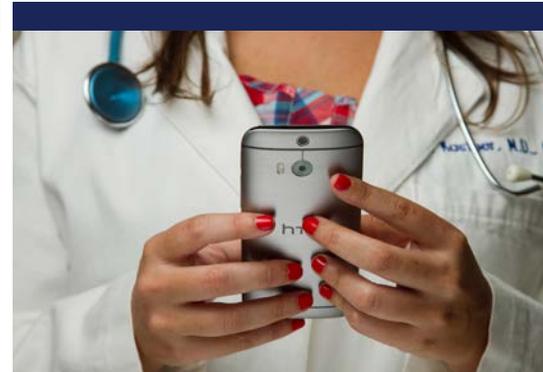




must READ

MONTANA UNIFIED SCHOOL TRUST NEWSLETTER



FALL2020

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WHEN & WHY YOU SHOULD GET A FLU SHOT

Flu season typically begins around November in the northern hemisphere, and the combined burden of the illness and COVID-19, hospitals and testing sites could be overwhelmed.

This year, there are some additional reasons why it's extra beneficial to get your flu shot. Influenza can have dire consequences ranging from loss of productivity to death, so you should do everything you can to prevent the flu, and the shot is the best way we can do that. In addition to protecting yourself, a flu shot also helps protect other family members who may be more vulnerable to respiratory disease.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated in the 2018–2019 season, some 35.5 million Americans came down with the flu, and of those about 34,000 of them died from it. Flu shots prevented another 4.4 million cases and about 3,500 deaths. In 2020 vaccinating as many people as possible against influenza could be critical to preventing a dual-epidemic scenario.

During this flu season, it's even more important to get a flu shot because it's going to be hard to tell the difference between flu and COVID—considering that the two diseases have similar symptoms. Widely vaccinating against influenza can reduce unnecessary COVID-19 testing and protect vulnerable people: those whose immune symptoms have been compromised by either of the two illnesses are at greater risk of contracting a more severe case of the other one.

Is there an optimal time to get a flu shot? Stuart Ray, an infectious disease physician at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, says everyone aged six months and older should get a vaccine every flu season, preferably before Halloween. "It takes some time for your immune system to recognize and respond to the vaccine, and those responses last for a long time," he says. On

average, the antibodies produced by an individual's immune response to a flu shot take two weeks to develop. While there is no definitive time line, immunity can last four to six months—given that a person's immunity depends on many factors, from their own immune system function to the virulence of the flu strain. The immune system can maintain a "memory" of the vaccine for more than a year that can "reawaken and contribute to protection against a severe infection," Ray adds.

All experts agree on the bottom line: make a plan to get a flu shot to protect yourself and those around you.

Source: www.scientificamerican.com



MUST HAVES

- Flu vaccinations are **covered at 100%** for MUST members and enrolled family.
- **CareHere Clinics** offer a variety of vaccination clinics and appointments **FREE** of charge to MUST members and families. Visit carehere.com for locations near you.
- vaccinefinder.org is an easy way to find available vaccine locations in your community.

LUNCH & LEARN

Enjoy this healthy fall recipe and learn some **MUST KNOW** facts about your benefits for total body health.

STUFFED BUTTERNUT SQUASH

YIELDS	PREP TIME	TOTAL TIME
6 SERVINGS	0 HRS 15 MIN	0 HRS 15 MIN

INGREDIENTS

3 small acorn squash
3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 c. farro
2 c. plus 2 tablespoons apple cider, divided
2 sprigs fresh thyme
1/2 lb. sweet Italian sausage
1/2 yellow onion, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp. fresh thyme, chopped
1 bunch lacinato kale, stems removed and chopped

DIRECTIONS

- 1 | Preheat oven to 400°. Cut each end off squash and halve.
- 2 | Use a spoon to remove seeds and brush all over with 2 table spoons olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and roast until tender, 30-35 minutes.
- 3 | Meanwhile, make farro: in a medium sauce pan, combine farro with 2 cups cider, 1 cup water, and thyme sprigs. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is evaporated and farro is tender, 25 to 30 minutes. If your liquid is evaporated and farro is not yet tender, add more water a ¼ cup at a time. Remove thyme sprigs.
- 4 | Make filling: in a large skillet over medium heat, heat remaining oil. Add sausage and cook, breaking up with a wooden spoon and stirring occasionally until golden and cooked through, 5 minutes. Remove sausage with a slotted spoon onto a pa per-towel lined plate.
- 5 | Drain most fat from the skillet, reserving about 1 tablespoon for cooking. Add onion and celery and cook until soft, 6 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add garlic and chopped thyme and cook until fragrant, 1 minute more.
- 6 | Add kale and cook, stirring frequently. Add remaining 2 table spoons cider after 4 minutes of cooking, then cook 4 minutes more, or until kale is tender.
- 7 | Add cooked farro and sausage to skillet with vegetables and stir to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Divide mixture among the 6 squash halves. Switch oven to broil and broil until tops are golden and filling is warmed, 2 to 3 minutes.

