



# Beneficial Wellness Newsletter

## Gratitude for Well-being: Acknowledging the People Who Enrich Our Lives

November is a time for reflection and gratitude, and there is no better moment to express appreciation and thanks for the people who make a difference in our lives. Acknowledging the positive influence of others can have a powerful effect on both them and us. There are so many people in our lives to be grateful for, including:

**Nurses, Teachers, or Mentors:** These people often go the extra mile to guide and support us.

**Parents or Family Friends:** The unwavering love and support of family and close friends are invaluable.

**Veterans:** As we approach Veterans Day, it's a perfect time to honor and thank those who have served. Their sacrifices and commitment to protecting our freedoms deserve heartfelt gratitude.

**Everyday Helpers:** Sometimes it's the small, unnoticed acts that make the biggest difference – a friend who helped you during a tough time, or someone who lent a hand when you needed it most.

**Everyday Heroes:** From the barista who makes your coffee just right to the janitor who keeps your workplace clean, there are people who contribute to our lives every day.

This month, challenge yourself to express gratitude for one or more of these individuals. You might write a heartfelt note, make a phone call, send a text or email, or simply take a moment to quietly reflect on the positive influence someone has had on your life.

Taking the time to appreciate those who enrich our lives not only uplifts them but also cultivates a greater sense of gratitude and positivity within ourselves. It can be a powerful reminder of the positive influences in our lives, especially during difficult times. Who are you grateful for?

### Hot Topics:

Solve the MMHG Wellness Puzzle **Feed your Immune System** on page 7 for a chance to win a raffle prize!

The Savory Living online program will guide you step-by-step to apply the power of evidence-based healthy eating to reduce inflammation and take control of how you feel. You'll discover how to eat right for YOU and turn it into a fun and delicious lifestyle that you love!

**BONUS: MMHG members get the program FREE** (limited spaces available). Get started at [www.savoryliving.com/mmhg](http://www.savoryliving.com/mmhg).

Visit our website [www.MMHG.org/Wellness](http://www.MMHG.org/Wellness)



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## Skip the Journal: Try a Gratitude Ledger



Did you know that people tend to remember negative experiences more vividly than positive ones? It's a natural part of how our brains work, but it can sometimes leave us feeling down or stressed. One way to counter that effect is by writing down things that you're grateful for. This simple habit can shift your focus, lift your spirits, and reduce stress, bringing more positivity into your life.

Why not give it a try this month? Start a simple gratitude ledger and set aside a few minutes every so often to write down something that you're thankful for. For example, you might feel grateful for a friend who checked in on you during a tough time or for a family member who made you laugh when you needed it most. You could also appreciate a moment of peace during a busy day or a personal achievement you're proud of.

Of course, not everyone enjoys journaling, and that's okay. This does not have to be a traditional journaling exercise. Think of it more as a log or a tracker. You can use anything—your phone, a notepad, or sticky notes. You might even make it a visual ledger by snapping a photo of things you're grateful for as you go through the month and dropping them into a gratitude album.

### Medicare Plan Subscribers:

November 1st– December 7th is open enrollment for Medex 2/Blue Medicare RX (PDP) and BCBS Medicare PPO Blue FreedomRX subscribers with an effective date of January 1st— check your mailbox for important information from your benefit coordinator.

#### Important things to know:

- Do not voluntarily enroll in another Medicare Part D plan because it will cancel your enrollment in your current Medicare plan with MMHG.
- You must continue to pay your Medicare Part B premium timely in order to remain eligible for MMHG coverage.
- Visit [www.mmhg.org](http://www.mmhg.org) for new calendar year 2025 Medicare plan materials.

