

Benefits News

Get to know your benefits

July 2023



NATURAL WAYS TO STAY HEALTHY

In this issue, learn simple ways to stay healthy—naturally.

- Boost your health with nutrient-rich foods
- Protect your gut by eating colorful foods and fiber
- Nine ways to turn household tasks into a workout
- Improve your work set-up to feel better
- PEBB at your service

Plus, check out the new online peer-to-peer support service



Not all bodies are the same

Sometimes staying healthy can be challenging, even when we exercise and eat nutritious foods. In these cases, medications or other treatments can help. Create a plan with your doctor for how you can reach, or maintain, good health.

Boost your health with nutrient-rich foods

Studies show that eating nutrient-rich foods is the best way to give your body what it needs. Your doctor can help determine whether you are getting enough nutrients from your diet alone.

Common nutrients, their health benefits, and food sources are listed in the following table.



	Health benefits	Food sources
Vitamin A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps fight infection• Maintains healthy heart, lungs, kidneys, vision, skin, bones, and teeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dairy products, such as milk, cheese, and yogurt• Yellow or orange fruits and vegetables
Vitamin B complex (includes eight different B vitamins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintains brain function and memory• Helps digest carbs, proteins, and fats• Improves cholesterol levels• Reduces risk of heart disease and stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leafy green vegetables, such as spinach and kale• Meat• Whole grains
Vitamin C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May reduce risk of getting the common cold• Maintains skin and tissue health• Strengthens bones and teeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oranges, grapefruits, and lemons• Strawberries• Kiwis• Broccoli• Tomatoes• Bell peppers

	Health benefits	Food sources
Vitamin D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps immune system • Maintains nervous system • Promotes bone health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatty fish • Cod liver oil • Juice, milk, and cereal fortified with vitamin D
Vitamin E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects cells from damage caused by toxins • Maintains muscles • Reduces risk of cancer, heart disease, and Alzheimer's disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avocados • Spinach • Seeds and nuts • Whole grains
Vitamin K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps blood clot • Helps wounds heal • Strengthens bones • Protects against heart disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leafy green vegetables, such as spinach and kale
Calcium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves muscle function • Helps maintain healthy blood pressure • Strengthens teeth and bones • Aids in hormone secretion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy products, such as milk, cheese, and yogurt • Soy products, such as tofu and soy milk • Spinach • Rhubarb
Iron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves immunity and brain function • Provides energy • Helps carry oxygen in blood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red meat • Leafy green vegetables, such as spinach and kale • Legumes, such as beans, peas, and lentils

	Health benefits	Food sources
Omega-3 fatty acids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces risk of heart disease • Lowers blood pressure and heart rate • Reduces inflammation • Lowers triglycerides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish • Nuts (especially walnuts) • Flax seeds and flaxseed oil • Leafy green vegetables, such as spinach and kale
Zinc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosts immune system • Reduces risk of cancer • Improves memory • Reduces cold symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red meat • Poultry • Beans and nuts • Whole grains

Sources: Cleveland Clinic, 2021; Harvard School of Public Health, 2023.



Potential health benefits of turmeric and cinnamon

Two powerful ingredients might be hiding in your spice cabinet.

- **Turmeric.** This yellow spice can help fight off type 2 diabetes, obesity, bowel issues, and cancer. It can also help reduce inflammation.
- **Cinnamon.** Loaded with antioxidants, it may help reduce inflammation. It may also protect against heart disease and lower your blood sugar levels.

Sources: Healthline, 2022; Mayo Clinic, 2022.



Protect your gut by eating colorful foods and fiber



Trillions of bacteria and other microbes live in your gut. The “good” ones support a healthy metabolism and create more energy. The “bad” ones can put your health at risk and lead to inflammation, weight gain, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes.

Promote good bacteria in your gut by:

- **Eating the rainbow.** Eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables each day such as red berries, blueberries, yellow and orange bell peppers, and green beans.
- **Having more fiber.** Plant-based foods such as beans, lentils, brown rice, fruits, and vegetables are full of fiber. Bonus: fiber keeps you feeling full longer!
- **Avoiding processed food.** Highly processed foods lose many of the nutrients and fiber that our bodies need to feel good and be healthy. Tip: Instead of having a pre-packaged muffin in the morning, try steel-cut oatmeal with berries.

Source: Kaiser Permanente, 2023.



For all PEBB members & families, except OSU:

New! Online peer-to-peer support service

Are you struggling and looking for others who are in the same boat? Join professional-led online chats available 24/7. Share your experiences and hear from others who are dealing with similar issues. Common topics include:

- Managing anger, anxiety, depression, grief, health issues, loneliness, parenting, relationships, stress, and work issues
- Handling the aftereffects of crises such as abuse, domestic violence, medical emergencies, panic attacks, sexual assault, and suicidal thoughts

This benefit is offered by the Canopy Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Get more details on **PEBB's Wellness Programs** page.



