

# In Sound Health

## Mapping Your Health: The Power of Family History

**4** Gut Feelings: The Impact of Stress on Your Digestive System

**6** Holiday Spirits: Navigating Alcohol During the Holidays





## Mapping Your Health: The Power of Family History

Your family’s health history is like a roadmap to understanding your own potential health risks. It includes medical information about you and your relatives, such as parents, siblings, grandparents, and cousins. This history often spans three generations and can help identify patterns of genetic conditions and shared lifestyle factors that affect your health.

Families share more than just genes; they also share environments and habits. This means if heart disease, diabetes, or cancer run in your family, you could be at a higher risk. Recognizing these patterns allows healthcare providers to make informed decisions about your health and suggest preventive actions.

### How Family History Shapes Your Health

Certain conditions are influenced by genetics, like heart disease and high blood pressure. Family history can also point to the risk of rarer genetic conditions, such as sickle cell disease or cystic fibrosis. Keep in mind that just because a relative has a certain condition doesn’t guarantee you will develop it, and having no family history of a condition doesn’t mean you’re risk-free.

Here are some common conditions that tend to run in families:

- Dementia
- Asthma
- Depression
- Certain types of cancer
- Blood clots
- Stroke
- High cholesterol
- Arthritis
- Type 2 diabetes
- Obesity
- Kidney disease

Knowing your family health history allows you to take proactive steps to reduce health risks. For example, if you have a family history of cancer, your doctor might recommend earlier or more frequent screenings like mammograms or colonoscopies. Additionally, lifestyle changes, such as maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and avoiding smoking, can help lower the chances of developing conditions like heart disease.



## Wellness Wonderland: Your Guide to a Healthy Winter

December 2024

As the weather gets cooler and holiday anticipation is in the air, it’s the perfect time to focus on your well-being. With the hustle and bustle of the season, taking a moment for self-care can make all the difference.

In this edition of *In Sound Health*, learn to map your health by considering your family history and how it can shape your health and wellness journey. Hit with holiday stress? Discover how stress impacts your gut health and explore strategies to keep your digestive system in check. Plus, find tips for managing alcohol consumption during the holidays and understanding the effects of anger on health. Bring a little color to your meals with a delicious kale salad with cranberries and jingle all the way to fitness with LiveWell Fit. As you prioritize self-care and healthy routines this winter, keep in mind that Sound Support programs are here to guide you on your journey to well-being.



## Gathering Family Health Information

The best way to start gathering your family’s health history is by asking relatives about their health conditions. Ask about any significant illnesses, when they began, and if there have been any early deaths in the family. If you were adopted, check with the adoption agency, which may have your medical history on file.

If you cannot ask family members directly for their history, try searching for information from public records, like birth certificates, marriage licenses, and obituaries. Old letters, family trees, or even family members’ electronic health records can also provide clues.

Once you have a complete record, share it with your healthcare provider to guide your care.

## Online Tools for Tracking Your Family Health

The U.S. Surgeon General offers an online tool called My Family Health Portrait, which helps you create a family health history that you can share with both relatives and your doctor. This resource can make it easier to track and update your medical history over time.

**Family health history**  
Please check appropriate boxes. Identify all known diseases or conditions.

Condition	Self	Father	Mother	Siblings	Child	Grandparents	Aunt/ Uncle	Cousin	Niece/ Nephew
<b>Chronic</b>									
Colonial									
Colon polyp									
Emmet									
Prostate									
Orange									
Other									
<b>Other Medical Conditions</b>									
Heart Disease									
Diabetes									
Asthma									
Eczema/psoriasis									
Hypertension									
Infectious									
Seizures									
Stroke/TIA									
High cholesterol									
Blending disorder									
High/low white count									
Anemia									
Liver disease									
Infectious									
Arthritis									
Osteoporosis									
Alcohol abuse									
Recurrent drug use									
STDs									
Depression									
Mental illness									
Suicide									
Adopted/ suicide									
Tuberculosis (TB)									
Other									

**Notes:**

### Looking for an easy way to record your family health history?

Scan the QR code to download a free family history worksheet from the Trust.



