Laugh your way to good health

Chuckle. Chortle. Giggle. No matter what it’s called, laughing just plain feels good. It’s strong medicine too. That’s because a dose of laughter:
- Creates connections. Laughing with others strengthens the bonds that support good mental health.
- Defuses conflict. It’s tough to harbor ill will when you’re giggling.
- Helps you avoid illness. By lowering stress hormones and increasing infection-fighting antibodies, laughing boosts resistance to disease.
- Protects your heart. Lungs, blood vessels and blood flow all benefit from laughter—offering protection from cardiovascular problems.

Here’s a free and easy prescription for better health: Laugh!
- Relaxes you. A hearty chuckle can relieve stress and tension.
- Releases feel-good endorphins. These chemicals promote a sense of well-being—and can even temporarily relieve pain.

Jump on the laugh track Ready to reap the benefits of laughter? These simple strategies can add a dash of healthy hilarity to your days:

1. **Double your pleasure.** Laughter is contagious—so share your funny stories. When your friends LOL, you’ll probably chuckle a second time.
2. **Meet at comedy central.** Before your book club or committee meetings come to order, invite everyone to share a funny anecdote.
3. **Go to the dogs.** Canines are natural clowns. Catch a free show at your local dog park.

Sources: Helpguide.org; Mental Health America

Food is fuel: Get kids off to a good start

What’s the easiest way to jumpstart your kids’ day? A healthy breakfast. Breakfast helps kids make it to school more often—and on time. And when they’re at school, they tend to pay more attention and do better on tests. Breakfast even helps with muscle coordination. And it may keep kids at a healthy weight.

So what’s stopping you from getting a good breakfast into your child? Maybe it’s:

- **Too little time.** Before everyone goes to bed, let your child choose and help prepare tomorrow’s breakfast. Then it’s easy to grab and go in the morning.
- **Kids with no appetite.** Don’t give your kids after-dinner snacks. And give them time to wake up before sitting down for a small, quick bite of breakfast.
- **A picky eater.** If so, get creative. Even leftover veggie pizza can kick-start a kid’s day.

It also helps to model healthy habits. So join your kids for meals in the morning.

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

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**SPREAD THE CHEER**
Tips for living life joyfully.

**HOW TO DEAL**
Managing your prediabetes.

**COLON CANCER**
Screening is key to preventing this common disease.
Accessibility of the Medical Management Department

The Health Plan Medical Management Department provides the following communication services for members:

- Staff is available at least eight hours a day during normal business hours for inbound and outbound calls regarding utilization management.
- A toll-free number is available for all inbound calls (608) 775-8007 or (800) 897-1923.
- TTY services for deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired members are available by dialing 711.
- Language assistance for members to discuss utilization management issues is available free of charge through our language line and in person through an interpreter with the Gundersen Interpreter Department.
- After hours, a voice recording provides instructions on how to leave a message, and all calls are responded to on the next business day.

Timeliness of utilization management decisions and notification

Behavioral health and non-behavioral health review determinations are those decisions which are required for admissions, procedures and out-of-network services which are made by the Medical Management Department of Gundersen Health Plan. The Health Plan provides a mechanism for initial medical determinations to occur in a process that ensures decisions are timely, made by the appropriate clinical staff and based on medical necessity standards.

The Health Plan adheres to the following time frames for notification of behavioral health and nonbehavioral health utilization management decision-making:

- For nonurgent preservice decisions, the Health Plan makes decisions within 14 calendar days of receipt of the request.
- For urgent preservice decisions, the Health Plan makes decisions within 72 hours of receipt of the request.
- For urgent concurrent review, the Health Plan makes decisions within 24 hours of receipt of the request.
- For post-service decisions, the Health Plan makes decisions within 30 calendar days of receipt of the request.

Please note that an urgent request is defined as any request for medical care or treatment in which the application of the time periods for making nonurgent care determinations could result in the following circumstances:

- Seriously jeopardizing the life or health of the member or the member’s ability to regain maximum function, based on a prudent layperson’s judgment.
- In the opinion of a practitioner with knowledge of the member’s medical condition, the member would be subjected to severe pain that cannot be adequately managed without the care or treatment requested.

Denial notices

In the event of a denial, Gundersen Health Plan provides the member and practitioner sufficient information to understand and decide whether to appeal a decision to deny coverage. The following information is included in all denial notices:

- The specific reason or reasons for the denial in easily understandable language
- Reference to the specific plan provisions on which the denial is based
- Instructions for filing a grievance/appeal regarding the denial and requesting an independent external review (if applicable)
- Notification of how the member may receive a copy of the specific criteria, guidelines or policies referenced for making the decision
- Information on how to contact the appropriate reviewer to discuss the denial

The Health Plan does not receive incentives

Gundersen Health Plan, Inc., does not give financial incentives to staff or healthcare practitioners/providers at any time. All utilization management decision-making is based on the appropriateness of care and services and the existence of coverage. Practitioners/providers or other individuals are not specifically rewarded for issuing denials of coverage, service or care.
7 ways to manage stress when you’re kicking the habit

Quitting tobacco is one of the best things you can do for your health. Tobacco use accounts for 6 million deaths around the world every year. Tobacco use is responsible for nearly 1 in 3 cancer deaths. Kicking the habit can add stress to your life. And if you tend to smoke when you’re anxious or worried, you’ll need some new ways to handle those feelings.

Before your quit date, test out a few stress-relief strategies. One or more of these may work for you:

1. Call a timeout. When stress builds up, find a quiet place to close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply.
2. Take a hike. Walking is a free and easy way to get the stress-relief benefits of exercise. Try to walk outdoors when possible. Nature and fresh air can be calming.
3. Distract yourself. Send your mind to a less stressful place, like the pages of a book or the squares of a crossword puzzle.
4. Give yourself a good talking to. Avoid negative self-talk like “I can’t do this; it’s too hard.” Instead, tell yourself: “I’ve overcome other challenges—I’ve got this.” Also, think about what makes you feel grateful or a few things you’re especially good at.
5. Read a self-help book or find a spiritual practice that gives you peace of mind.
6. Talk about it. Share your worries with a friend. Join a support group.
7. Address other health concerns. See your doctor so that concerns about your health—like weight gain, for example—can be discussed.

Source: American Cancer Society; American Heart Association; smokefree.gov

Keep in touch with your doctor

Risks for a number of health problems increase as people age. These include arthritis, cataracts and certain cancers. Sometimes a combination of genetics and environmental factors—including your lifestyle—puts you at risk as well.

By working with your doctor, you can better understand your specific risks. Just as important, you can learn how to head off those things that pose some of the greatest risks. For example, your doctor might recommend that you stop smoking, improve your diet, get moving and have recommended screening tests. In some cases, you might need medication.

If you already have a health problem, it’s important to work closely with your doctor. Doing so can help you manage your condition. And that can help you live as healthfully as possible.

Sources: AGS Foundation for Health in Aging; National Institutes of Health

You can quit tobacco!

If you are interested in quitting tobacco use, consider one of these options:

- Call your local state quit line. The quit line is staffed by people trained to help you. They talk every day with others who are quitting. Call (800) QUIT-NOW, or visit smokefree.gov.
- Call Gundersen Health System. Gundersen offers several options for people interested in quitting. Call (608) 775-5442 or (800) 362-9567, ext. 55442 to learn more.
- Talk to your healthcare provider. Ask about programs and medicines available to help you. If you have questions about coverage, call Gundersen Health Plan Customer Service.

WOULD YOU LIKE INFORMATION ON ADVANCE CARE PLANNING? If so, you can find information at gundersenhealth.org/advance-care. For more facts, please talk to your healthcare provider or call Gundersen Health System advance care planning at (800) 362-9567, ext. 56000.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once wrote, “Into each life some rain must fall.” If you sometimes feel like your life is one downpour after another, it’s time to find some joy. And it’s easier than you might think.

Being joyful has the power to help you bounce back from stressful events, solve problems, think flexibly and even fend off diseases.

So without further ado, here are 10 simple ways to make your days brighter:

1. **Do something you loved as a kid.** Sing silly songs, splash in puddles or see how high you can swing.

2. **Laugh at life’s hassles.** No day is perfect. But there’s often something at least a bit amusing in challenging situations if you look for it.

3. **Collect sayings or photos that make you smile.** Then stick them where they’re visible—on your refrigerator or at your desk, for instance—to look at when you need a pick-me-up.

4. **Play a song you love.** Imaging tests of brains show that music can release feel-good hormones.

5. **Go for it.** Stop putting experiences you want to try on hold. Bake a pie from scratch, learn to crochet or sign up for an indoor climbing class—explore what intrigues you.

6. **Take a nature break.** Look up at the sky, and see how blue it really is. Go on an early morning walk, and delight in the dew on the grass. Let nature’s beauty soothe you.

7. **Take a mental break.** Close your eyes and imagine a place you love. Use all your senses. Are you drawn to the beach? Smell the salt water, feel the sun on your back and hear the crashing waves.

8. **Spread happiness.** When you get good news, don’t keep it to yourself—tell a friend. You’ll relive the moment and have the extra pleasure of your friend’s reaction.

9. **Seek out happy people.** Good moods are contagious.

10. **Develop your playful side.** Joke with strangers in line, arrange nights out with friends or have a regular game night with your family.

*Source: HelpGuide; Mental Health America*
Disease management

Do you have diabetes, heart failure or asthma? Can we offer support for you to stay healthy?

Gundersen Health Plan offers disease management programs for diabetes, heart failure and asthma to help you stay healthy. There are no classes to attend, and there is no cost to participate. We offer educational materials in the mail and support by phone.

You know your health needs better than anyone else, and we understand that. By keeping track of your health conditions, learning how to take your medicines and getting regular checkups, you will help yourself stay as healthy as possible. Members are identified to be included in the diabetes, heart failure and asthma programs when a:

- Medical or pharmacy claim (bill received by the health plan) indicates that a member has asthma, diabetes or heart failure

- Healthcare provider asks us to include a member
- Member asks to be included by calling Customer Service or submitting a request through our website member login at gundersenhealthplan.org

The programs are voluntary and no cost. You are able to opt out at any time.

To contact us for more information, call Customer Service and ask to speak to a disease management nurse. We look forward to serving you and helping you stay as healthy as possible.

Meteorologists can often warn us of bad weather coming. Doctors can often do the same with our health—warning us when we’re at risk for a serious disease. An example: a condition called prediabetes.

If you’ve been diagnosed with prediabetes, it means you have a blood glucose (sugar) level that is creeping up. Your level isn’t high enough yet to be called type 2 diabetes, but it is above normal. The condition is a warning that screams, “Pay attention! Danger ahead!” That’s because your risk of developing full-blown diabetes is higher with prediabetes.

And once you have diabetes, it never goes away.

But here’s the good news: If you act now, you can slow this trip toward diabetes. You may even be able to stop it altogether.

Make changes to your habits

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), you can cut your risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58 percent if you:

- Lose 7 percent of your body weight, or about 15 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds
- Exercise moderately—taking a brisk walk, for example—30 minutes a day, five days a week

These may require turning off the TV, listing schedules to make time for exercise, and eating and shopping in a new way. A healthy diet is one that cuts back on calories and saturated fat and emphasizes low-fat or nonfat dairy products, healthy oils, whole grains, lean meats, dried beans, fish, and lots of fruits and vegetables.

By taking positive steps now to control prediabetes, you can put yourself on the road to better health—a road that just might lead to a life without diabetes.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PREDIABETES. Visit the ADA website at diabetes.org. Search for “prediabetes.”

Prediabetes: Why you shouldn’t ignore it
Colon cancer: Which test is best?

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. It is one of the most preventable types of cancer. It is often cured if found early. Screening tests are important as most early colorectal cancers have no symptoms. All people starting at age 50 need regular screening.

