



# Dakota Wellness Program

## MAY 2024

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Join Sanford Health Plan Wellness team members for our monthly 15-minute wellness webinar.

**Click here to register today!**



NORTH DAKOTA  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES  
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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HEALTH PLAN

# Women's Health:

## A holistic approach to wellness

Unlocking a vibrant, empowered version of yourself isn't a distant dream; it begins with simple yet potent lifestyle shifts. These shifts, encompassing diet, exercise, stress management and regular check-ups, lay the foundation for a life bursting with vitality and resilience.



### Revolutionize your diet

Dive into a world of flavor and nourishment with a heart-healthy diet rich in vibrant fruits, crisp veggies, hearty whole grains and protein-packed lean meats. Embrace the art of culinary adventure, infusing your meals with creativity and zest.



### Ignite your inner fire with exercise

Transform mundane moments into invigorating bursts of energy. Dance through life with purposeful movement, sculpting your body and spirit with each step. Embrace the challenge, the sweat and the triumph of conquering new heights.



### Shed the weight, discover your strength

Aim for gradual, sustainable weight loss through balanced eating and regular exercise.



### Champion your health

Regular doctor visits help monitor health and catch issues early. Keep communication open with your health care provider.



### Conquer stress, embrace serenity

Defy the chaos of modern life with a warrior's spirit, mastering the art of tranquility amidst the storm. Cultivate inner peace through mindfulness, meditation and self-compassion, forging a sanctuary of calm in a world of turbulence.



### Craft a legacy of health

By integrating these practices into your life, you're investing in a healthier future.

THE EMPOWERED WOMAN'S  
GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH

# TAKING CARE OF YOU

MARY I. O'CONNOR, M.D.  
& KANWAL L. HAQ, M.S.

MITCHELL PRESS

## Book Club

### *Taking Care of You*

by **Mary I. O'Connor, MD & Kanwall L Haq, MS**

"Taking Care of Yourself" is a comprehensive guide designed to empower women as advocates for their own health. The book serves as a valuable resource providing essential information on various aspects of women's health. The authors aim to address health care disparities, particularly among women of lower socioeconomic status and women of color. The book covers a wide range of topics beyond reproductive, sexual and maternal health, focusing on conditions that impact women differently from men or more frequently. The mission is to encourage active engagement with health care teams, fostering a positive change in women's health care experiences.

### Discussion questions

1. How can women actively advocate for their own health within the health care system, and what steps can be taken to address and reduce health care disparities, especially for women of lower socioeconomic status and women of color?
2. The book focuses on conditions that impact women differently from men. Can you provide examples of such conditions and discuss the importance of recognizing and addressing these gender-specific health concerns?
3. In what ways does the book emphasize the role of communication in women's health care? How can improved communication between women and their health care teams contribute to better health outcomes and a more equitable health care experience for all women?

# How can I transition to plant-based eating for optimal health and sustainability?

Plant-based eating is a dietary approach centered around consuming predominantly plant-derived foods while minimizing or eliminating animal products. This dietary pattern emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Plant-based eating is flexible and can include various levels of plant-focused diets, such as vegetarian or vegan lifestyles. The emphasis on plant foods provides essential nutrients, fiber and antioxidants, contributing to overall health and well-being. Research suggests that plant-based diets may be associated with a reduced risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease and certain cancers. Plant-based eating aligns with environmental sustainability goals and often involves a mindful and conscious approach to food choices. By incorporating a variety of plant foods, individuals can enjoy a diverse and nutritious diet that supports both personal health and environmental stewardship.



## Empower Your Mind

### The Transformative Power of Healthy Self-Talk for Resilience and Well-Being

Healthy self-talk is a powerful tool for promoting mental well-being and building resilience. It involves cultivating positive and supportive internal dialogue to counter negative thoughts and boost self-esteem. Acknowledging achievements, no matter how small, and practicing self-compassion in times of challenges contribute to a healthier mindset. Reframing negative thoughts into constructive ones helps foster a more optimistic outlook. Setting realistic goals and focusing on one's strengths enhances confidence and self-worth. Regular mindfulness practices, such as meditation or deep breathing, can aid in maintaining a positive internal dialogue. By consciously nurturing healthy self-talk, individuals can cultivate a more resilient and positive mindset, ultimately contributing to improved mental and emotional well-being.

## Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

As a Sanford Health Plan member, you have a diabetes prevention program offering to help you make small lifestyle changes that can lead to big health improvements.