Source: www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a28484111/easy-stuffed-acorn-squash-recipe/

DID YOU KNOW?

MUST offers three new programs to help you stay on track with your health. These programs are FREE for eligible MUST members.

OMADA

Omada® is a digital lifestyle change program. We combine the latest technology with ongoing support so you can make the changes that matter most—whether that's around eating, activity, sleep, or stress. It's an approach shown to help you lose weight and reduce the risks of type 2 diabetes.

Visit omadahealth.com/must for more information.



NATURALLY SLIM

Naturally Slim® is an online program that helps you change how you eat instead of what you eat. Learn the skills to lose weight and keep it off forever while still eating your favorite foods. Plus, you will improve your health and reduce your chance of developing a serious, chronic disease, like diabetes or heart disease. And, it's covered 100% by your MUST plan so there is not out of pocket cost for you.

Go to naturallyslim.com/MUST to learn more and enroll!



LIVONGO

MUST now offers Livongo for members with diabetes and high blood pressure.

- ◆ Smart blood glucose meter and blood pressure monitor
- ◆ Unlimited strips and lancets delivered to your door
- ◆ Real-time insights, one-on-one expert coaching, and much more

Visit get.livongo.com/MUST/begin to get started today!



For additional resources on all these amazing new programs, visit the MUST website at mustbenefits.org/wellness

WORKPLACE WELLNESS

5 SIMPLE WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS THIS YEAR

Finding ways to process the challenges of this year will be critical for schools.

Educators this year are faced with a multitude of decisions and reflexive reactions as schools and communities try to create the safest plans for the return to school, and the chronic unpredictability of this situation wears on our nervous systems.

Why is this? Our brains and bodies are being flooded with millions of bits of sensory information every day, but with an increase of anxiety and worry, these sensations can trigger our stress response systems, causing our bodies and brains to move into a survival state where we find ourselves feeling chronically unsafe and stressed.

These feelings can show up in the body as tightness, headaches, nausea, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, or a variety of other symptoms. If we do not process how we are experiencing these sensations and emotions, our immune systems can become compromised and we find ourselves living day after day in a fight, flight, or freeze response.

When we're aware of these sensations and feelings, we can begin to address our mental and physical well-being. Below are practices and strategies that address nervous system regulation and can be implemented in just a minute or two each day.

A calm brain can calm another brain. When we find our inner balance and feel grounded, we're able to share this with our students and colleagues. Emotions, negative or positive, are contagious, and when we prioritize the health of our nervous systems, we can share that health and well-being with all those around us.

Source: www.edutopia.org/article/5-simple-ways-manage-stress-yea

5 SIMPLE WAYS TO FIND CALM

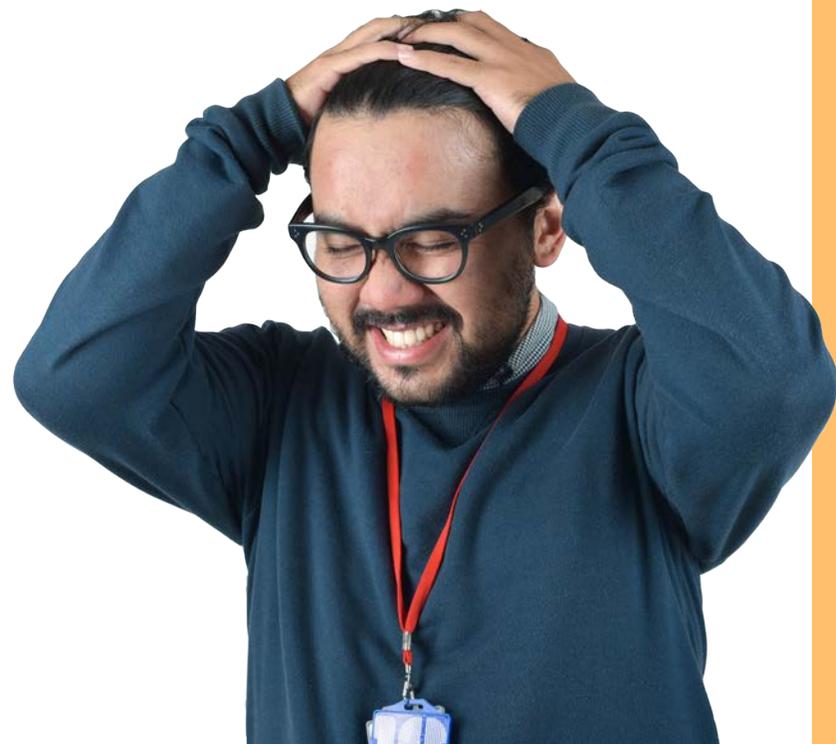
1. Take some belly breaths—A few long, deep belly breaths coupled with calming sounds provide rhythmic healing to a worn-out nervous system. Before you go to sleep or first thing when you awaken, step outside and just listen to the night or morning sounds. Sit comfortably, and for two or three minutes take a few deep breaths, exhaling a few seconds longer than you inhale.