#### Information for all MMHG Subscribers

You are required to notify your employer within 30 days of the following life events:

- ~Change of address
- ~Divorce/Remarriage
- ~Medicare eligibility of yourself or of a dependent
- ~Marriage
- ~Birth/adoption/legal guardianship
- ~Dependent loss of status as a dependent (except for turning age 26)

Your health plan is committed to helping you achieve your best health. Rewards for participating in a wellness program are available to all employees. If you think you might be unable to meet a standard for a reward under this wellness program, you might qualify for an opportunity to earn the same reward by different means, contact us at 774-773-9306 or by email at [wellness@mmhg.org](mailto:wellness@mmhg.org) and we will work with you (and if you wish, with your doctor) to find a wellness program with the same reward that is right for you in light of your health status.

## Healthcare IQ : How to be a Savvy Consumer



*The Healthcare IQ Corner is a regular feature of the MMHG Beneficial Wellness Newsletter. With medical costs continuing to rise, consumers are challenged more than ever to make informed decisions about their healthcare.*

### Learn to Live Fall Challenge– *Win Raffle Prizes!*

Did you know that you have **FREE** support for the most common mental health concerns? [Learn to Live](#), a benefit available to all MMHG member unit employees and retirees, is like a gym for your mental fitness where you can learn strategies that really work to alleviate suffering and cultivate positive mental health.

Employees have 24/7 all-inclusive access to Learn to Live's proven online programs, coaching, and other services at no cost. It's private, convenient, and often works as well as face-to-face therapy.

This November, Learn to Live and MMHG are offering special rewards in a **Fall Challenge** to members who start or continue their Learn to Live journey. Simply complete one or both of the following activities and you'll be entered to win **one of 8-- \$50 Amazon gift cards**:

- Enroll in any Learn to Live program
- Complete a lesson in any program

It's easy to get started – visit [www.learntolive.com/partners](http://www.learntolive.com/partners) and enter access code **MMHG**, or sign-in [HERE](#) if you have an existing account.

### Your MMHG Wellness Benefits - *Save Time & Money!*

Have you checked out the MMHG Wellness website and calendar of events yet? You may be surprised at the variety of wellness programs available to you. Whether it's a walking challenge, Zumba, healthy cooking demo or virtual chair yoga class, there's a convenient option for everyone. Programs are **FREE** and open to employees, retirees & dependents of MMHG member units. Visit [www.MMHG.org/Wellness](http://www.MMHG.org/Wellness) for a complete schedule of events and description with registration details.

#### Ongoing:

**On Demand Fitness:** FREE 24/7 access to professionally filmed fitness classes

**Learn to Live:** Free & confidential online mental health program

**Savory Living:** 12 session online, evidence-based, healthy eating food as medicine program. FREE spots available.

**EX Program:** FREE online smoking cessation program

**Virtual Mindfulness Sessions:** Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, 8:30– 9 a.m.

**Virtual Zumba:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:16–6 p.m.

#### November Highlights:

**Healthy Holidays Challenge:** 11/18– 12/15  
Stay focused on your well-being during the hustle and bustle of the season. Win raffle prizes!

**Mindful Movement (Virtual Chair Yoga):**  
11/12, 12– 12:30 p.m.

**Healthy Holiday Guide (Webinar):**  
11/13, 12:15– 1 p.m.

**Festive Nutrition (Webinar):**  
11/13, 1-1:30 p.m.

**Focus & ADHD (Webinar):**  
11/20, 1- 1:30 p.m.

# LEARN TO LIVE BULLETIN

## *Your guide in wellness & mental health*

### **Men's Mental Health: Breaking the Silence**

Imagine a world where your brother, father, husband, or best friend feels too ashamed to ask for help when they're hurting. For many men, this is not something they need to imagine – it's their reality. Men's mental health has long been a topic clouded by stigma, misconceptions, and silence. Although some work has been done to break down the traditional norms of masculinity, there are still messages in our society telling men they need to be "tough" and that they should not show feelings. As a result, many men stay silent and internalize their struggles, viewing mental health challenges as a sign of weakness or failure.



The consequences of this silence are profound. It's been shown over the years that men are less likely than women to seek help for mental health issues. They are more likely to turn to unhealthy coping, such as substance abuse or aggressive behavior. Men are at a higher risk of suicide, with rates as much as 4 times higher than women in the US. Breaking the silence surrounding men's mental health is incredibly important, yet there are several factors that contribute to the reluctance of men to seek mental health support.

