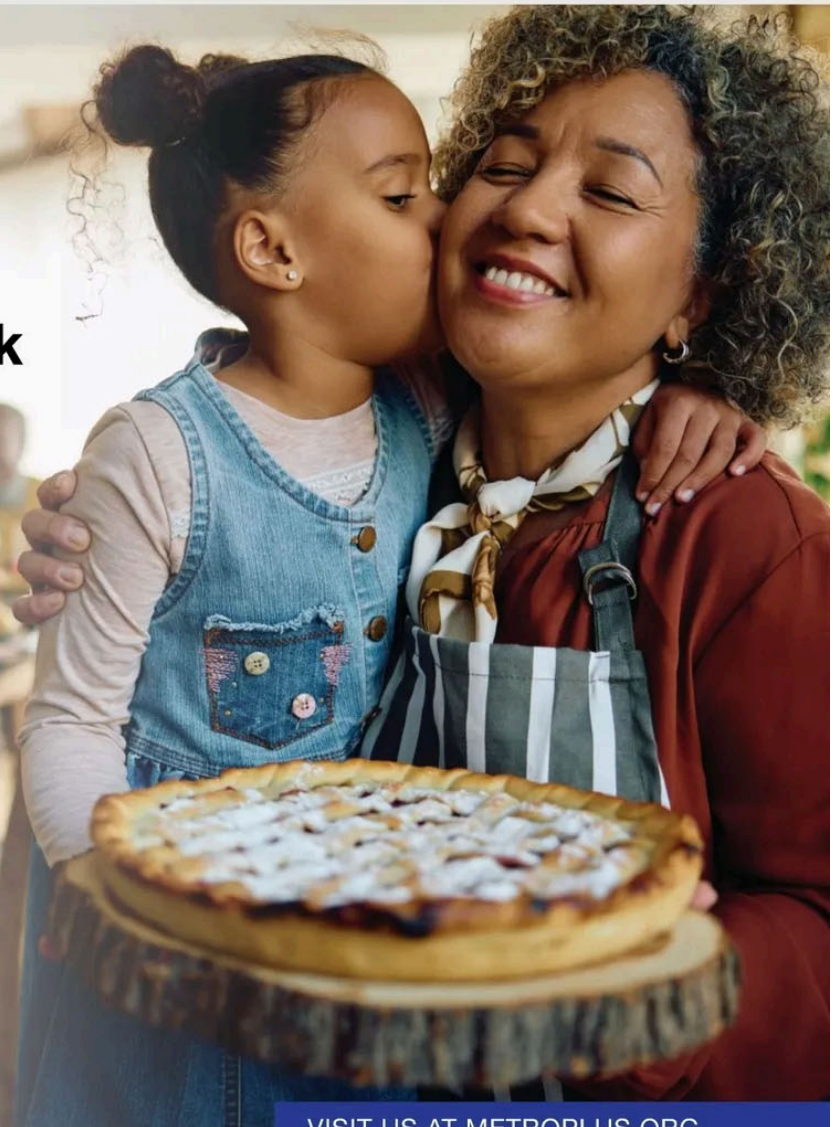
PAGE 4

How to make friends at an older age

PAGE 5

Try this recipe: Stovetop chili

PAGE 7



VISIT US AT [METROPLUS.ORG](https://metroplus.org)

Do you speak a language other than English? MetroPlusHealth has Member Services staff who speak your language. If you need help making an appointment, call the Member Services Department at **877.475.3795 (TTY: 711)**.



Developed by Krames, a WebMD Ignite solution.
11087A

How to simplify your medication routine



Medication adherence sounds straightforward enough: Take the right meds, at the right time, and in the right way. But the reality of juggling multiple prescriptions can be daunting.

Understanding how to manage this process is essential — not just for protecting your health but for simplifying your day-to-day life. Here's how to set yourself up for success.

Chart the course

Start with a clear outline of your medications. This should include each prescription, over-the-counter drug, vitamin, and dietary supplement. Record the name, dosage, and when to take it. For more tips on taking medicine, click [here](#).

