



Dakota Wellness Program

MAY 2026

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

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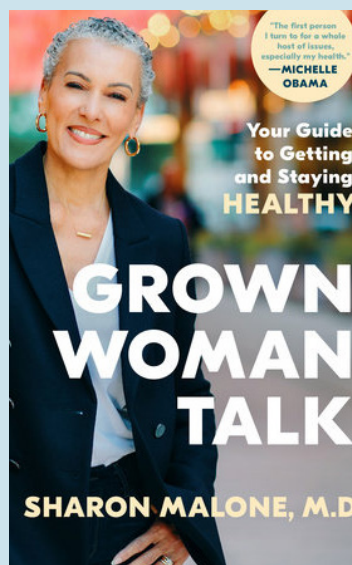
Women's health is a lifelong investment

Women's health is a lifelong investment, shaped by daily choices and proactive care. Protecting it begins with prevention – scheduling regular checkups, completing recommended screenings and staying up to date on vaccinations. Listening to your body is equally important. Persistent fatigue, unusual pain, mood shifts or cycle changes are signals worth paying attention to.

Movement and nourishment form the foundation of long-term wellness. Strength training and regular activity support heart health and bone density, while balanced meals rich in protein, fiber and healthy fats help regulate hormones and energy. Sleep and stress management are just as essential; quality rest and intentional downtime protect mental clarity and emotional resilience.

Women should also safeguard reproductive and sexual health through regular gynecologic care and open conversations with providers. Knowing your family medical history strengthens prevention strategies.

Ultimately, prioritizing your health is not selfish – it's empowering. When women care for themselves consistently and confidently, they build stronger futures for themselves and those who depend on them.



Monthly book club

***Grown Woman Talk: Your Guide to Getting and Staying Healthy* by Sharon Malone**

Grown Woman Talk: Your Guide to Getting and Staying Healthy by Sharon Malone is an empowering health guide designed especially for women, particularly women of color, who are often overlooked in the health care system. Blending medical expertise with personal stories, Dr. Malone explains common health concerns such as heart disease, diabetes, menopause, cancer and aging. She emphasizes prevention, early detection and practical lifestyle habits while encouraging women to advocate for themselves in medical settings. The book also addresses racial and gender bias in health care and teaches readers how to ask better questions, understand their risks and build strong relationships with providers. Clear, conversational and evidence-based, it serves as both a medical resource and a confidence-building roadmap for lifelong health.

Discussion questions

- **Dr. Sharon Malone emphasizes self-advocacy in health care. What practical steps can women take to become stronger advocates for themselves during medical appointments?**
- **The book discusses racial and gender bias in the health care system. How do these biases impact health outcomes, and what changes could improve equity in care?**
- **How does blending personal stories with medical science make the book's health advice more impactful or relatable? Did this approach change how you think about your own health decisions?**

Ask the expert

Can what you eat help reduce hot flashes?

Yes, your diet can help manage hot flashes during menopause. Hormonal changes, especially drops in estrogen, often trigger these symptoms, but certain foods may provide relief. A Mediterranean-style diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthy fats may reduce hot flashes. Soy-based foods like tofu and edamame contain isoflavones that mimic estrogen and may ease symptoms. Other helpful options include flaxseeds, legumes, berries and omega-3-rich foods like fish. “Cooling foods” such as cucumbers and watermelon may also help.

Limit ultra-processed foods, caffeine, alcohol and spicy foods, which can worsen symptoms. Tracking your diet can help identify personal triggers and improve symptom control.



Menopause brain: What’s happening and how to stay sharp

“Menopause brain” is real, rooted in hormonal shifts that begin in the brain – not just the ovaries. As estrogen fluctuates, women may experience brain fog, memory lapses, mood changes and trouble concentrating. Neuroscientist Lisa Mosconi explains that these changes affect overall brain health and can influence the entire body. The good news: there are ways to support your brain during this transition. Prioritize quality sleep, eat a nutrient-rich diet, stay physically active and manage stress. Mental stimulation and social connection also help maintain cognitive function. Understanding these changes empowers women to take proactive steps, protect brain health and navigate menopause with greater clarity, confidence and resilience through this natural life stage.



npr.org/2021/03/05/973805003/lisa-mosconi-how-does-menopause-affect-the-brain

Exercise is Medicine (EIM)

Exercise is Medicine (EIM) is a 12-week program that empowers you to make exercise a habit and gives you the tools you need to decrease your health risks. It’s ONLY offered virtually at this time. To qualify, you must be 18 years old or older.