Knowing your family health history empowers you to take control of your health by identifying risks and adopting preventive measures for a healthier future.

Sources: [medlineplus.gov](https://www.medlineplus.gov), [ama-assn.org](https://www.ama-assn.org)

## Prevention Pays: Boost Your Health and HRA!

Schedule a preventive care appointment this January to stay healthy and get a head start on funding your 2026 HRA! With Prevention @ 100%, your covered eligible in-network preventive care is paid in full by the Trust – with no deductibles or co-insurance.

### Earn more when you get vaccinated

If eligible, you may earn between \$200–\$500 in HRA funding by getting these covered vaccines: flu shot, both doses (if applicable) of FDA approved COVID-19 vaccine, and FDA approved COVID-19 vaccine boosters.

### Health checkups can boost your HRA

Earn \$100, if eligible, for getting one of the following covered services:

- Well-adult annual physical
- Preventive mammogram, Pap smear, or prostate exam
- Certain adult immunizations
- Biometric screening
- Preventive colon cancer screening



**Take charge of your health today – scan here to get started**

*\*Final earned amount depends on the other Health Related Actions you perform this year. Must be HRA eligible on January 1, 2026.*

## Gut Feelings: The Impact of Stress on Your Digestive System

Stress and anxiety often manifest physically, with one common symptom being an upset stomach. Whether it's the sensation of knots in your stomach or butterflies when you're nervous, these feelings are normal and usually temporary. However, chronic stress and anxiety can have a more significant impact on your digestive system, potentially leading to long-term gastrointestinal (GI) problems.

If you frequently have stomach pain due to stress or other reasons, it's important to consult your primary care physician. They can help determine whether stress is the root cause or if it is something more serious. In some cases, you may be referred to a gastroenterologist, a specialist who can evaluate your symptoms and provide appropriate treatment.

### The Brain-Gut Connection

Your brain and digestive system are closely linked. The enteric nervous system, which governs the GI tract, is connected to the brain through the central nervous system. When you're stressed or anxious, this connection can trigger digestive problems like pain, bloating, or even diarrhea. Stress hormones can disrupt how food moves through your system, making these symptoms more likely.

### When to See a Doctor

If your stress-related stomach pain is severe or lasts more than a day, it could be a sign of something more serious. Warning signs to look out for include:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Blood in your stool or black tarry stools
- Abnormal blood test results, such as anemia

These symptoms could indicate a chronic condition that requires medical attention. A gastroenterologist may perform tests to rule out serious conditions like inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

### Managing Stress-Related Stomach Pain

In the short term, over-the-counter remedies like antacids can help soothe an upset stomach. Additionally, maintaining a healthy diet, avoiding foods high in sugar or fat, and managing your stress levels through relaxation techniques like meditation or exercise can reduce the frequency and intensity of stomach pain.

Identifying and managing the causes of your stress can help keep your digestive system healthier and prevent ongoing discomfort. Remember, a happy gut contributes to a happy life—so listen to your body and treat it with the care it deserves!

Source: [uchicagomedicine.org](http://uchicagomedicine.org)



## Kale Salad with Cranberries

Try this quick and flavorful holiday salad, featuring a sweet citrus dressing hand tossed into fresh kale for a burst of bright flavor. Ready in just 15 minutes, it's the perfect healthy side dish for holiday gatherings! **Serves: 6**

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot
- 2 1/2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon grated orange zest
- 3 tablespoons orange juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
- 7 cups stemmed, torn and massaged mixed kale, such as lacinato, curly and/or red
- 1/2 cup sweetened dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds

### PREPARATION

1. Stir shallot and vinegar together in a large bowl; let stand for 5 minutes. Whisk in oil, honey, orange zest, orange juice, salt and pepper.
2. Add kale and toss the mixture gently with your hands until the kale is lightly wilted, about 3 minutes. Arrange the salad on a platter; sprinkle with cranberries and almonds.

### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Serving size: 1 cup

**134 calories**      **2g fiber**  
**7g fat**            **2g protein**  
**19g carbs**

Source: modified from *Eating Well* at [eatingwell.com](http://eatingwell.com)



# Keeping Your Cool: The Effects of Anger on Your Health

Anger is something that we all experience from time to time, but prolonged or intense anger can take a serious toll on your health. While short bursts of anger can be a natural response to dangerous situations, chronic or unchecked anger can harm your physical and mental well-being.

Here are four ways anger affects your health:



### Heart Stress

Frequent anger releases stress hormones that can damage your cardiovascular system over time. Studies show that angry people have a higher risk of heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Even a single angry reaction can double the risk of a heart attack within two hours.



### Digestion Disruption

Because the brain and gut are closely connected, anger can upset your digestive system, causing stomach pain, bloating, and diarrhea. Over time, it may lead to conditions like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or acid reflux.



### Poor Mental Health

Constant anger can lead to anxiety, depression, and emotional stress. It can also harm relationships, increase feelings of isolation, and affect concentration, making it harder to focus or feel positive emotions.



### Sleep Problems

People who struggle with anger often experience poor sleep. Anger heightens arousal, making it difficult to relax and fall asleep. This lack of sleep can worsen your mood, creating a cycle of irritability.

## Want help to keep anger in check? The Trust is here to help.

### PPO Participants:

- Doctor on Demand offers 24-hour virtual mental health care. Visit [soundhealthwellness.com/ppo/benefits/doctor-on-demand](https://soundhealthwellness.com/ppo/benefits/doctor-on-demand) to learn more.
- Guardian Nurses can help you find treatment for mental health issues, including anxiety and depression. Learn more at [soundhealthwellness.com/ppo/guardian-nurses/](https://soundhealthwellness.com/ppo/guardian-nurses/).

**Kaiser Participants:** Find a Kaiser Permanente mental health provider online by visiting [soundhealthwellness.com/kp/benefits/find-a-provider](https://soundhealthwellness.com/kp/benefits/find-a-provider).

Remember, you can't completely eliminate anger, but you can change how it affects you and how you respond to it. Finding healthy ways to manage anger not only improves your well-being but also enhances your relationships and overall quality of life.

Sources: [apa.org](https://www.apa.org), [everydayhealth.com](https://www.everydayhealth.com)

# Holiday Spirits: Navigating Alcohol During The Holidays

The holidays are a time for gathering and celebrating with friends and family. For some, alcohol is part of the festivities, but others may drink to cope with feelings of loneliness or anxiety. It's important to cultivate healthy drinking habits and be mindful of your consumption. Whether you're trying to cut back or simply want to drink responsibly, these tips can help you navigate the holiday season safely.



## Debunking Common Alcohol Myths

Misconceptions about alcohol often contribute to unsafe drinking behaviors, so it's essential to be informed. Here are some common alcohol myths and the truth behind them:

### MYTH 1: I'm in control.

Alcohol can initially boost your confidence, but it quickly impairs your judgment and reduces inhibitions. As you drink more, it becomes harder to recognize its impact on your thinking and behavior, which can lead to risky decisions.

### TIP 1: Pace yourself.

Stick to one standard drink per hour — a 12-ounce beer, 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5-ounce shot of liquor. Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks for men and four or more drinks for women in a short period of time.

### MYTH 2: It's just beer, so I'm fine.

Many people believe beer is less harmful than liquor, but a 12-ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor all contain the same amount of alcohol. It's not what you drink—it's how much you drink.

### TIP 2: Savor your drink.

Drink slowly and mindfully. Taking time to notice the flavor, aroma, and color of your drink will help you enjoy it more and prevent overconsumption.

### MYTH 3: I can still drive.

You may feel fine, but alcohol impairs your coordination long before signs of intoxication appear. Even small amounts can slow reaction time and increase the likelihood of accidents.

### TIP 3: Plan your transportation.

Always have a sober designated driver or arrange for a ride-sharing service to ensure you get home safely.

### MYTH 4: I can sober up quickly.

Contrary to popular belief, cold showers, coffee, or fresh air don't sober you up. Only time can reduce alcohol's effects, so be cautious about your transportation after drinking.

