

THE CONNECTION

To provide a high quality plan of health and other benefits that are affordable to the employee and the employer

May 2008

Strawberry & Spinach Salad



Sweet local strawberries, tender spinach and a snappy dressing make

up a fresh, healthful salad.

1 lb or pkg clean spinach leaves
2 pt cleaned, sliced strawberries
1 clove minced garlic (optional)
½ cup olive oil
¼ cup raspberry vinegar
1 tsp honey
2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
Salt and pepper to taste

Place spinach and strawberries in large bowl. Whisk together remaining ingredients. Drizzle dressing over salad; toss gently.
Adapted from Oregon-berries.com

Share your Success Story



Have you found a way to keep your weight where you want it?

Share your success with other PEBB members. E-mail mystory.pebb@state.or.us. We may use your story in a coming edition of *The Connection*.

Communication Champions

If you care about benefits and have a knack for plain language, consider becoming a PEBB Communication Champion. Learn more about this volunteer opportunity at oregon.gov/das/pebb/champ.shtml.

Allergies or Asthma Getting You Down?

Allergies

With nasal allergies, it's the itch that usually gets you first — in your eyes, nose and throat. Then come the sneezing, watery discharge and congestion. Symptoms can affect your sleep, too, making you tired all day.

Causes

About 20 percent of PEBB members suffer from nasal allergies. Some react to pollen during spring and fall. Others react year-round when exposed to dust, animal dander or mold.

Self Care

Try to avoid your allergy triggers. For example, stay inside — away from pollen — during spring, or clean your house often to limit dust.

Over-the-counter treatments may help. Non-drowsy antihistamines relieve the itching, sneezing and watery eyes. Decongestants help you breathe better. Saltwater drops and inhalers can soothe irritated tissues.

Seeing Your Doctor

If your symptoms or side effects are getting worse, you may want to keep a log for a few days and see your doctor. A log can help in discussing symptoms, treatments, results and side effects.

Your doctor may prescribe a prescription nasal spray. If it's a brand that isn't on your plan's formulary, ask if one that is would work as well at less cost. Use it as prescribed to get the full benefit.

Asthma

Nasal allergies can be a bother, but asthma can be life threatening. It can require daily use of medications to keep it under control.

People with asthma need an action plan developed in coordination with their provider. It helps them identify and avoid their asthma triggers and lays out steps to deal with symptoms.

See a sample asthma plan from the Oregon Asthma Resource Bank at oregon.gov/dhs/ph/asthma/resourcebank/index.shtml.

Help from Your Plan

Your medical plan offers support for chronic conditions, including asthma. Check your plan's online resources to learn more about asthma causes, treatments and outcomes. The more you know about it, the better you can control it.



oregon.gov/das/pebb

Upcoming PEBB Meeting Topics

May 13

Operations Subcommittee. Hear member suggestions on 2009 plan designs.

Please see

oregon.gov/das/pebb/members.shtml for details and for guidelines on providing comment during meetings.

May 20

Executive session. Review 2009 rate quotes.

Public Meeting. Make preliminary decisions on plan renewals. Hear Operations Subcommittee report.

Connect with your Benefit Board pebb.connect@state.or.us

Voting members

Chair, Diane Lovell; *Vice Chair*, Sue Nelson; Peter Callero; Rocky King; Paul McKenna; Jeanene Smith; Rich Peppers; Bret West

Advisory Members: Rep Tina Kotek; Sen. William Morrisette

Resources

oregon.gov/das/pebb

Question about your benefits?
inquiries.pebb@state.or.us
(503) 373-1102, (800) 788-0520

FSAs orpebb.asiflex.com

EAP cascadecenters.com (800) 433-2320

Medical Plans

Kaiser Permanente my.kp.org/nw/pebb

Providence Choice providence.org/pebb

Regence BCBSO or.regence.com/pebb

Samaritan Select samaritanselect.com

VSP (Vision Service Plan) vsp.com

Mail-order Prescriptions

PPS ppsrx.com

Walgreens walgreenshealth.com

Dental Plans

Kaiser Permanente my.kp.org/nw/pebb

ODS odscompanies.com/pebb

Willamette Dental willamettedental.com

Optional Plans

Standard Insurance standard.com

UnumProvident unumprovident.com/enroll/pebb

Tobacco Cessation Benefit Update

Dependent Coverage

Graduates ready to leave the nest may be full of knowledge, but they may still need guidance on health insurance.

You can continue covering dependents age 19 to 24 in your PEBB plans if they meet conditions set in PEBB rules.

These conditions include the dependent's marital (partner), military, tax, student, residence and financial support status.

Review PEBB rules to see if your dependent meets the conditions.

When the child's coverage ends, PEBB's administrator will send a notice about continuing coverage through COBRA. This federal law allows a dependent who loses coverage through your group plan to enroll in a PEBB plan as an individual. This coverage usually runs for up to 18 months, as long as the premiums are paid.

Review the Notice of Continuing Coverage and COBRA premium rates in your benefits handbook.

Dependents no longer have valid coverage under PEBB plans at the end of the month in which they lose eligibility. Don't leave yourself open to repaying invalid claims. Remove the dependent from coverage by submitting a completed Medical and Dental Update Form to your agency or benefits office within 60 days.

Download the form at oregon.gov/das/pebb/forms.shtml.

Calling All Opt Outs

If you opt out of medical coverage, your online benefit record may be out of date or incomplete. Make sure you get the latest updates with just six quick steps:

1. **Log in** at <https://pebb.benefits.oregon.gov/members>.
2. Select **Update My Coordination of Benefits Information**.
3. As needed, update the information; then select **Save and Continue**.
4. Select **Update My Personal Information**.
5. As needed, update your contact information including e-mail; then select **Save and Continue**.
6. **Log out**.

All medical plans cover these Free & Clear benefits:

- Free quit guide, phone counseling and online coaching
- Free nicotine replacement therapy (patch or gum)
- \$5 bupropion (\$1 in Kaiser) or \$5 Chantix® co-pay when prescribed by your provider.

It's easy to sign up: (866) 784-8454 or freeclear.com/webenroll/PEBB. Kaiser members, call Kaiser first.