Tips for tracking

Pillboxes, charts, calendars, and medication reminder apps are

great tools for staying organized. Other strategies you can add to your routine include:

- **Using visual cues:** Write reminders on sticky notes. Place them in areas of the house you see frequently, like your refrigerator door or bathroom cabinet.
- **Color coding:** Put colored labels on your bottles based on the time of day you need to take the medicine; for example, blue for morning, red for afternoon, and yellow for bedtime.
- **Syncing your habits:** If you can, schedule doses around daily events. Reach for your morning pills before pouring that first cup of coffee. Take your evening dose right after brushing your teeth.

Conversation is key

Keeping your doctor in the loop is more than a good practice — it's a vital step in the process. At appointments, you should:

- **Talk about your routine.** Discuss how your medication regimen is going. If you're

having a hard time following the schedule, ask about possible adjustments.

- **Share updates.** Your doctor should know what you're currently taking, including nonprescription meds and supplements. They can make sure there are no harmful interactions.
- **Bring up concerns.** Mention any side effects you've noticed since your last visit. They might be able to change your prescription.

Managing medications is a daily commitment that helps you live your best life. Stay consistent and keep communication open. Your health is worth the effort!

Flu shot reminder

Get a flu shot to help you stay healthy and well this winter. To find a flu vaccination site, click [here](#).

Holiday health myths

Many people feel as if they face a choice: They can either enjoy the holidays or focus on their health, but they can't do both.

Luckily, that's a myth. You can have it both ways. The key is to show yourself some holiday kindness. Pat yourself on the back when you choose more vegetables or go for a walk. And cut yourself some slack if you eat too much at one meal or skip a workout one day. You can always get back on track for the next meal or day.

Here's the truth about four other common myths.

Myth: The holiday is ruined if something doesn't go as planned.

Reality: Everyone has their own idea of what a "perfect" holiday is — and no one has ever lived it. In real life, setbacks happen and that's OK. A burned dish or broken ornament is only one part of the whole holiday experience. Remind yourself about all the things that are going right, such as being together with family and friends.

Myth: You have to give up your favorite holiday foods to eat healthier.

Reality: You can eat what you love and still make healthier choices. Take smaller portions. Offer to bring a healthy dish. Include fruits and vegetables on your plate. If you indulge in a little treat, make it count. Decide which treat you really want and which ones you can skip. For example, you might have a half-slice of pie but skip the whipped cream.

Myth: Being active is hopeless if you don't have time for long workouts.

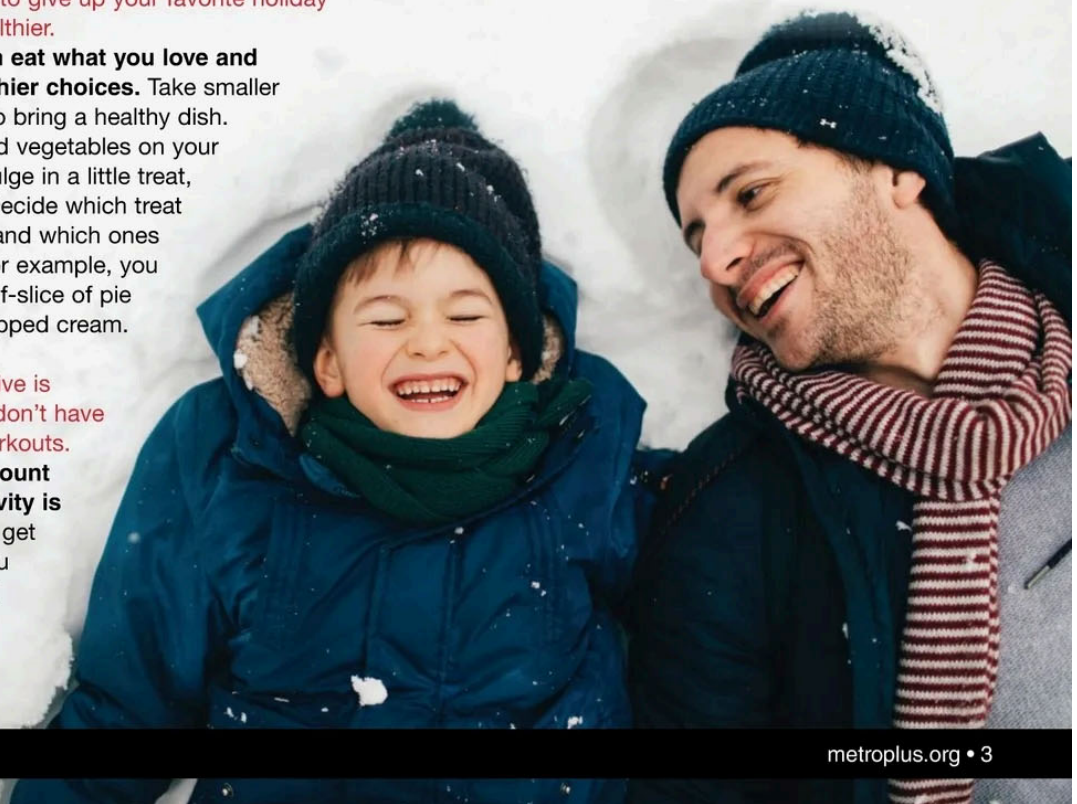
Reality: Any amount of physical activity is helpful. Walk to get around when you can. If you work from home, ride