Change Your Weigh is an evidence-based program offered in partnership with the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program. This yearlong, group-coaching program focuses on simple strategies to help you lose weight, increase physical activity and decrease your risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

The group virtual program includes:

- Weekly meetings for the first four months
- Monthly meetings for the last eight months
- Support from a trained lifestyle coach and class peers

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN** for summer and fall program start dates by scanning or visiting below.



Learn more

◀ Scan the QR Code or visit [sanfordhealthplan.com/diabetes-prevention](https://sanfordhealthplan.com/diabetes-prevention).



## Reminders and Announcements

### Marathon in a Month

Are you ready to step-up your health? Then get excited for the Marathon in a Month Challenge! It's a fun way to stay active and earn rewards from the Dakota Wellness Program. During the challenge, you can walk, hike, dance or get your steps in any way you like. Just track 50,000 steps from May 1 through May 28 (must track 21 of the 28 days) to earn 1,500 points toward your wellness incentive.

# Preventive Health

## The Benefits of Pet Ownership

May is National Pet Month. Pet ownership can provide individuals and families with many health benefits. Pets create opportunities to socialize, exercise and be outside. They can provide companionship and help to manage depression and loneliness. The bond between a pet and its owner can also lead to improved cognitive function in older adults and decrease symptoms of PTSD. Playing with your pet or walking your pet can decrease triglyceride and cholesterol levels and also decrease blood pressure.

### Important considerations for maintaining your health and the health of your pet:

- Individuals with a weakened immune system, young children less than 5 years, pregnant women, and those older than 65 should talk to their doctor and veterinarian to discuss the best pet option for optimizing health
- Seek regular visits with a veterinarian and ask how you can keep your family and your pet healthy. Regular veterinary care is important for maintaining good health for your pet
- Frequent hand washing after any contact with your pet can reduce the spread of germs

## Monthly Observances

**Arthritis Awareness Month**  
**Global Employee Health and Fitness Month**  
**Mental Health awareness Month**  
**National Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month**  
**National High Blood Pressure Education Month**  
**National Stroke Awareness Month**  
**National Women's Health Month**  
**Healthy Vision Month**

**May 7 World Asthma Day**  
**May 8 National Women's Checkup Day**  
**May 5-11 Children's Mental Health Awareness Week**  
**May 12-18 National Women's Health Week**  
**May 13-19 Bike to Work Week**  
**May 17 Bike to Work Day**

### QUICK LINKS

[sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers](http://sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers)

### SET-UP A

[mySanfordHealthPlan](http://mySanfordHealthPlan)

### ONLINE ACCOUNT

[sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin](http://sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin)

### CONTACT US

[NDPERSwellness@sanfordhealth.org](mailto:NDPERSwellness@sanfordhealth.org)  
(800) 499-3416 (TTY: 711)

## Best Ever Kale Salad

### SERVINGS:6

Yummiest kale salad you'll ever eat. If you like sundried tomatoes and pumpkin seeds and lemony deliciousness, at least. Unlike most salads with greens and dressing, this one is good for making ahead – I actually prefer if the dressing has been mixed in advance. And it works well as a potluck item or bagged lunch since is ready-to-eat/dressing-pre-incorporated!

### Ingredients:

**Kale, 1 large bunch, rinsed, de-stemmed and chopped/torn into small pieces**

**1/3 cup quality cold pressed, extra virgin olive oil**

**Juice of 1 lemon (about 1/4 cup or so)**

**1/8 cup wine vinegar (red or white)**

**1 Tbsp maple syrup**

**1/2 cup sundried tomatoes, chopped into small pieces**

**1/8 cup red onion, diced small**

**1 clove garlic, chopped**

**Salt and pepper – a few dashes of each**

**1/3 cup pumpkin seeds (or other seed/nut of your choice)**

**Optional: avocado, black olives and/or capers**

### Instructions:

1. Rinse kale, remove tough stems and chop or tear kale into small bite-sized pieces.
2. Toss kale bits with some of the olive oil in a large bowl – really massage the oil into the kale to soften the leaves. Let sit for a few minutes while you prepare the dressing.
3. In a medium-sized jar, prepare the dressing: combine remaining olive oil, wine vinegar, lemon juice, maple syrup, garlic, red onion, sundried tomatoes, salt and pepper. Shake it all up in the jar – it will be a pretty 'lumpy' dressing.
4. Toss dressing into the bowl of kale along with the pumpkin seeds and any other optional add-ins.
5. Mix well and serve.

**Nutrition Facts:** Calories: 166kcal | Fat: 7.3g  
Carbohydrates: 20.2g | Protein: 7g | Cholesterol: 0mg  
Sodium: 156mg | Fiber: 2.9g | Sugar: 7.4g



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The information in this newsletter should not be considered medical advice and is not a substitute for individual patient care and treatment decisions.



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