

March 2025



NUTRITION MONTH

March is National Nutrition Month and during this month we encourage everyone to learn more about making informed food choices and developing healthy eating habits and a healthy lifestyle.

REASONS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH IS IMPORTANT:

- **Awareness and Education:** It raises awareness about the importance of nutrition and educates the public on how to make healthier food choices. This can lead to improved overall health and wellbeing.
- **Prevention of Chronic Diseases:** Proper nutrition is crucial in preventing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. National Nutrition Month encourages individuals to adopt healthier eating patterns that may reduce the risk of these conditions.
- **Promotes Balanced Diets:** The initiative highlights the importance of a balanced diet that includes a variety of nutrients necessary for maintaining good health.
- **Encourages Physical Activity:** Alongside nutrition, this month also promotes the importance of regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- **Supports Mental Health:** Good nutrition is linked to better mental health outcomes.
- **Community Engagement:** It provides an opportunity for communities, schools, and organizations to engage in activities and events that promote nutrition and healthy living.

Important Reminder

**Don't forget to complete your
Wellness Incentive Credits by
March 31, 2025.**

***Emily Stafford has notified via
email, all employees who have
not completed the Wellness
Incentives.***

FUELING YOUR BODY FOR BETTER HEALTH

Healthy foods offer a wide variety of nutrients to fuel your body and support bodily functions. Consuming healthy, nourishing foods like those listed below provides the right mix of fuel for your unique body.

- **Plants** provide essential micronutrients. Aim for at least 5 servings of colorful fruits and vegetables each day.
- **Protein** regulates blood sugars, repairs muscles, and helps you stay full longer after meals. Incorporate high-quality protein sources into your meals, such as lean meats and poultry, fish (such as salmon and tuna), legumes (such as lentils and chickpeas), Greek yogurt, nuts, and seeds.
- **Carbohydrates** help replenish glycogen stores in your liver and muscles to be used as a fuel source between meals and during physical activity.
- **Fats** are essential for absorbing vitamins, protecting your organs, and providing a long-lasting energy source. Focus on healthy fats like avocados, olive oil, nuts, fatty fish (such as mackerel and sardines), and seeds.
- **Fermented Foods** support a healthy microbiome and immune system, which are essential for balanced nutrition and healthy weight maintenance.
- **Water & Electrolytes** help maintain fluid balance in your blood, which is needed for regulating blood pressure, body temperature, muscle function, and carrying nutrients throughout the body.

Food is not the only fuel for the body. The following can also boost energy:

- **Sleep** is an often overlooked source of fuel for the body. Without sufficient amounts of rest, you may feel fatigued and sluggish. Adequate sleep supports immune function, weight regulation, and metabolism. When you fall short on sleep, a brief 10- to 20-minute nap can help you catch up on a sleep deficit.
- **Meditation** is calming to the nervous system and can ease an overactive mind. Your thoughts can either be energizing or draining, so finding mindful-based strategies to support your mental wellbeing can also be a source of fuel.
- **Stretching** relieves muscle strain and tension to support your physical body.

Not getting adequate nutrients can trigger your body to break down stored energy for fuel, which can lead to loss of muscle and strength, vitamin and mineral deficiencies, and other medical complications. A balanced eating style can help ensure you have a consistent source of fuel for your body.



BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT: MYPREGNANCY PROGRAM

Stay informed, empowered, and supported throughout your pregnancy with the MyPregnancy Program. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (Blue Cross NC) offers the My Pregnancy app – an easy-to-use smartphone app that provides information, tools and resources from a trusted source – at no additional cost.

Your questions and concerns about your pregnancy can be quickly addressed with MyPregnancy's click-to-call feature that connects you to a nurse. Their high-risk identifier program can also help spot issues early and refer you to case management for further support.

WHAT MAKES THE MY PREGNANCY APP DIFFERENT?

There are a lot of pregnancy apps out there. Many are loaded with ads or with content that's not necessarily from reputable medical sources. MyPregnancy offers reliable medical content and is integrated with your Blue Cross NC health benefits.

WHAT DOES THE MY PREGNANCY APP OFFER?

- Week-by-week updates
- Due date calculator
- Weight gain calculator
- Pregnancy milestones
- Symptom search
- Personalized healthy pregnancy actions
- Baby kick counter
- Daily tips and affirmations
- Baby boost relaxation tool
- Birth plan template

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Information from a trusted source
- Integration with insurance benefits
- Click-to-call nurse line available 24/7
- Case management referrals for high-risk indicators
- Personalized content
- HIPAA-compliant
- No advertisements

AVAILABLE IN THE APP STORE:

- Available for Apple and Android.
- Search for **My Pregnancy Blue Cross NC** and follow the prompts to download.



MEDITERRANEAN QUINOA SALAD

This Mediterranean Quinoa Salad is packed with protein, fiber, and essential nutrients from the vegetables, making it a balanced meal that aligns with the principles of healthy eating discussed in the content provided. Enjoy this nutritious and flavorful dish as part of your balanced eating plan

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cook quinoa according to package instructions and let it cool.
- In a large bowl, combine the cooked quinoa, chickpeas, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, red onion, parsley, feta cheese, and Kalamata olives.
- In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper to make the dressing.
- Pour the dressing over the salad and toss gently to combine.
- Serve the Mediterranean Quinoa Salad chilled or at room temperature

NUTRITION FACTS

Calories 320
Total Fat 12g
Sodium 300mg
Carbohydrate 45g
Protein 10g



Benefit	Vendor	Website / Email / Contact
Dental	Delta Dental	www.deltadentalnc.com
401k Retirement Plan	Empower	Donny Dutton Donny.Dutton@prudential.com
Local Governmental Employee's Retirement System	Retirement System Division	www.myncretirement.com
Benefit Solver	Business Solver	www.benefitsolver.com
Employee Assistance Program	The Counseling Group	(828) 322-9130
Medical	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	www.bluecrossnc.com
Blue Connect	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	Blue Connect
My Pregnancy Program	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	Download the <i>My Pregnancy</i> through Blue Cross NC app to get started
NCHIP Concierge	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	1-800-795-9402

March 2025 - Lunch & Learn

What: Gardening & Preserving

Who: Der Holcombe, Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences

When: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:30 – 12:30 or 1:00 – 2:00

Where: Alexander County Services Center

Registration information coming soon!

Made You Smile!

"I thought the dryer was shrinking my clothes. Turns out it was the refrigerator all along."

"If a child refuses to sleep during nap time, are they guilty of resisting a rest?"

"Whenever I try to eat healthy, a chocolate bar looks at me and Snickers."

"Why do bees have sticky hair? Because they use a honeycomb."