2. Try a yoga pose—There is growing research on the benefits of certain yoga poses to relieve anxiety and calm the nervous system. One of the most powerful ways to feel immediate relief from the overwhelming sensations of the day is to lie on your back with your legs straight up at a 90-degree angle against a wall. You can place a pillow under your head, but with your legs elevated, take a few minutes and breathe all the way down to your belly, feeling it rise and fall with each inhale and exhale. This pose produces a release of anxiety in the body.

3. Talk to yourself—Talking out loud to yourself, especially in the third person, can be extremely helpful in stressful moments. If you're by yourself, say what you need to say about a problem and then talk about options or outcomes. Validate and soothe yourself. If you're not alone, take a minute to write down your concerns and challenges until you can speak them aloud later. Try adding soothing and comforting words you need to hear, and say those out loud whenever you need them.

4. Control what you can control—When we're feeling anxious, and worried, we can lose perspective on what is realistic and in our control, so it can be helpful to create a short list of the situations that we can control and those we cannot. Sometimes when we're feeling overwhelmed we forget to pause, step back, and try to find a deeper perspective. Educators tend to want to fix problems, soothe troubled student feelings, and quickly find a solution. Often, we need to let go and observe, allowing the experience to unfold. Follow the quiet. Allow the quiet of contemplation to enter, and to leave when its work is completed.

5. Hum or sing—Can activate the vagus nerve, a critical nerve that flows from the brain stem throughout most of our body. It is associated with functions of the body that are automatic, like swallowing, digesting, and the heart's beating, and it relays signals to the brain that all is well or not. Activating this nerve basically tells your brain that you are calm and relaxed, while stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system to slow your heart rate and respiration and lower your blood pressure.



90 DAY FILL & PROVIDER FINDER

90 DAY FILL (MAIL ORDER OR AT RETAIL) 2X CO-PAY

**Member responsibility will be the lower of the contracted rate or the copay*

HDHP

Members on High Deductible Health Plans (HDHPs) will pay 100% of the cost of their medications until their medical plan deductible is met. All HDHP plans include an Expanded Preventive Drug List, which covers additional preventive prescriptions at \$0 before deductible. The preventive drug program currently includes prescription drugs in the following categories: anti-coagulants/anti-platelets, bowel preparation, breast cancer prevention, contraceptives, diabetes medications and supplies, fluoride supplements, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, osteoporosis, respiratory, tobacco cessation, and vaccines.

- ✓ Remember, MUST HDHPs include the Expanded Preventive Drug List, as well as standard ACA \$0 preventive drugs.

BASIC

Members on the Basic Plan can use the MUST ID card for certain pharmacy discounts. The card must be provided at the point of service. ACA preventive prescriptions are covered at 100%.

MAIL-ORDER PROGRAMS FOR ONGOING MEDICATIONS

You can obtain a 90-day supply of medication through a mail-order program with Ridgeway Pharmacy, Costco Pharmacy, or AllianceRx Walgreens Prime. You can access information for the mail-order program through their websites or by contacting them directly at the numbers listed below. With the mail-order program, medication will be delivered to your mailing address. Members who have not yet signed up with one of the mail-order pharmacies must do so using the applicable form found on our website at mustbenefits.org/explore-plans/pharmacy.

AllianceRx Walgreens Prime

1-877-357-7463

walgreens.com/topic/s/mail_service_pharmacy_primemail.jsp

Costco Pharmacy

1-800-607-6861 | www.pharmacy.costco.com

Ridgeway Pharmacy

1-800-630-3214 | www.ridgewayrx.com

PROVIDER FINDER

MUST utilizes Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana's extensive nationwide provider networks. For pharmacies, visit myprime.com to compare prescription costs.

MUST members will experience the lowest out-of-pocket costs when utilizing network providers. Network providers agree to accept pre-determined allowable amounts as payment in full. This protects members as they are not subject to charges beyond MUST's allowable limits (often referred to as balance billing). Network providers also agree to submit claims on members' behalf, and MUST will make payments directly to those providers through BCBSMT.

Visit my.providerfinderonline.com for your network providers.

90 DAY FILL &
PROVIDER FINDER

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TEACHER STRESS &
ONLINE LEARNING

1

FLU SHOTS: WHERE &
WHEN TO GET ONE

IN THIS ISSUE



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