

# In Sound Health

## BUSTING IMMUNITY MYTHS

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chance to fully fund  
your HRA for 2022

**4** Know your benefits:  
Vision & Dental are  
healthcare too!



## FOCUS ON YOU THIS FALL

September 2021

As summer comes to an end and colder weather arrives, we will all be spending more time indoors. COVID-19 cases are on the rise again, and flu season is just around the corner. Whether you have children going back to school, holiday gatherings you are looking forward to, or you just plan on spending time with friends, there are steps you can take to strengthen your health to stay well this fall.

In this issue of *In Sound Health* we've gathered tips on how to boost your immune system, and we share the importance of regular dental care. We also continue with our four-part series, Healthy at Work, by focusing on the importance of managing workplace stress.

## BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT IMMUNITY

Myths and tips on how to boost your immunity.

After more than a year of thinking about the pandemic and doing your best to stay healthy, you might be more aware than ever of how important it is to have a strong immune system. Your immune system protects your body from infection and illness, but sometimes germs successfully invade and make you sick. There are ways you can boost your immune response, but since the immune system is a complex system of hormones, cells, and proteins, it takes a holistic approach. The internet is filled with quick-fix tricks, like eating lemons, downing whole garlic, or going on juice diets, but with a balanced approach and healthy habits you can naturally strengthen your immune system.

Here are four myths about how to boost your immune system, and ten tips that can actually help.

### Myth #1: Losing weight quickly will boost my immune system.

**Fact:** Fast weight loss is never good for our bodies. Extreme and restrictive diets along with intense exercise can weaken immunity due to a lack of proper nutrition and added stress on the body.

### Myth #2: Not getting enough sleep doesn't impact my immune system.

**Fact:** There is a strong connection between sleep and overall health. But not just any sleep, restorative sleep, where your body gets enough time to heal and build immunity. Sleep needs vary but most adults should aim to get 7-8 hours a night. Teens and kids require even more: from 9-12 hours a night.

### Myth #3: A daily multivitamin is all I need to stay healthy.

**Fact:** Multivitamins, which contain a range of good-for-you vitamins are a great addition to an adult's daily routine, but a multivitamin alone won't make an impact on your immune system. Combine a multivitamin with good sleep, a balanced diet and regular movement and you're bound to see positive effects.

### Myth #4: Stress doesn't impact my immune system.

**Fact:** Stress can cause or worsen a lot of different health problems, including negatively impacting your immune system. When you are stressed, you produce the hormone cortisol, which can change the way your body's defense system reacts to infections

### GET PERSONALIZED HELP BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS

PPO Plan participants have access to Health Coaching — a confidential, phone-based program designed to help you set and meet goals to improve your health and well-being — and it is fully paid for by the Trust.

Visit [www.soundhealthwellness.com](http://www.soundhealthwellness.com) → PPO Plan → Sound Support Health Coaching to learn more.

Kaiser Plan participants should talk to their doctors to make a plan to improve their health and well-being.



and other threats, making you more prone to illness. In addition, when stressed, many of us turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms like smoking and drinking alcohol – both of which also lessen immunity.

### So, what are ways you can protect and boost immunity?

1. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly.
2. Limit alcohol and avoid smoking.
3. Get regular exercise every day, avoiding overly stressful workouts.
4. Stay up to date on vaccinations.
5. Talk to your doctor about supplements such as Vitamin D or probiotics.
6. Eat a healthy and balanced diet, limiting fried, processed, and fatty foods and focusing on lots of fruit and veggies.
7. Make sleep a priority and aim for 7-9 hours a night.
8. Drink lots of water. A good rule of thumb is to divide your weight in half and then drink that amount in ounces a day.
9. Manage your stress by setting boundaries around your time, making time for fun, practicing mindfulness, or possibly seeking the help of a counselor.
10. Have a positive mindset. Looking on the bright side and thinking things are going well is not only good for your mental health but has been also proven to boost the immune system.

While there's no quick-fix pill you can take, or certain food you can eat to immediately boost your immune system, there are definite ways to improve your immune system function over time. Our immune systems weaken as we age, but making small lifestyle changes in diet, daily movement and sleep can help keep your immunity strong and keep you healthy.



Sources: Harvard Health; Web MD

## DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO FULLY FUND YOUR HRA FOR 2022

Complete your annual health assessment by September 30, 2021!

Fully funding your Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) is an investment in your health. The funds in your HRA are used to pay for the first eligible medical expenses covered by the plan in each calendar year – which helps you avoid a higher deductible and save money!