### TIP 4: Hydrate between drinks.

Alternate alcoholic beverages with water or non-alcoholic options. Staying hydrated not only helps you pace yourself but also gives your body time to process the alcohol.

## Hosting Tips for a Safe Party

As a host, help your guests drink responsibly by:

- Offering non-alcoholic beverages and plenty of food throughout the event.
- Stopping alcohol service at least one hour before the party ends.
- Not serving alcohol to intoxicated guests, and
- Making sure no one who is drunk gets behind the wheel.



By confronting these myths and following these tips, you can enjoy the holidays mindfully and safely while ensuring that you and your guests have a great time.

Sources: [blueshieldca.com](http://blueshieldca.com), [dmh.mo.gov](http://dmh.mo.gov)

# 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
MCC Nurses —for Hospitalization/Health Conditions	(877) 362-9969 Option 2
MCC Nurses —for Behavioral Health	(206) 308-5632
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

### 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 Trust 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.***

## 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
WellDyneRx —for Prescription Coverage	(800) 373-1568
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

### Be A Health Hero — Share Your Story

Have you experienced the benefits of Sound Support programs like Health Coaching, Wondr, Guardian Nurses, or LiveWell Fit? Your journey could motivate others to take charge of their health! Sharing your success story not only highlights the positive impact these programs can have, but it also encourages fellow participants to take advantage of the Sound Support programs that are available to them — all fully covered by the Trust.

Ready to inspire? Reach out to a Wellness Coordinator or scan the QR code to fill out our online interest form.





**SOUND HEALTH**  
& WELLNESS TRUST

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GET  
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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.

## Jingle All the Way to Fitness With LiveWell Fit!

This winter, bundle up and stay active with LiveWell Fit!

Whether you're hitting the trails for a run, joining a marathon, or cycling through snowy paths, there's an event for everyone. The Trust will reimburse your registration fee for up to four LiveWell Fit approved events each year, helping you stay fit and motivated. Plus, you can earn rewards and HRA funding for 2025 (if eligible), if the event is completed before December 31. Embrace the chill and make this winter your most active season yet!



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

DATE	EVENT NAME & DESCRIPTION
<b>DECEMBER</b>	
14 Bellingham	<b>Jingle Bell Run Bellingham</b> — 3.1 or 1 mile run/walk
14 Tacoma	<b>Santa Runs Tacoma</b> — 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
14 Orting	<b>Reindeer Run 5k</b> — 3.1 mile run/walk
14 Maple Valley	<b>Pigtails Run</b> — 31, 26.2 or 13.1 mile run/walk
14 Redmond	<b>Beat the Bear the Santa Bear 10k</b> — 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk and kids run
15 Snohomish	<b>Chase the Grinch Outta Snohomish</b> — 3.1 mile run/walk
15 Kirkland	<b>12ks of Christmas</b> — 7.5 or 3.1 mile run/walk
15 Seattle	<b>Go Swifty 5k</b> — 3.1 mile run/walk
15 Kent	<b>Christmas Rush Fun Run/Walk</b> — 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
22 Seattle	<b>Sleigh That 5k</b> — 3.1 mile run/walk
28 Spokane	<b>Luau 1M, 5k, 10k, 15k &amp; Half Marathon</b> — 13.1, 9.3, 6.2, 3.1 or 1 mile run/walk
29 Kenmore	<b>Absolution Run</b> — 8 or 4 mile trail run/walk
<b>JANUARY</b>	
1 Auburn	<b>New Year's Day 5k &amp; 8k</b> — 4.97 or 3.1 mile run/walk
1 Seattle	<b>Resolution Run 5k &amp; Polar Bear Dive</b> — 3.1 mile run/walk and kids dash
4 Yakima	<b>Pirate 1M, 5K, 10K, 15K, &amp; Half Marathon</b> — 13.1, 9.3, 6.2, 3.1 or 1 mile run/walk
4 Lakewood	<b>Ft. Steilacoom Resolution Run 5k &amp; 10k</b> — 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk