

RESPIRATORY

DISEASE MANAGEMENT NEWS

FALL | 2024

MAKE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Change can be difficult to navigate sometimes, even with the right motivators. Knowing what is needed and the desire to make a change is the first step. Here are some tips to help successfully achieve goals:

- Commit. Know the goal and commit to meeting that goal. Ensure there's a clearly defined goal in hand and progress can be measured.
- Understand the starting point to measure progress. Knowing where the starting point is can help see when change begins to happen.
- Understand barriers and the plan to move past them.
- Set realistic goals. Start with small goals to help achieve a larger goal at hand.
- Identify support sources. Find family members, friends or coworkers that can help in supporting achieve goals.
- Monitor progress. Reflect on what has helped in achieving (or not achieving) goals and continue working towards an end result.

Congratulations on taking the first steps! Change is difficult to navigate but with the right tools, and having a measurable plan in place, success is possible!

An important note about TRICARE program information: At the time of publication, this information is current. It is important to remember that TRICARE policies and benefits are governed by public law and federal regulations. Changes to TRICARE programs are continually made as public law and/or federal regulations are amended.



EAST REGION

Enjoy the Outdoors With Asthma

People with asthma often must avoid being outdoors for extended periods of time. Particles found in the air like pollen, pollution and other irritants can worsen asthma symptoms or trigger an attack. Fortunately, by taking proper steps and precautions, people with asthma can still enjoy time outside. It's essential to know which environmental factors can trigger symptoms and take action to prevent contact with them.

1. **What is the air quality like each day?** The air quality index is a measure of air pollution and can be found at airnow.gov. The green rating means good air quality, while maroon indicates hazardous conditions.
2. **Are allergy medicines impacting asthma?** Allergies often coincide with asthma and can worsen symptoms and triggers by interfering with airways, aggravating any existing asthma reactions.
3. **Can extreme weather conditions be avoided?** Both excessive heat and excessive cold can irritate lungs and breathing capabilities. Cold/dry and hot/humid air can impact the ability to breathe outside. Try to plan for being outside during the mildest parts of the day or move workouts inside.
4. **Is it possible to avoid traffic?** Air pollution from vehicle exhaust and other related chemicals can inflame airways and worsen asthma symptoms. A long walk in the park may not be attainable for everyone, but avoiding streets that tend to be more crowded and steering clear of rush-hour traffic times can help lessen the impacts of this type of air irritants.
5. **Should an inhaler be used before it is needed?** Using an inhaler in advance of activities known to have one of these strains in the air, will make it easier. Talk to a doctor about using this suggestion.
6. **Is the asthma plan working?** If these problems are happening often and the asthma plan is being followed, the plan may need to be adjusted. Talk to a doctor about making changes to allow the asthma plan to work.

Outdoor activities do not have to be the enemy for those with asthma! Taking small actions and precautions in advance of journeying outside will help asthma sufferers enjoy outside events again.



FROM THE CLINICIAN



Barb is a nurse with the disease management department that has a unique view on the program. Barb not only provides education for beneficiaries but has been diagnosed with diabetes since the age of eight. Barb reports that her job gives her such satisfaction because she is able to see improvement in the health of beneficiaries every day. Since she is able to see diabetes from both an educator and patient level, she has some tips she wants to share with all of you.

1. Write down and ask questions as they occur. This gives you some control at your appointment and better enables you to take care of yourself.
2. Take responsibility for understanding your diabetes, how foods affect you, and how your blood sugar trends occur. The more information you gather about yourself and the more you learn, the better you are able to care for yourself.
3. Advocate for yourself. Through this program we educate on recommended testing. Providers work really hard to care for their patients; however, providers see many patients and sometimes things can be forgotten. By knowing about diabetes and your body you can talk with your provider and ensure that all testing is up to date.
4. It is okay to have feelings of burnout. These are normal feelings. It is important to talk about your feelings and, if needed, find a healthy outlet to aide with them. Anytime feelings of burnout occur try to think about goals that you are ready to work on and change, and also, take into consideration the long term ramifications of any action.
5. Be honest with yourself and your providers. By holding yourself accountable and looking at actions, change can occur. By knowing what changes you are ready and able to make, a care plan can be developed.

The role of the nurse in this program is to enable you, our beneficiaries. We educate, but also support, cheer and advocate. We relish in victories and build trust to enable us to help through your hardships. Our goal is not to control your health, but help you to control your own health. We do this through determining where you are in your health journey, what steps you are ready to take and what steps you hope to take soon. This program has allowed me to get to know people and what is important to them and allowed me to guide and support to fulfill their goals and improve or maintain their health.