If you are HRA eligible, you and your covered spouse, if married, must complete these three steps by September 30, 2021 to earn up to \$300 of the \$500\* maximum HRA funding for employee-only coverage. If married, you and your spouse can earn up to \$600 of the \$1,000\* maximum HRA funding, for family coverage.

Go to [www.soundhealthwellness.com](http://www.soundhealthwellness.com) and log in to your secure account to:

1. Complete your confidential Personal Health Assessment (PHA) for PPO Plan participants, or your Health Profile for Kaiser Permanente Plan participants
2. Confirm or select your Primary Care Physician
3. Update or confirm your contact information

\*Final earned amount depends on the other Health Related Actions you perform this year. To earn HRA funding you must be HRA eligible on January 1, 2022.

### DON'T LET TIME RUN OUT!

If you will be HRA eligible on January 1, 2022, you can still take actions this year to fund your account for 2022. Don't wait another year to save!

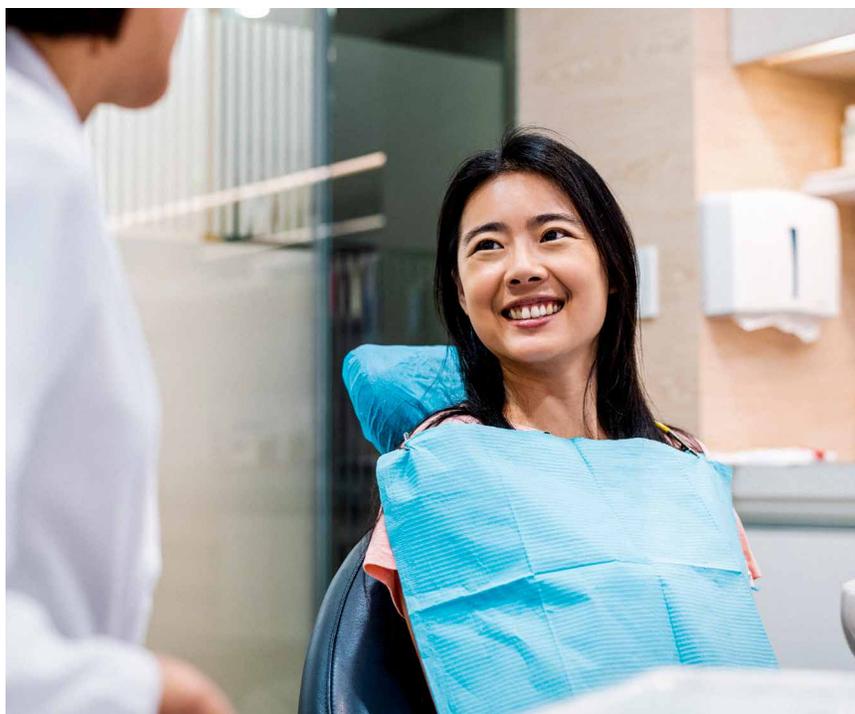
## TAKING CARE OF YOUR TEETH

Proper dental care is good for the whole body.

Very few people enjoy going to the dentist, but an annual cleaning might be one of the most important medical visits you make all year. Plaque builds up on teeth every single day, destroying the enamel on your teeth. Without proper daily care and an annual cleaning, plaque buildup can cause cavities, tooth decay, gum disease, and halitosis (bad breath). It can also lead to thyroid problems, leukemia, certain cancers, diabetes, osteoporosis, and anemia, if left untreated. To keep your smile healthy and bright:

- **Brush twice daily.** Once before bed and when you wake up. This breaks up the sticky plaque that builds up on teeth throughout the day and night.
- **Floss daily.** Flossing makes a huge difference in how much food stays between teeth — feeding bacteria that will harm your teeth.
- **Get an annual cleaning and checkup.** Brushing and flossing are great daily habits, but they only remove about 2/3 of the plaque and bacteria in your mouth. With a professional cleaning, your mouth will be fully cleaned, and your oral health will be evaluated. The dentist will analyze your gums and teeth for signs of any medical concerns that could lead to serious infections or diseases harmful to the whole body.
- **Avoid sugary foods and drinks.** Bacteria thrive on sugar and break it down quickly, producing acids that eat away tooth enamel, and lead to cavities and gingivitis (gum disease).

Before you make an appointment, be sure to check your Summary Plan Description and Delta Dental of Washington for what's covered under your plan.



