

live life well.

Issue 2 | Winter 2009

Cold Weather Tips for Winter Health

Staying healthy during the winter months can be hard for people over 50. The excitement of the holidays is behind us. We have shorter days. And colder weather makes getting out of doors more difficult. It's not surprising that winter is also a time when some people feel more "blue" than normal.

How can you stay healthy and upbeat during the winter? Here are some tips to help guide you until the birds start to sing in the spring!

Lose post-holiday pounds Many people gain weight over the holidays. That's because they eat lots of rich holiday foods. In fact, the average American gains five pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Eating 3,500 extra calories will lead to one extra pound of weight. So, you will need to burn 3,500 extra calories to lose that one pound.

Stay active A brisk walk in cold weather can help keep you healthy. If you do not want to be outdoors in cold weather, think about joining a fitness center. Many area shopping malls also offer "mall walkers" clubs for those who like to get their workout indoors. Aim for 30 minutes of exercise five times a week. If you have post holiday pounds to lose, working out will help you burn the calories you need to lose weight.

Stay in touch Many people enjoy the holidays because it puts them in touch with friends and loved ones. Keep that holiday cheer alive by reaching out to friends and family all year long. Make phone calls, write emails, or handwritten personal notes. Staying in touch will help you avoid the blues that so often come with winter.



Feeling SAD? Shorter days may be the reason. Serotonin, a mood-adjusting chemical in the brain, is typically lower in the autumn and winter than in the spring and summer months. Because sunlight affects Serotonin levels, a lack of sunshine means less of this feel-good chemical in your body. Doctors call this Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

How can you cope? Doctors often order light therapy to treat SAD. If you suffer from depression during the winter months, please talk with your doctor.

Continued on Page 8

IN THIS ISSUE:



NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH
Lower your chances of getting cancer.



AMERICAN HEART MONTH
Tips for a heart-healthy lifestyle.



COMMUNITY EVENTS
Bravo Health in the community.

A Message From Our Chairman



Dear Bravo Health Member:

Welcome to this issue of *Live Life Well*, a newsletter created just for members of Bravo Health. I hope that it is informative, and that you gain some knowledge on how to keep yourself safe and healthy in 2009.

We are always looking for ways to help you live your life to its fullest. When it comes to your health, nothing is more important. In this issue, we offer some important tips for staying healthy this winter. We also focus on the importance of eye care, National Cancer Prevention Month, and American Heart Month. On page 5 of this issue, you'll meet Sally DeWitt and Amra Buns, two of our Member Service Associates, who are dedicated to helping you make the most out of your membership with Bravo Health. Like all of us at Bravo Health, these Associates are striving to give the best possible service to our members.

We are very proud that today over 250,000 people with Medicare have coverage through Bravo Health. As we continue to grow, we are dedicated to staying focused on providing individual, personalized service to all of our members. Thank you for your continued membership with Bravo Health.

Best of health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. H. Folick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Folick
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Bravo Health, Inc.

The Eyes Have It

Many people take their vision for granted, until something happens to it. You can take steps to protect your eyesight. Here is what you need to know about keeping your eyes healthy.

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that cause blindness. Glaucoma can affect people of all ages, though it mostly strikes the middle-aged and older adults. Those at higher risk include people of African, Asian, and Hispanic descent, people over 60, and people with diabetes or high blood pressure (hypertension).

Over 3 million Americans have glaucoma and half of them don't know they have it. In its most common form, there are almost no signs of the disease. Vision loss begins with peripheral or side vision, so if you have glaucoma, you may not notice anything until you lose most of your vision. The best way to protect your sight from glaucoma is to get a complete eye exam. If you find out you have glaucoma, treatment can begin right away.

Macular degeneration, also known as AMD (for Age-related Macular Degeneration), is the leading cause of visual problems for people aged 50 and older. It affects 1.6 million Americans. AMD harms the part of your eye that is responsible for your central vision. It won't cause total blindness, but it will result in blurred vision or a blind spot in your central vision. You may have AMD if you:

- ▶ Need more and more bright light when reading or doing close work
- ▶ Have problems adjusting to low light levels, such as when entering a movie theatre
- ▶ See blurry words when reading
- ▶ Have trouble recognizing faces
- ▶ Develop haziness in your overall vision or a blind spot in the center of your vision

Even though there is no cure for AMD, there is hope. Finding out early and close follow-up care is the best way to avoid losing your vision to AMD.