your bike during your lunch break. Get moving with your kids, such as taking them to the park. Or incorporate the kids in active chores.

Check out the sports and fitness classes offered by your local senior/community center or neighborhood YMCA. Shape Up NYC also offers free fitness classes. To search for classes, click [here](#).

Myth: Feeling stressed and frazzled is unavoidable over the holidays.

Reality: The holiday season can get hectic. Sometimes, the most important thing you can do for yourself and your family is to relax and recharge. Make time for the things you find calming, such as listening to music, reading a book, getting a massage, **meditating**, or talking with a good friend. You can also relax by listening to ocean sounds by clicking [here](#).



Take control of your cancer risk

Many of the choices we make throughout our lifetimes can influence our risk. That means there are specific ways to help set ourselves up for a healthier future.

Where to start

A recent study found that in adults ages 30 and older, about 40% of new cancer cases are linked to things we can work to change. And there's one clear place to start: Don't smoke cigarettes.

Data showed that smoking caused the highest number of cancer cases and deaths. The study called out secondhand smoke, too. So, quitting not only lowers your risk for cancer but also decreases the risk for those around you.

MetroPlusHealth offers smoking- and vaping-cessation resources. To learn more, click [here](#). You can also visit the **New York State Smokers' Quitline**, or call **866.697.8487** to apply for a free starter kit and to talk to a quit coach.



Next steps

The chart below outlines more risk factors noted in the study — and how to start addressing them.

Risk	Tips	Resources
Alcohol consumption	The less you drink, the better. Consider designating “alcohol-free” days every week	Take a quiz and make a plan at cdc.gov/drinklessbeyourbest .
Excess body weight	If you're carrying extra weight, losing pounds can lower your cancer risk. Healthy food choices and exercise are part of the equation.	For weight management resources and advice, click here .
Food choices	Eat more fruit, nonstarchy vegetables, and foods with fiber or calcium. Avoid or eat less processed and red meat.	To browse recipes by Nutrition Focus, click here .
Infections	Ask your provider if you should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vaccines for human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B ■ A screening test for hepatitis C, which can lead to liver cancer if left untreated ■ An HPV and/or Pap test to screen for cervical cancer 	Visit cancer.org and click on “All About Cancer” for information on prevention, screenings, and more.
Physical inactivity	Replace time sitting with movement . Work your way up to at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week	Access resources at health.gov/moveyourway .

Keep in mind: Even when we make all the right choices, some factors are still beyond our control. But focusing on the things we can change sets us up for the best future possible!



4 ways to make friends at an older age

Friendships are critical as we age — but often harder to come by. Here's where and how to find new connections.

Friends celebrate your successes and support you when you're down. With them, leisurely everyday activities, like errands or walks, become fun adventures. Meanwhile, they provide emotional support for heavy topics like grief and loss.