### **Barriers to Seeking Help**

Stigma plays a significant role, as many men fear being judged or perceived as weak if they admit to struggling. Some men confuse being a strong provider and protector with ignoring their own emotional needs. Also, some men are unaware of their own symptoms of mental health problems. These barriers can play a role in creating that silent struggle that goes unaddressed.

### **Giving Voice to Men's Mental Health**

Addressing men's mental health requires us to challenge existing norms and take steps to create awareness and better access to mental health resources. Here are some steps that can help:

1. **Education & Awareness:** Increasing awareness about men's mental health issues is crucial. This includes educating about the signs and symptoms of common mental health conditions, including gender differences, and encouraging them to seek help early.
2. **Open Conversations:** If a man doesn't speak about his mental health, it tells other men in his orbit that talking about mental health isn't important. This perpetuates the problem. One man can break the chain by being open to discussing his own mental health and encourage others to do the same.
3. **Access to Care:** Identifying what mental health services are available can be a critical first step. These can be augmented with support groups, mental health campaigns, and initiatives that encourage open dialogue about men's mental health.

### **Get Started Today**

We can take meaningful steps toward men feeling empowered to seek the help they need. Investing in mental health is not a sign of weakness; it is a crucial part of overall well-being. To learn more about how Learn to Live can help break the silence with men's mental health, consider taking a quick mental health assessment by visiting [learntolive.com/partners](https://learntolive.com/partners) and enter access code **MMHG**. Learn to Live is available to you and your family members, ages 13 and older at no cost.

# Staying Active in November: Simple Strategies for a Busy Season

November can be a whirlwind of activity and challenges. The end of Daylight Saving Time often disrupts our sleep patterns, while increased travel exposes us to more germs. The stress of navigating holiday gatherings and the year-end rush can leave us feeling exhausted.

Staying active is crucial for maintaining both physical and mental well-being during such a busy time. Here are some straightforward tips to help you keep moving and stay energized throughout November:

- **Embrace the Outdoors.** Take advantage of the crisp autumn air when you can. Dress in layers and explore local park or nature trails to soak up the autumn scenery and get some fresh air.
- **Schedule Workouts.** With more events filling up your calendar, treat workouts like any other appointment to ensure it doesn't get sidelined by other commitments.
- **Break It Down.** Pressed for time? Shorter, more frequent workouts can still make a difference. Even a quick 10-15 minutes of movement can boost your energy and mood.
- **Incorporate Movement into Holiday Prep.** Turn holiday tasks into opportunities for physical activity. Cleaning, decorating, and cooking can all keep you on your feet and moving throughout the day.
- **Create New Movement Traditions.** Recruit family and friends to join you for a post-meal walk or a friendly game of touch football to combine movement with quality time during the holidays.
- **Make Use of Daylight.** With shorter days, try to get outside during daylight hours. If you're indoors, position your workout space near a window to maximize natural light.
- **Use Goals Strategically.** Set small, achievable fitness goals, like hitting a certain number of steps each day or completing a fitness challenge. Having a goal can keep you motivated during the busy season.
- **Stay Active While Traveling.** Research exercise options at your travel destination. Pack portable equipment like resistance bands or a jump rope. Use travel time for stretching or simple exercises and take breaks to move around during long trips.

Keep moving through November and enjoy a healthier, happier season!



## November 18th—December 15th

The holidays are here, and 'tis the season to celebrate health! This challenge will help you stay focused on your well-being while having fun throughout the festive hustle and bustle of the season.

**How the Challenge Works:** Using the Wellable online platform, you will earn Wellable Points for tracking physical activity, logging meals & snacks, and for other special activities. All participants can win weekly raffle prizes and all participants are eligible to win a prize in the Grand Prize Raffle drawing!

Click [HERE](#) for more information

## Hearty and Healthy: Rethinking Your Fall & Winter Comfort Foods

As the weather turns colder, it's natural to crave warm, hearty meals. But if your favorite comfort foods mostly feature pasta, cheese, or meat, you might be missing out on key nutrients to help you stay healthy through the winter.

Adding more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to your meals can provide your body with fiber, vitamins, and minerals – critical nutrients that help boost energy levels and support a strong immune system, and often enhance the flavor of your meals.

Here's how to give your favorite winter dishes – like casseroles, soups, and roasts – a nutritious upgrade:

**Add More Vegetables (Fresh or Frozen).** Winter is a great time to load up on extra vegetables and leafy greens. They're packed with fiber, slow-digesting carbs (the “good” kind), and essential vitamins and minerals. Frozen veggies are also a great option—they are flash frozen to lock in nutrients and can be easily tossed into soups, stews, sauces, or casseroles.

- Add chopped parsnips, leeks, or kale to chicken soup for a nutrient boost.
- Throw some frozen peas and green beans into your beef stew to up the fiber.
- Mix pureed sweet potatoes, pumpkin, or butternut squash into your mac and cheese for a delicious twist.

**Swap in Whole Grains and Legumes.** If your winter meals rely on white pasta or rice, try switching to whole-grain alternatives like quinoa, buckwheat, or wild rice. Beans, peas, and lentils are also great for adding extra fiber and protein. Mix and match to experiment with new flavors and textures.

- Use quinoa or barley instead of white rice in your stuffed peppers or casseroles.
- Swap out white pasta for whole wheat or chickpea pasta in baked ziti or lasagna.
- Add lentils to your shepherd's pie in place of some of the meat for a hearty, plant-forward option.

Need more inspiration? Living Well has you covered this month with two free webinars.

Festive Nutrition (November 13, 1-1:30p.m.) Details [HERE](#)

Comfort Foods Re-imagined (November 20, 1-1:30p.m.) Details [HERE](#)



*“Adding more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to your meals can provide your body with fiber, vitamins, and minerals – critical nutrients that help boost energy levels and support a strong immune system, and often enhance the flavor of your meals.”*

### Lentil Shepherds Pie

Serves 6

#### Ingredients

- 3 T olive oil
- 1/2 c celery (chopped)
- 1/2 c onion (chopped)
- 2 clv garlic (chopped)
- 2 c lentils (cooked)
- 3 T all purpose flour
- 1 T tomato paste
- 1/2 c vegetable broth
- 1 c frozen mixed vegetables
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 c mashed potatoes
- 1/2 c grated cheddar cheese (optional)

This warm and hearty meal is loaded with zinc, fiber, folate, magnesium, protein, and vitamin A and is a great recipe to try if you've got leftover mashed potatoes or veggies to use up! Feel free to sub ground turkey for some of the lentils.

#### Instructions

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- In a medium pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Once hot, add the celery, onion, and garlic. Cook for 2-3 minutes or until softened.
- Next, add the lentils, flour, and tomato paste. Cook for 3-4 minutes, continuously stirring until the flour begins to brown.
- Add the broth and stir. The mixture will begin to thicken. Add the mixed vegetables and simmer for 2-3 minutes until heated through. Season with salt and pepper and transfer into a baking dish.
- Top the lentil mixture with mashed potatoes and cheese and put in the oven and bake for 5-10 minutes, or until mashed potato topping is golden brown.

# Flu Fighters: How to Gear Up for a Healthy Season

Flu season is upon us, and it's essential to be proactive. By taking a few simple steps now and maintaining these practices throughout the season, you can significantly reduce the risk of flu for yourself and your loved ones. Here are some ways you can stay resilient and minimize the impact of this seasonal illness.