EIM Price Guide

Virtual EIM program over Webex, which includes a fitness box: \$99
Non-Sanford Health Plan member virtual EIM program: \$199

A one-time fee unlocks:

- Group fitness classes
- Access to a personal trainer
- A fitness box will be mailed to your home, which includes:
 - EIM workbook
 - Mini loop resistance band
 - Recipe book
 - Handled resistance band
 - Pilates ball
 - Yoga mat

Virtual Class Options

Virtual EIM offers four weekly live virtual classes. Participants are encouraged to attend 3 live classes every week. New cohorts start in June.

- Afternoon Workout Session: Mon. and Wed. 6 to 7 p.m. CT.
- Morning Workout Session: Tues. and Thurs. 5:30 to 6:30 a.m. CT.
- Workbook Overview: Fri. 11:30 a.m. to Noon CT.

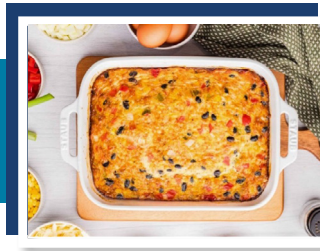
Learn more and register at sanfordhealthplan.com/exercise-is-medicine.

Preventive health

Healthy vision month

May is Healthy Vision Month, a great time to focus on protecting one of our most valuable senses, our eyesight. Good vision helps us perform everyday tasks such as reading, driving, working and staying active. Taking steps to care for your eyes can help prevent vision problems and support long-term eye health. One of the most important ways to protect your eyesight is by scheduling regular comprehensive eye exams. Many common eye diseases, including glaucoma, diabetic eye disease and age-related macular degeneration, may not show noticeable symptoms early. Routine exams allow providers to detect problems sooner and begin treatment when it is most effective. Healthy lifestyle habits also support good vision. Wearing sunglasses that block 100% of UVA and UVB rays helps protect your eyes from sun damage. Eating a balanced diet rich in leafy greens, colorful fruits and vegetables and omega-3 fatty acids can support overall eye health. If you spend long periods on digital devices, remember the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds to reduce eye strain.

Southwest cottage cheese breakfast casserole



Total Time: 55 minutes

Yield: Serves 6

This Southwest cottage cheese breakfast casserole is hearty, healthy and packed with flavor. It's an easy, protein-packed breakfast that is surprisingly easy to make.

Ingredients:

10 large eggs	2 scallions, thinly sliced
1 cup small curd cottage cheese	1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 cup shredded pepper Jack cheese	1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 cup frozen corn, thawed	1 teaspoon chili powder
1 cup black beans, drained and rinsed	1/4 teaspoon salt (plus more to taste)
1 red bell pepper, diced	1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 small yellow onion, diced	

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 375°F, then lightly grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with olive oil or cooking spray. Whisk the eggs together in a large mixing bowl until well combined. Next, add cottage cheese, smoked paprika, cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper. Whisk to combine. Stir in the remaining ingredients, including pepper Jack cheese, black beans, corn, onion, bell pepper and chopped scallions, until all the ingredients are evenly distributed throughout the batter. Pour the casserole batter into the prepared 9x13-inch baking pan, then use a spatula to smooth the top. Bake the casserole for 40–45 minutes, or until it is puffed, golden brown and a knife inserted into the center of the casserole comes out clean. Allow the casserole to rest for 10 minutes after removing it from the oven, ensuring it has cooled enough for slicing. As it cools, the casserole's texture will become firmer. Serve the casserole warm and consider topping it with additional items, such as salsa, sliced avocado or chopped scallions, if desired.

Nutrition Facts: Serves 6 | Calories per serving: 300 | Protein: 22.5g | Carbohydrates: 17.5g | Fat: 15.8g
Sodium: 627mg | Daily fiber: 4.4g | Sugar: 5.2g

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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.

Monthly Observances

Mental health awareness

Employee health and fitness

Healthy vision

National asthma and allergy awareness

May 5: World hand hygiene day

May 10-16: Women's health week

May 27: National senior health and fitness day

May 31: World no tobacco day

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sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers

SET-UP A

MyChart

ONLINE ACCOUNT

sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin

CONTACT US

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



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