Social connections aren't just nice to have. They're crucial to mental and physical health and well-being. In fact, isolation is linked to a 50% greater risk of developing dementia. Meanwhile, loneliness heightens depression and anxiety.

Unfortunately, loneliness and isolation are common with age. Friends may move or pass away. Making new ones when you're older can feel difficult, especially if you're working from home or retired.

The barriers to building these bonds are real, but there are ways to overcome the obstacles. Here are four strategies for making, and deepening, new connections.

1 Try something new.

Revisit an old hobby or pick up a new one. Take a class or join a group of people with similar

interests. That way, you'll already have something in common when you get there.

Shape Up NYC offers free fitness classes. To search for classes, click [here](#). Many NYC parks also offer fun, informative, and healthy events. To browse a calendar of events, click [here](#).

2 Give back.

Volunteer for an organization or cause close to your heart. Perhaps it's a local animal shelter or food pantry. You will meet people around you with like-minded beliefs and values. Search volunteermatch.org for ideas.

Donating your time instills a sense of mission and purpose in life. This also benefits your health and may even extend your life.

3 Make the first move.

Did you hit it off with someone at a meeting or a volunteer shift? Don't hesitate to ask for contact information or to make plans with them. Say something like, "I enjoy talking to you. I'd love to stay connected."

Friendships take effort to start and maintain. If you're actively reaching out, they're likely to reach back.

4 Stay consistent.

Once a new friendship buds, nurture it with regular contact. Plan weekly or monthly meetups so there's always something on the calendar.

One way to do this is to work together toward a goal. Maybe you'd like to complete a 5K, read more books, or eat healthy meals. Schedule walking dates, book clubs, or cooking sessions. You'll achieve your goals and build your relationships.

Get support

If you're struggling with loneliness or isolation, tell your doctor. MetroPlusHealth offers behavioral health services and programs for children, teens, and adults. For information, click [here](#).

Stock your pantry with healthy foods that last

Grocery shopping may be something you take for granted. But heading into the cooler months, you never know when the flu (or another seasonal illness) might keep you from your normal errands. Stocking your pantry now is a proactive way to ensure you always have access to nutritious meals.

Start by creating a well-thought-out shopping list. In addition to some fresh foods, include foods with a long shelf life. Having several days' worth of supplies on hand can provide peace of mind.

Making smart food choices

First, focus on choosing nutrient-rich foods. No magic ingredient can stop you from getting sick. However, a healthy, balanced diet provides several nutrients that may help support your immune system when eaten on a regular basis. For example:

- **Proteins**, specifically amino acids, are essential for creating the immune system's antibodies. Sources include fish, lean meat, poultry, beans, and nuts.

- **Vitamin A** helps regulate the immune system. Sources include sweet potatoes, carrots, spinach, and apricots.
- **Zinc** helps the immune system fight off bacteria and viruses. Sources include fish, poultry, beans, and whole grains.

Creating your shopping list

Next, include some long-lasting staples on your list. Here are a few suggestions (look for brands with low-sodium or no-salt-added options):

- Canned tuna, salmon, and sardines
- Canned chicken
- Peanut butter
- Dried beans, peas, and lentils
- Brown rice
- Whole-grain cereal
- Whole-grain pasta
- Jars of pasta sauce
- Cans or shelf-stable cartons of soup and broth
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Dried fruit
- Pasteurized, shelf-stable milk