**Give It Your Best Shot.** Every year, nearly 1 out of every 5 people gets the flu, but you can lower your risk by getting an annual flu shot —at your doctor's office, a local clinic or drugstore or an on-site flu-shot program at your workplace

**Stock Up Your Sick Kit.** When you're feeling lousy, the last thing you want to do is trek out to the store. Why not be ready with a fully stocked Sick Kit? Here are some items you can gather now and stash in an easy-to-grab kit:

- Fever and pain relievers
- Cough syrups and drops
- Decongestants
- Allergy medicine
- Menthol vapor rub
- Saline nasal spray
- Thermometer, heating pad, ice pack
- Tissues, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes/spray
- Broths, herbal teas, electrolyte drinks

**Feed That Immune System.** While there is no cure for the flu or common cold, a strong immune system can be a powerful defense. Eat foods that contain immune-boosting and infection-fighting nutrients, such as:

- vitamin C and beta-carotene (found in citrus fruit, cabbage, broccoli, pumpkin, sweet potato, and spinach)
- zinc (found in fish, oysters, poultry, eggs, milk, unprocessed grains, and cereals)
- polyphenols (found in green tea like matcha)
- healthy carbs (found in sweet potatoes, yams, pumpkins, and squash) to counter winter blues and food cravings.
- probiotics for a healthy gut (found in fermented foods, like sauerkraut, kimchi, and yogurt)



## Matcha Latte

This 3-ingredient matcha latte is packed with antioxidants and delicious flavor. A cozy, healthy drink for cool days.

<https://www.loveandlemons.com/matcha-latte/> Makes one serving

### Ingredients

- ½ to 1 teaspoon matcha powder
- ¾ cup hot water
- ¼ cup coconut milk (or other milk), warmed
- Maple syrup, honey, stevia, or sweetener of choice, optional

### Instructions

- Sift your matcha so it is lump-free.
- Spoon the matcha into a large mug. Add the hot water and whisk briskly, in an up and down motion, until frothy - about 30 seconds or so. Add the coconut milk and whisk until well combined.
- Taste and add additional water, coconut milk, and/or sweetener to your liking.



**WIN A *HEALTHY COOKBOOK* !**

Print, solve and return the completed puzzle to MMHG no later than **December 16th** and you'll be entered in a random drawing to win **one of four– *Living Well Cookbooks***. This spiral-bound cookbook includes over 100 tried and tested recipes (main courses, salads, soups, snacks, apps and more). Find a scrumptious and healthy recipe that works for you!

**BONUS: Complete the poll below for a chance to win a \$50 Amazon gift card!**

Return your completed puzzle via:

**Email-**

wellness@mmhg.org

**or FAX-**

774-773-9403

**or Mail-**

MMHG

PO Box 6008

North Plymouth, MA 02362

If you would like a printed copy of the puzzle mailed to you call 774-773-9306 or request by email at wellness@mmhg.org.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Member Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address **(to send prize if you're a winner)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility: Raffle is open to all employees, retirees, dependents 18+ of MMHG member units. \*Your member unit is the municipal entity (town, district etc.) you work at or retired from.

**Winners will be notified by email**

**December 16th**

See page 8 for a list of Summer Newsletter Puzzle Raffle Winners.

# SOLVE THE MMHG WELLNESS PUZZLE

## Feed the Immune System

With the autumn chill comes cold and flu season. While there is no cure for the flu or common cold, a strong immune system can be a powerful defense. Eat foods that contain immune-boosting and infection-fighting nutrients and focus on stocking your kitchen with foods containing vitamin C, and beta carotene, zinc, polyphenols, healthy carbs and probiotics.

**Puzzle Directions: Circle or highlight the in the word search puzzle below. Words appear straight across, backwards, straight across, up and down, down and up, and diagonally.**



**ALMONDS**

**BROCCOLI**

**CITRUS FRUITS**

**GARLIC**

**GINGER**

**GREEN TEA**

**KIWI**

**MUSHROOMS**

**OYSTERS**

**RED PEPPERS**

**SALMON**

**SPINACH**

**SWEET POTATOES**

**TURMERIC**

**YOGURT**



**\*\*BONUS\*\* Poll**

**How do you support your immune system this time of year?**

- Get plenty of sleep**
- Exercise regularly**
- Eat lots of fruits & vegetables**
- Handwashing, masking**
- Try to minimize stress**
- Flu shot, vaccines**
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

Select all that apply and/or write in (other) for a chance to win a \$50 Amazon gift card. We'll share poll results in the Winter newsletter!