FROM THE PATIENT



Ray, a participant in the asthma program, has had a wonderful experience in the disease management initiative so far. His clinician has been patient, kind, informative and nonjudgmental in helping with his asthma care. Her approach allows an environment in which Ray has been able to learn about and feel comfortable talking about his struggles. Through everything in their communications, she has always taken the time to show that she cares and ensures she understands everything he says. She takes the time to educate, review and reinforce concepts so he is able to retain the information and utilize it in improving his care. The information and understanding he now has will help him better prepare for handling future asthma flare-ups, especially in the winter months, when Ray's asthma can be the most difficult to handle.

Thanks to her dedication in addition to his TRICARE providers, Ray feels confident in his ability to manage his asthma. Ray says, "It's nice to know what I need to avoid, what medications to take and what exercise I can do to help my health".

Asthma and Natural Disasters

Natural disasters affect people in many ways. For people with asthma, these disasters can impact wellness in unforeseen ways. Wildfires, tornadoes, severe flooding or hurricanes can worsen medical conditions of all types, including asthma. Triggers that can lead to an asthma flare-up include:

- Allergens released into the air (pollen, mold).
- Particles floating around as irritants (dust, smoke).
- No access to treatments or medicine due to being displaced.
- Overwhelming feelings and emotions (fear, anxiety).

The time to create a planning kit for asthma during a disaster is now, before an emergency arises. Making sure the kit is stored in a safe, handy place for easy access is as important as what's in it!

Ideas for a planning kit include:

1. **Any prescriptions, medical equipment and supplies.** Include asthma inhalers, long-term treatments, allergy medications like nasal sprays and any other medicines prescribed by a provider.
2. **Critical documents, forms and other paperwork.** Many times, disasters involve downed power sources and internet access. Be sure to have copies of insurance cards, medical action plans, important phone numbers, all doctor's names and numbers, pharmacies and a list of medications, along with the amounts.
3. **Dietary needs.** Each family member should have at least a three-day supply of food and water on hand. Anyone who has food allergies or specific food requirements need to have a supply in the kit. Make sure it is packed and ready to go, so time is not wasted collecting the items during an emergency.
4. **Other helpful supplies.** Imagine anything needed if power and/or running water was not available. Examples include: extra phone chargers and portable batteries, other batteries, sanitizing wipes, flashlights, extension cords and other supplies to help during an emergency.





CORN AND BLACK BEAN BURRITOS

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 5 minutes

Yield: 12 burritos

Serving size: 1 burrito

Ingredients:

- ¼ C scallions, rinsed and sliced into ¼" wide circles (including green tops)
- ¼ C celery, rinsed and finely diced
- 1 ¼ C frozen yellow corn
- ½ ripe avocado, peeled and diced
- 2 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- ¼ C reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese
- ¼ C salsa or taco sauce (look for lowest sodium version)
- 12 whole wheat tortillas (9")

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine scallions, celery, and corn in a small saucepan. Add just enough water to cover
3. Cover, bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium. Simmer for 5 minutes, until vegetables soften. Drain vegetables. Set aside to cool.
4. Combine avocado, cilantro, and beans in a large mixing bowl. Add cheese and salsa and mix.

5. When corn mixture has cooled slightly, add to avocado mixture.
6. In a large nonstick pan over medium heat, warm each tortilla for about 15 seconds on each side. Place each tortilla on a flat surface. Spoon 1/3 cup of the mixture into the center of the tortilla. Fold the top and bottom of the tortilla over the filling. Fold in the sides to make a closed packet.
7. Repeat with the remaining tortillas.
8. When all tortillas are wrapped, continue heating in the oven 5 minutes, until all are warm and cheese is melted.

Nutritional information (per serving):

Calories	189
Total fat	3 g
Protein	8 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Potassium	204 mg
Carbohydrates	34 g
Saturated fat	0 g
Total fiber	3 g
Sodium	257 mg
Percent daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

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- Toll-free phone number: **800-881-9227**
- Find more information at www.HumanaMilitary.com/dm



EAST REGION

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Humana Military is Here to Help!



Humana Military offers many free services and programs for many conditions. We have a team of nurses who reach out to various patients after a hospital stay. These nurses check in to make sure patients have everything they need after discharging home.

This program outreach involves discussing health information protected by law. Humana Military associates must read a privacy statement and confirm your identity. To verify, you will need:

- Your name
- Sponsor's ID (social security number) or Defense Benefits Number (DBN), found on your military ID card and,
- One other qualifier, i.e. your date of birth or address

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