Source: Oral Health Foundation [www.dentalhealth.org](http://www.dentalhealth.org)



## HEALTHY APPLE MUFFINS

Start the morning off right with these delicious fruit-packed muffins. Yield: 12 muffins.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/3 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup grated apple
- 1 cup apple diced into 1/4 cubes
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup maple syrup or honey
- 2 eggs, preferably at room temperature
- 1/2 cup plain low-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup applesauce
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Grease muffin tin or use muffin cups.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. Add grated apple and chopped apple. Stir to combine.
3. In a separate bowl, combine the oil and maple syrup (or honey) and beat together. Add eggs and beat well, then add the yogurt, applesauce and vanilla and mix well.
4. Pour wet ingredients into dry and mix with spoon, just until combined (a few lumps are ok). The batter will be thick. Divide batter evenly between 12 muffin cups. Bake for 13 to 16 minutes, or until the muffins are golden on top and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
5. Place the muffin tin on a cooling rack to cool. Leftover muffins can be stored in the refrigerator for 4 days, and frozen for up to 3 months.

### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Serving Size: 1 muffin

- 176 calories
- 2.9 g fiber
- 5.7 g fat
- 4.5 g protein
- 29.1 g carbs

Source: modified from [www.cookieandkate.com](http://www.cookieandkate.com).

## 5 TIPS FOR HEALTHY EYES

Our eyes play an important part in our health — they help us see and make sense of the world around us. As we age, our eyesight can decline, and without proper care and nutrition, this process can happen even faster. Here are a few things you can do to help keep your eyes healthy.

# 1

### BE ACTIVE

Regular exercise can delay the onset of age-related macular degeneration — the top cause of vision loss later in life.



# 2

### GET AN EYE EXAM EVERY YEAR

Everyone should see an optometrist annually, even if you have 20/20 vision. Your doctor will check for early symptoms of serious eye conditions like macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.



# 3

### WEAR SUNGLASSES

Sunglasses protect your eyes from harmful UV radiation, which can increase your risk of cataracts and macular degeneration.



# 4

### GIVE YOUR EYES A REST

If you spend a lot of time looking at screens your eyes will become tired. Close your eyes or practice the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes look away to about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds.



# 5

### EAT YOUR FRUITS AND VEGGIES

A healthy diet including fresh fruit, dark, leafy greens and Omega-3 fatty acids are proven to reduce your risk of macular degeneration, glaucoma, and more.



#### To learn more about your vision benefits:

For PPO Plan participants, visit [www.soundhealthwellness.com](http://www.soundhealthwellness.com) → PPO → Benefits and click the Vision tab to learn more.

For Kaiser Plan participants, [www.soundhelathwellness.com](http://www.soundhelathwellness.com) → Kaiser → Benefits and click the Vision tab to learn more.

# HEALTHY AT WORK:

## Tips on Managing Stress

All jobs come with a certain level of stress and working in retail is no exception. Add to that new and changing requirements from the pandemic and feeling stressed out from time to time is bound to happen. But how we manage stress can make a big impact in our daily lives and health. Here are some tips you can use to take care of yourself during stressful times.



### Know Yourself

That may sound simple but knowing the kinds of situations and interactions that really stress you out can help you avoid them when you can, and plan how to deal with them when you can't. Is it a certain task in your day? A particular kind of customer? Time constraints? Figure out what stresses you out and make decisions ahead of time for how you want to respond. And keep in mind that different things stress out different people: what might bother a co-worker could be no big deal to you and vice versa.



### Take Time for You

Sometimes when we feel stressed out, the best thing to do is take a break. Take your scheduled breaks and use that time to have a snack, take a quick walk, call or text someone close to you, or just sit and breathe. Just 90 seconds of calm can help you face the next thing in your day.



### Get Enough Rest

A good night's sleep can do wonders in our ability to manage stress. Be sure to prioritize getting at least 7-8 hours a night. And on those days you didn't get quite enough, be easy on yourself for not being at your best. We all have those days. Also, don't forget to add in activities that you find restful and restorative – reading, exercise, meeting with friends or taking time for a favorite hobby.

This is the second article in our “Healthy at Work” four-part series for 2021. You can view past articles online at [www.soundhealthwellness.com](http://www.soundhealthwellness.com) under News & Articles.



### Ask for Help

We all need some help from time to time – from our co-workers, managers, friends, partners, community, or healthcare providers. None of us need to go it alone. Asking for help can sometimes be a challenge, but often there are people in our lives who will be happy to help us out.