If you want to estimate your risk of colon cancer and learn about ways to lower that risk, take a few minutes to answer some questions about your health, background and lifestyle here: cancer.gov/colorectalcancerrisk.

After determining your risk, talk with your doctor about which screening test is right for you. There are a number of recommended screening tests for colon cancer. How often you need to get screened depends on which test is best for you.

5 screening tests for colorectal cancer

• **COLONOSCOPY.** A lighted tube with an attached video camera is used to examine the rectum and the colon. Polyps or biopsy samples can be removed. You will need a sedative. You will need to cleanse your bowels with laxatives to prepare for this test, and you may need to be on a liquid diet before the procedure.

• **FECAL OCCULT BLOOD TEST.** These take-home tests look for traces of hidden blood from cancer or precancerous polyps. A positive result may mean you will need a colonoscopy to find out why.

• **SIGMOIDOSCOPY.** A lighted tube with an attached video camera is used to examine the rectum and the lower part of the colon. Polyps or biopsy samples can be removed. You may not need a sedative as you would with a colonoscopy. But you will need to cleanse your bowels with laxatives to prepare for this test.

• **VIRTUAL COLONOSCOPY.** This test requires the same preparation as a regular colonoscopy, but it uses X-rays and other external scans to take images of the colon. The colon does not need to be inflated with air to be scanned properly.

• **DNA STOOL TEST.** The stool DNA test is a take-home test that looks for DNA changes in the cells of a stool sample. The stool DNA test specifically looks for DNA changes associated with colon polyps and colon cancer. No special diet or bowel laxatives are required for a stool DNA test. A positive result may mean you will need a colonoscopy to find out why.

Who pays?

Although many insurance plans cover the cost of colon cancer screenings, you still might be charged for some services. Review your health insurance plan for specific details. It is your responsibility to determine which screening tests are included by your plan. If you have questions about insurance coverage for these screening tests, contact Customer Service.

If you have specific problems, such as belly (abdominal) pain, intestinal bleeding or low red blood cell counts (anemia), colonoscopy is not considered a screening test. If you are getting a test for such a reason, you may have to pay the usual deductible and copay.

Need health information?

Check out our resources on the Web at gundersenhealthplan.org/healthresources. Don’t have easy access to the Web? If you would like information mailed to you regarding topics such as healthy weight, smoking cessation, physical activity, healthy eating, stress management, alcohol use and depression, contact the Quality Management Department.
Many adults use medications to help them sleep; however, there is danger in this practice. The use of zolpidem (Ambien®), benzodiazepines (alprazolam, lorazepam, etc.) and many other sleep medications can cause various negative effects. Some of these medications can cause anterograde amnesia (the inability to later recall events which occurred while under the influence of the drug), sleep walking and impaired driving the following morning, among other side effects.

Women may be more susceptible to some of these adverse effects. Four years ago, the FDA required that the manufacturers of zolpidem update their labeling to indicate that the maximum recommended dosage for women is half of the dosage recommended for men.

Further, these negative effects are enhanced when combined with alcohol, and people should not consume alcohol while taking these medications. Many people who have difficulty sleeping benefit from nondrug interventions. Proper sleep hygiene should be considered before resorting to medications. Here are some healthy habits to try for better sleep:

- Avoid napping during the day.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, food and nicotine close to bedtime.
- Exercise is helpful (but do this earlier in the day).
- Adequate exposure to natural light during the day helps maintain the sleep-wake cycle.
- Associate your bed with sleep (avoid watching TV, reading or listening to the radio in bed).
- Wake up and go to bed at the same times every day.
- Other practices that may be helpful are cognitive behavioral therapy and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

If you often struggle with sleep, talk to your healthcare provider about the best ways to manage this problem.

Save some trips to the pharmacy

In the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota, pharmacists have the ability to switch your prescription from 30 days to 90 days. Studies have shown that those who fill their maintenance medications for 90 days’ supply are better able to consistently take their medications because they only have to make four trips to the pharmacy per year instead of 12.