Low vision refers to partial sight, or vision that is not aided with contact lenses or standard glasses. You still can see, but normal daily activities become more difficult. The degree of loss can be modest to almost total blindness. However, many low vision aids are available to make the most of the vision you have left. These include magnifiers, screen readers, and more.

The most important step you can take to protect your vision is to get annual eye exams. This is especially important for those over 50 years of age. For more information or to schedule an eye exam, please call your eye doctor. If you do not know who your eye doctor is or need one, please call Member Services at **1-800-291-0396**, 8 am to 8pm, Monday through Friday. Please call **1-800-964-2561** for the hearing impaired.

To read more about vision health, visit the National Eye Institute website at www.nei.nih.gov.



It's National Cancer Prevention Month

There is good news on the cancer front: Cancer rates and cancer deaths have been dropping in the United States. According to the American Cancer Society, "The hard work towards preventing cancer, catching it early, and making treatment more effective is paying dramatic, lifesaving dividends."

Lung cancer is the most widely known deadly cancer in men, followed by prostate, and colon cancer. In women, lung, breast, and colon cancer are the most common.

So what can you do to lower your chance of getting cancer? A healthy lifestyle can go a long way toward lowering your chance of getting the disease. Here are some tips to get you started.

If you smoke, quit –Cigarette smoking is the single major cause of cancer death in the United States. Smoking causes nearly one in five deaths in the United States. Since people choose to smoke cigarettes and use tobacco, smoking is the most preventable cause of death in our society.



Eat for prevention –What you eat (or don't eat) can impact your chance of getting cancer. Health experts suggest following a diet that is low in saturated fats and has five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. You should also include at least three servings of whole grains each day.

Use sun protection –Most of the one million cases of skin cancer diagnosed each year in the United States are sun-related. "Slip! Slop! Slap! And Wrap" is a catch phrase that reminds you how to protect yourself from the sun. Slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat, and wrap on sunglasses to protect your eyes from ultraviolet light. When used together, these steps will give you the best protection from the sun.



Remember: Cancer is more treatable the earlier it is found. Be sure to follow your doctor's suggestions for getting screened regularly. For more information, log onto The American Cancer Society's website at www.cancer.org.

Did You Know?

Laughter really is good for you. A good laugh can lower stress. If you haven't enjoyed a good laugh recently, here are some tips to help tickle your funny bone.

- ▶ When you're watching TV, turn off the news and turn on your favorite comedy
- ▶ Read the funny pages

- ▶ Enjoy funny books, videos, or DVDs
- ▶ Ask a friend or family member to tell you their funniest joke
- ▶ Keep an eye out for funny things, every day

Humor can't take the place of your medicine, but it can sure make you feel good!

How Can I Provide You with Excellent Service? Meet Two Bravo Member Services Representatives

At Bravo Health, we take member service seriously. If something matters to you, it matters to us. That is why we have a team of skilled Associates trained to answer your calls and help you get the answers you need. In each issue of *Live Life Well*, we'll introduce you to some of the people who assist you when you call Bravo Health.

Sally DeWitt, Member Services Representative

My name is Sally DeWitt. I began my adventure with Bravo Health in September 2008 after hearing so many wonderful things about the company from current Associates. I enjoy working hand in hand with our members to overcome any issues and helping to find a resolution. The best part about working at Bravo Health is talking with our members and listening to their stories. Our members always make me smile.

When I am not working at Bravo Health, I enjoy spending time with my five children, my husband, and three dogs. I am a true animal lover and I love listening to music.



Amra Buns, Member Services Representative

I like my job because we provide highly professional customer service so that our members feel comfortable talking about their issues or concerns. The best part of my job is assisting our members, especially when I am able to resolve their problems right away. I also love the fact that I work in a professional and friendly environment. I enjoy seeing the smiling faces of my co-workers everyday.

In my spare time, I love to travel and spend time with my family and friends.



Your Member Services Questions Answered

Q: What is a PCP? Why should I have a PCP?

A: A PCP is your Primary Care Provider, a doctor, or a nurse practitioner that you see on a regular basis. Having a PCP is important because he or she can help you with any care or treatment you may need. For example, if you need to see a specialist, your PCP can help arrange your care.

Once you have a PCP, he or she will learn about your health history and will be able to personalize your care.

If you need to choose a PCP or have questions about who your PCP is and how to reach them, please call Bravo Health's Member Services Department.