Getting groceries without leaving home

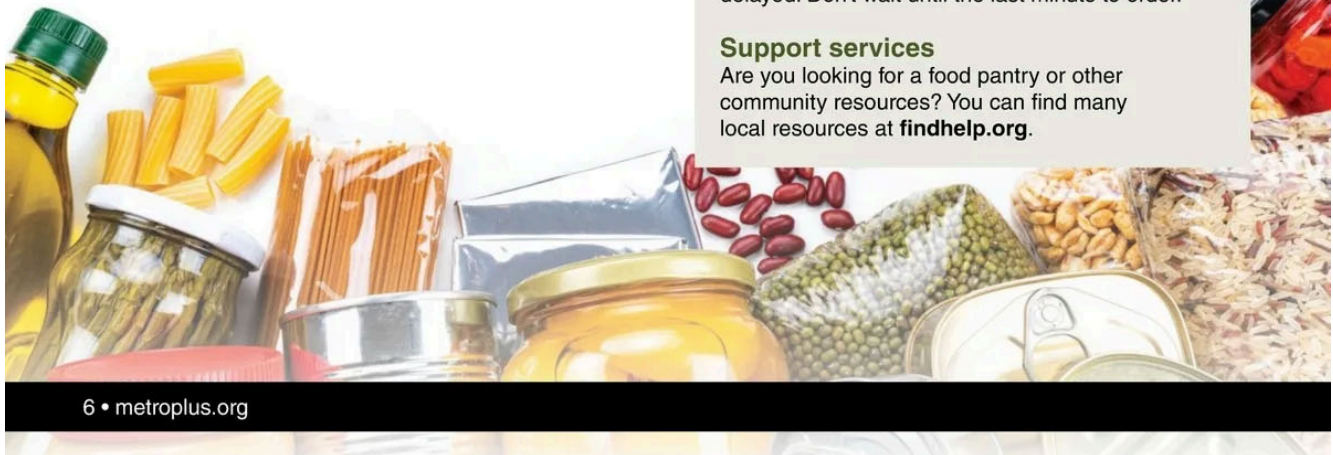
Avoiding crowds during flu season can be a good idea. If you don't want to go out, consider ordering your groceries online from:

- Your supermarket's website, asking a relative, friend, or neighbor to pick them up
- Your supermarket's website, requesting delivery to your home
- A home delivery company, such as Amazon Fresh or Instacart

Ask about delivery fees. Also, be aware that some items may be out of stock and deliveries may be delayed. Don't wait until the last minute to order.

Support services

Are you looking for a food pantry or other community resources? You can find many local resources at findhelp.org.





Stovetop chili

Eating beans can help lower your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity. Because they contain lots of fiber that digests slowly, beans tend to fill you up.

Ingredients

- 1 tsp. cooking oil
- 1 lb. beef trimmed of all visible fat and cut into half-inch cubes
- 2 onions (about 2 cups chopped)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tbsp. cumin
- 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes
- 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes with jalapeño
- 2 cups water
- 15.5-oz. can black beans
- 15.5-oz. can red kidney beans
- 12 sun-dried tomato halves, not packed in oil, chopped
- ½ lb. fresh mushrooms (about six large), chopped

Directions

1. Heat oil to hot in a large pot on the stove and put beef in one layer to brown quickly.
2. Add onion, garlic, chili powder, and cumin. Cook until onions wilt, about five minutes.
3. Add tomatoes, water, beans, sun-dried tomatoes, and mushrooms. Bring to a boil, then bring down heat to medium-low.
4. Cook for two to three hours, uncovered, stirring at times.

Alternative method:

1. Combine all ingredients in a slow cooker.
2. Cook 10 to 12 hours on low.

Per serving

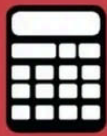
Serves eight; serving size is 1 ½ cups. Each serving provides: 270 calories, 4.5 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 35 mg cholesterol, 650 mg sodium, 35 g total carbohydrate, 11 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugars, and 23 g protein.

For less sodium, drain and rinse beans to reduce salt and use low-sodium diced tomatoes.

To try another one of our healthy recipes, click [here](#).

WHAT YOU NEED — TO KNOW ABOUT — NUTRITION LABELS

Serving Size: Start with the serving size and number of servings per container. Ask yourself how many servings you're eating.



Calories: Take note of how many calories you consume. To keep from gaining weight, you'll need to use at least as many calories as you take in every day.

% Daily Value*

Nutrients to limit: Look for information about saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Aim to keep these low and try to eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day.

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 300mg 12%

Carbohydrates 15g 5%

Total carbohydrates, dietary fibers, and sugars are also listed. Cut back on foods with added sugars, but increase high-fiber foods.



*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.