Nine ways to turn household tasks into a workout

Short on time? Looking for ideas to fit in more exercise?

Household tasks give you plenty of opportunities to move, strengthen your muscles, and raise your heart rate. Here's how to turn them into a workout.

1

DOING LAUNDRY. Do a wall sit for 20 to 30 seconds each time you check off a step on laundry duties. Between starting the washer, switching the load to the dryer, pulling it out of the dryer, and folding, you'll log at least a minute. If you find yourself struggling to hold good form, cut down the time and slowly work your way up.



2

VACUUMING. Stretching, pulling, pushing, bending—vacuuming has pretty much everything you need for a full-body workout. Engage your lower body even more by doing a set of lunges after you finish a room. You can also increase the intensity by challenging yourself to complete a room in a certain amount of time.



3

PUTTING AWAY GROCERIES. Canned goods, condiment bottles, and even apples can all double as free weights. Complete a few sets of arm curls as you restock the pantry and fridge after a grocery trip. For a tougher workout, increase the number of reps.



4

DUSTING. Sneezing isn't the only workout you can get from dusting. (It's a legit core exercise!) Each time you reach for a high shelf or fan blade, do a set of calf raises. And when it's time to tackle a different floor of your house, take an extra trip up and down the stairs. Then do a few more calf raises off the edge of a step.



5

WASHING WINDOWS OR SCRUBBING THE SHOWER FLOOR. The circular motions will wake up your shoulder muscles. This is especially good to do if you sit at a computer most of the day.



6

MAKING THE BED. After you make the bed or change the sheets (a workout in itself depending on your mattress size!), do a set of tricep dips. Position yourself at the edge of the bed, or for more support, a sturdy chair or bench.



7

GETTING THE MAIL. Walk around the block or do a few laps in your driveway the next time you head out to get the mail. Even if it's just an extra trip from your porch to the sidewalk, this is a great way to boost your daily step count. Challenge yourself to do the same when you grab your latest package delivery or take out the trash.



8

WASHING THE CAR. All the reaching and scrubbing as you work your way around the car will strengthen your muscles. The key is to keep up the pace. Other pro tips: Bend at the knees to wash the wheels and the lower parts of the car. Avoid bending at the waist (your back will thank you) and move up and down as much as you can.



9

WORKING IN THE YARD. Raking leaves, digging out weeds, and mowing the lawn are all tasks that can help you break a sweat. Instead of adding movements to get a full-body workout, try going old-school. For example, use a push mower or use a rake instead of a leaf blower.



Source: *WeightWatchers, 2023.*



For enrollees in a Long-Term Disability plan:

Improve your work set-up to feel better

Are you currently being treated for pain or a medical condition that's impacting your work? If you're enrolled in a Long-Term Disability plan through The Standard, you may be eligible to receive services to help you comfortably stay at—or return to—work.

The Standard's Workplace PossibilitiesSM program can:

- **Remove barriers** to your comfort, safety, and ability to perform your job effectively.
- **Assess your workstation and make necessary adjustments.** This might mean lowering or raising your desk or adding lumbar support to your chair. It could also include modifications to the equipment you use.
- **Promote open communication** with your manager and medical provider.

If you're interested, ask your manager to start the process by completing an [application](#) for you. Once The Standard receives the application, a program coordinator will follow up with you.

Take advantage of free and low-cost wellness programs



Taking care of your health is important—today and for your future. PEBB offers **wellbeing programs** to help you:

- Start and stick to an exercise routine
- Find healthy and easy recipes to try
- Manage or even reverse prediabetes

Many of the programs are offered at **low or no cost to you!**

PEBB at your service



How does PEBB's Board compare benefit plans with other employers?

At the beginning of each year, Board members work with Mercer consultants to compare PEBB's benefit plans with those of other employers across the state. They consider:

- **The costs you must pay.** Premiums, deductibles, copays, coinsurance, and out-of-pocket maximums.
- **The offerings you can receive.** Services, procedures, and provider networks.
- **The overall value.** What participants get for their premium dollar. For example, if you pay higher premiums but there aren't many doctors in the network, the value will be **lower**. If you pay lower premiums and the medical plan covers a lot of extra services, the value will be **higher**.

During the first few months of this year, the Board reviewed potential changes that will help keep PEBB's benefit plans competitive. The latest changes will be communicated ahead of the upcoming 2024 benefits open enrollment period.

The Board strives to create a benefits package that's affordable, provides value, and meets the diverse needs of our members and their families.

PEBB Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month and are open to the public. To learn more about upcoming meetings or view recordings of past meetings, visit the [Public Meetings](#) page of the PEBB website.

Benefits Questions?

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