Gundersen Health Plan formulary updates

**New generic additions to tier 1**
- Abacavir sulfate/lamivudine (QLL) 30/30
- Erythromycin ethylsuccinate
- Nitroglycerin
- Olmesartan medoxomil (QLL) 30/30
- Olmesartan medoxomil/hydrochlorothiazide (QLL) 30/30
- Sumatriptan (QLL) 12/30
- Estradiol

**New additions to tier 3**
- Bromite 0.075% eye drops (QLL) 20/365
- Ryvalson 5mg to 80mg tablet (QLL) 30/30
- Otoval 0.3% to 0.025% ear drops

**New additions to tier 4**
- Orkambi 100mg to 125mg tablet (PA, QLL) 120/30

**New additions to tier 6**
- Stelara 130mg/26ml vial (PA)
- Infectra 100mg vial (PA)

**PA:** Requires prior authorization

**QLL:** Quantity level limits are in place

Injectable and IV drugs may not be added to the formulary due to possible coverage under the medical benefit. These drugs may require an approved prior authorization to be in place for coverage under the medical benefit. **Please note:** Nonformulary medications have alternatives, formulary equivalents, or over-the-counter or generic equivalents. Please talk to your healthcare provider or call Customer Service for more details.

Trouble getting your ZZZs?
SLEEPING MEDICATIONS SHOULD BE A LAST RESORT

Jeremy Fejfar, PharmD

Dr. Fejfar has been a pharmacist with Gundersen Clinic Pharmacy since 2003. He is also the Health Plan Clinical Pharmacy Director. Dr. Fejfar earned his doctorate in pharmacy from South Dakota State University. He is a member of the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin.
Translation information


Nondiscrimination notice

Gundersen Health Plan complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or health status. Gundersen Health Plan:

- Provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
  - Qualified sign language interpreters
  - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
  - Qualified interpreters
  - Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact Gundersen Health Plan Customer Service at (800) 897-1923.

If you believe that Gundersen Health Plan has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can file a grievance with:

- Kristie Meier, Compliance Officer
  1900 South Ave., Mailstop NCA2-01
  La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601
- Phone: (800) 897-1923, ext. 101402; TTY: 711 or toll-free (800) 877-8973
- Fax: (608) 644-3500
- Email: appealsspecialists@quartzbenefits.com

You can file a grievance in person or by mail, fax or email. If you need help filing a grievance, Kristie Meier, Compliance Officer, is available to help you. You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf or by mail or phone at:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  200 Independence Ave., HH13 Building, SW Room 509F,
  Washington, DC 20201
  (800) 368-1019; TDD: (800) 537-7697
- Complaint forms are available at hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html.

GUNDERSEN HEALTH PLAN

Visit us

Our offices are located at 3190 Gundersen Drive, Onalaska, WI, and at the Resource Center located in the Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center – La Crosse Clinic at 1836 South Ave., La Crosse, WI.

Contact us

Employer Group Plans:
(608) 881-8271
(800) 897-1923
Marketplace Plans:
- GundersenOne:
  (608) 881-8278
  (855) 685-6404
- Employer Group Plans:
  (608) 881-8272
  (855) 459-8076

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired, please call TTY 711 or (800) 877-8973. Or you may call through a video relay service company of your choice. Interpreter services are provided free of charge to you. Our office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Visit our website
gundersenhealthplan.org

Email us
hpcustomerservice@quartzbenefits.com

Talk to a nurse 24/7
Do you have a health question or concern? Do you think you may need to go to the doctor, but you aren’t sure? You have free access to a Nurse Advisor, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call (800) 858-1050 or (608) 775-4454.

Our network of providers
To learn if a healthcare provider is in the Gundersen Health Plan network:
- Check our Provider Directory online at gundersenhealthplan.org/providerdirectory.
- Call Customer Service.

FOR YOUR HEALTH is published three times a year as a community service to members of GUNDERSEN HEALTH PLAN. Information in FOR YOUR HEALTH comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your healthcare provider. Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

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