## Mayflower Municipal Health Group

P.O. Box 6008  
N. Plymouth, MA. 02362

[www.MMHG.org](http://www.MMHG.org)  
Contact us at

### USE BELLY BREATHING TO STAY CALM DURING STRESSFUL SITUATIONS.

This Monday, try belly breathing to calm your mind and body.

- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.
- Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four, making sure your belly is expanding and not your chest. Exhale through your mouth for a count of four.
- Continue this breathing cycle for a few minutes.
- Feel the stress leave your body while your mind becomes calm.



#DeStressMonday

DeStressMonday.org

DE STRESS MONDAY

### MMHG Summer Newsletter Puzzle Raffle Winners & Poll Results

#### 4 Winners- Pickleball To-Go Kit

Elizabeth Sheibley (Plymouth County), Emily Adams (Brockton Area Transit), Rosanne Dupont (GATRA), Cynthia Mello (Rochester)

#### 1 "Bonus Poll" Winner- \$50 Gift Card Voucher:

Susan Porter (Marshfield)

#### Bonus Poll Results: What's your Idea of the perfect "field trip"?

In 1st place 'The Beach or Whale Watching Tour', in 2nd place 'Hiking in the Mountains', in 3rd place 'Visiting a Museum, Aquarium or Library', in 4th place 'The Farmers Market followed by a Nap in a Hammock', and in 5th place 'A Sporty Day, Playing Tennis, Golf, Pickleball'.

The information contained in this newsletter can be used to increase your personal awareness of health and wellness. Always contact your health care provider before beginning a new exercise or nutrition program, and when you have questions and concerns about medical issues impacting you and your family.

### MMHG Smart Consumer Programs

The following programs may help you save time and money!

#### Telehealth:

- [BCBS Well Connection](#)
- [HP Doctor on Demand](#)

**SmartShopper Incentive**– (BCBSMA Members only)- Receive a reward for shopping for high quality lower cost services.

**CanRx**— This cost saving mail order prescription drug program is for active (non-Medicare) members taking brand name maintenance medications approved by their doctor. It provides no copays with the convenience of receiving medications in the mail.

### Thinking About Quitting?

The **EX Program** Helps Smokers, E-Cigarette Users, and Smokeless Tobacco Users Quit!

The **EX Program** is a **FREE**, confidential, digital tobacco cessation program that personalizes the quitting journey for each participant. The interactive, self-paced, guided quit plan provides the specialized support tobacco users need for the behavioral, social, and physical aspects of tobacco addiction.

The **Ex Program** includes a personalized quit plan, live chat coaching, an active online community, text messages, and nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges (delivered to your home).

Find out more [HERE](#) or at [www.mmhg.org/wellness](http://www.mmhg.org/wellness)

#### MAYFLOWER MUNICIPAL HEALTH GROUP CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING TOWN/GOVERNMENTAL UNITS:

Bridgewater ~ Brockton Area Transit Authority ~ Carver-Marion-Wareham Regional Refuse Disposal District ~ Dartmouth Fire District No. 3 ~ Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority ~ Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District ~ Halifax ~ Hanover ~ Hanson ~ Hull ~ Kingston ~ Marshfield ~ Norfolk County ~ North River Collaborative ~ Onset Fire District ~ Pembroke ~ Plympton ~ Plymouth County ~ Plymouth County Retirement Association ~ Rochester ~ Silver Lake Regional School District ~ Southeastern Regional Transit Authority ~ South Shore Educational Collaborative ~ South Shore Regional Emergency Communication Center ~ South Shore Regional School District ~ Southfield Redevelopment Authority ~ Wareham ~ Wareham Fire District ~ West Bridgewater ~ Whitman ~ Whitman-Hanson Regional School District ~