If you need help managing stress, as a Trust participant you have many confidential services available:

- Your primary care provider is a great resource when you need help managing stress. They can talk through treatment options and resources available to you.
- For PPO Plan Participants, health coaching provides one-on-one telephone coaching. Your qualified coach will help you find resources and tools to reduce your stress, set wellness goals and support you along the way. This program is fully paid for by the Trust.

Visit [www.soundhealthwellness.com](http://www.soundhealthwellness.com) to find a provider or learn more about Sound Support programs.



# IMPORTANT NUMBERS TO KNOW

## PPO PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Trust Office—Benefits, Eligibility, HRA	(206) 282-4500 or (800) 225-7620
Delta Dental PPO & Schedule Plan	(800) 554-1907
DeltaCare	(800) 650-1583
VSP (Vision Service Plan)	(800) 877-7195
WellDyneRx—for Prescription Coverage	(888) 479-2000
Nurse Line	(877) 362-9969 Option 1
Health Coaching	(877) 362-9969 Option 3
Quit Tobacco Coaching	(877) 362-9969 Option 4
LiveWell Fit	(800) 225-7620 Option 2, then 5

## KAISER PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Trust Office—Eligibility, HRA	(206) 282-4500 or (800) 225-7620
Kaiser Permanente—Benefits, Claims Status	(888) 901-4636
Delta Dental PPO & Schedule Plan	(800) 554-1907
DeltaCare	(800) 650-1583
Consulting Nurse Helpline	(800) 297-6877
Quit for Life® Tobacco Cessation	(800) 462-5327
LiveWell Fit	(800) 225-7620 Option 2, then 5
Chronic Conditions Workshops	(800) 992-2279

## PRIVACY POLICY

Your health information is completely confidential, protected by federal law, and cannot be shared with your union or your employer without your permission.

All wellness programs are provided and managed by independent service providers contracted by the Trust. The information on your health status and conditions, your medical and prescription drug claims, and the information you may provide when participating is only used to offer you programs that could help you meet your health and wellness goals.

***By law, your health information cannot be used to deny healthcare coverage.***



## IT'S ALMOST TIME!

Open Enrollment for 2022 begins October 11, 2021. Watch your mailbox for the official announcement that will contain all the details.



**SOUND HEALTH**  
& WELLNESS TRUST

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**GET INVOLVED**

This newsletter provides a general overview of plan benefits. Please refer to your Plan Booklet for specifics about covered expenses as well as exclusions and limitations. The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your healthcare providers, not to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

## FALL INTO FITNESS

Put your fitness first, win prizes, and earn HRA funding by participating in one of the many LiveWell Fit events going on this fall!

*Eligible Trust participants and covered family members can get reimbursed for registration fees for up to four approved events per calendar year.*



Earn funds for your HRA with LiveWell Fit. See the full list for details.



*Trust participants with their 5K medals!*

DATE	EVENT NAME & DESCRIPTION
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	
12	Friday Harbor <b>San Juan Island Half</b> — 13.1 mile run/walk
12	North Bend <b>Tunnel Light Marathon</b> — 26.2 mile run/walk
12	Mukilteo <b>Run-a-Muk</b> — 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
12	Snohomish <b>Spartan Super and Sprint</b> — 6.2 or 3.1 mile obstacle course and kids obstacle course
12	Whidbey Island <b>Whidbey Island Marathon</b> — 26.2, 13.1, 6.1 or 3.1 mile run/walk and kids run
18	Olympia <b>Club Oly Fall Frolic 2021</b> — 5 mile run/walk
18	Grand Coulee <b>Run the Dam</b> — 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
18	Spokane <b>Happy Girls Run Spokane</b> — 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk and kids run
18	Bonney Lake <b>Tehaleh Trail Run</b> — 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile trail run and kids run
18	Redmond <b>Get Your Rear in Gear</b> — 3.1 mile run/walk and kid's fun run
18-19	Seattle <b>Orca Half Marathon</b> — 13.1 mile run/walk
19	Gig Harbor <b>Race for a Soldier</b> — 13.1, 10 or 3.1 mile run/walk
19	Quilcene <b>Quilcene Oyster Races</b> — 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile trail run/walk and kids run
25	Bellingham <b>Bellingham Bay Marathon</b> — 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
25-26	Black Diamond <b>Tough Mudder</b> — 5 mile obstacle course or relay
26	Bellingham <b>Bellingham Bay Marathon</b> — 26.2 or 13.1 mile run/walk