Feel the Beat: American Heart Month



Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States. Lifestyle has everything to do with beating your chances of having a heart attack. In honor of American Heart Month, here are some tips for living a heart-healthy lifestyle:

Keep a healthy weight – Obesity is a major risk factor for heart disease. The extra weight makes the heart work harder. It also raises blood cholesterol and blood pressure, and can lead to diabetes. The chance of death rises with increasing weight. Even being slightly overweight (10 to 20 pounds for a person of average height) raises the chance of getting heart disease.



Eat a heart-healthy diet – Your food choices can make a difference. Whole-grain foods contain fiber that can help you lower your blood cholesterol and make you feel full, which may help you manage your weight. Eating fish such as salmon, trout, and herring may help lower your chance of having a heart attack. Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber and can help you control your weight and your blood pressure. Be sure to choose lean meats and poultry without skin, and cook them without added fats.

Get some exercise – An inactive lifestyle is a major risk factor for heart disease. Not only does exercise make your heart stronger, it also helps it to work better. According to the American Heart Association, all healthy adults should be getting at least 30 minutes of exercise five days a week. Walking, swimming, and cycling are low-impact ways to get the exercise you need to stay healthy. Whether it's included in a workout program or part of your daily routine, all physical activity adds up to a healthier heart.



Stop Smoking – Cigarette smokers are much more likely to die from coronary heart disease than nonsmokers. Smoking raises blood pressure, lowers exercise tolerance and “good” cholesterol, and raises the tendency for blood to clot. All of these factors can lead to a heart attack.



By making some simple changes in your routine, you can beat your chances of getting heart disease. For more information, log onto The American Heart Association website at www.americanheart.org.

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Community Events

The first of the year is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our activities of the prior year. Bravo Health had a great time meeting and greeting our members in the community during 2008. Our primary focus was to bring educational information and entertainment to our members and to the communities where we work, live, and serve. Below are some recent events at which Bravo Health was proud to sponsor the entertainment.



Philadelphia:

Recently, Bravo Health participated in a Senior Health Expo that attracted over 600 people. Dottie Smith was the event's entertainer. She has been a professional singer and drummer for more than 50 years. Dottie has performed all around the United States and is a highly regarded Jazz singer in Philadelphia.



Mid-Atlantic:

During a fall health fair, Merle Stanley provided the entertainment. She is the winner of the 2007 Maryland Senior Idol competition. Merle is a native Marylander, a wife, mother, grandmother, and recently a retiree. Merle has always enjoyed music and singing is her passion.



Houston:

This past fall, Bravo Health held a concert at the Beall Village Senior Center. The attendees enjoyed songs and theatrical performances by the Sunshiners, a 13 piece senior band that performs 52 shows every year. The performers range between the age of 61 and 87 years young.

Pittsburgh:

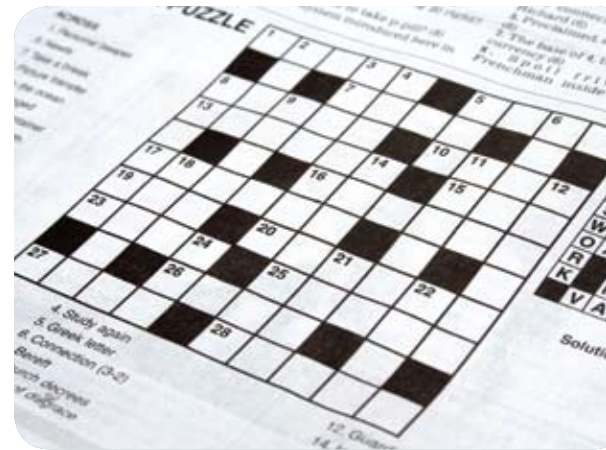
Bravo Health hosted a Holiday Celebration at Jefferson Manor this past winter. The attendees enjoyed walking down memory lane with the tunes played by the Monarchs. Pictured are the 3 band members, left to right: Donald, Jack, and Don.



Continued from page 1:

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Test your brain Research shows that people who stay mentally active raise their odds of staying alert as they age. The more you use your brain, the stronger it gets — and the longer your brain stays strong. Word games, crossword puzzles, Sudoku, and computer games can all help keep you mentally sharp. Since many people spend more time indoors during winter, it's a great time to start a new habit: challenging your brain.



Need to reach us? Please call Member Services at 1-800-291-0396, seven days a week, from 8 am to 8 pm. TTY/TDD users can call 1-800-964-2561. A representative will be happy to help you.

BH-0241



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