

# Member News

VNS Health MLTC



## Eat Fresh to Feel Better

Spring brings fresh fruits and vegetables that can improve your diet. Eating a mix of these colorful foods can make your meals more nutritious and help you feel healthier.

Fruits like strawberries, cherries, and lychees are tasty and full of vitamins. Vegetables such as asparagus, radishes, spinach, and peas are also full of nutrients your body needs.

Did you know? A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, prevent some types of cancer, and improve blood sugar levels—which helps control appetite.

Try adding leafy greens and colorful vegetables to your lunch (see recipe on the back page). Or, blend fruits like berries and bananas with spinach for a quick and healthy smoothie.

Source: *Harvard's Nutrition Source*

## Don't Miss Out on Important Plan Information

To give you the best service possible, we need to have your current mailing and email address and cell phone number. If your contact information has changed, please call us at **1-888-867-6555 (TTY: 711)**. Or you can update your information on your personalized online account at [vnshealthplans.org/account](https://vnshealthplans.org/account).



## In This Issue – Spring 2025

- Ease the Ache and Find Arthritis Relief
- Chew on This: Habits for Healthy Teeth
- Choosing the Right Care: PCP, Urgent Care, ER

## Spring into Fitness

Want to boost your mood and have more energy? Let's get moving. Every little bit helps, even if you are busy, tired or haven't moved much. Here's how to get started:

**Start Small:** Begin with short, easy exercises. Try walking around your apartment or doing gentle stretches.

**Make It Fun:** Pick activities you enjoy. Dance to your favorite music or do chair exercises while watching TV. Having fun makes it easier to stick with it.

**Set Mini Goals:** Aim to be active for 10 minutes a day. Celebrate your progress, no matter how small.

**Pick a Partner:** Do an activity with a friend or join a group.

**Stay Positive:** Think about how great you'll feel after physical activity.

**Speak to your provider before starting any exercise.**

Source: *National Institute on Aging*



## Ease the Ache and Find Arthritis Relief

Making small changes can help you feel better with arthritis. Here are some common types and ways to manage them:

**Osteoarthritis (OA):** When the cushion between bones wears away, causing pain and stiffness.

- Light activities like stretching can help. Heat or cold packs can ease pain.
- Pain relievers or physical therapy might be recommended.

**Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA):** When your immune system attacks your joints, causing swelling and pain.

- Rest when needed and use warm towels to soothe sore joints.
- Medications can reduce swelling and pain. Range of motion exercises may also be advised.

**Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA):** Affects people with psoriasis, a chronic skin condition characterized by red, scaly patches, causing joint pain and swelling.

- Try low-impact movement and keep your skin moisturized.
- Medications can help control skin and joint symptoms.

Eating fish, nuts, fruits, and veggies can support joint health. Talk to your doctor before starting any new treatment or exercise.

Source: *Mayo Clinic*



## Chew on This: Habits for Healthy Teeth

Did you know that what you eat, and drink can help keep your teeth and gums healthy? Eating a balanced diet is important for your dental health.



### Tooth-Friendly Choices

Eating junk food and drinking soda or sports drinks can harm your teeth. Here are some healthier options:

**Cheese and Nuts:** These snacks are high in calcium and protein, which can help strengthen your teeth.

**Fruits and Veggies:** Apples and carrots are a little sweet and high in vitamins.

**Water:** It helps wash away food and bacteria, reducing the risk of cavities.

### Dental Visits Matter

But it's not just about what you eat. Regular dental check-ups and cleanings can help catch problems early and maintain your smile. Taking care of your teeth is an important part of taking care of your health.

To set up your dental checkup appointment, contact HealthPlex at **1-866-795-6493 (TTY: 711)**, Monday – Friday, 8 am – 6 pm.

Source: *Harvard's Nutrition Source*

## Help Us Serve You Better

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) may ask you to complete surveys about VNS Health's quality of care. These surveys can ask about your health plan, services, providers, and physical and mental health. You may be asked to rate your Care Manager, health plan, Home Health Aides (HHAs), and your involvement in making decisions about your care. Surveys may be sent by mail, email, or phone.

**Your Voice Counts:** If you get a survey, please fill it out. Your answers help us improve our services and care for you and others.

## Choosing the Right Care: PCP, Urgent Care, ER

Not all health concerns need a visit to the hospital's emergency room. Many issues can be handled at urgent care clinics. Other times, it might be best to see your primary care provider. Consider your symptoms before deciding where to go for help. This way, you can get the right care at the right place.



### Call your Primary Care Physician (PCP) for:

- Sore throat, earache, runny nose, cold
- Mild pain
- Medication refills, annual exams, screenings

### Go to Urgent Care for:

- Burns, broken bones, sprains, strains, minor injuries
- Fever, flu-like symptoms
- Cannot reach your primary care provider

### Go to Emergency Room or Call 911 for:

- Severe pain, serious injury
- Chest pain, difficulty breathing
- Sudden loss of vision, blurred vision

### Go Online:

- Search the Provider Directory for providers or urgent care centers near you:  
[vnshealthplans.org/find-a-doctor/](https://vnshealthplans.org/find-a-doctor/)

Source: *Mayo Clinic*



Any questions? Check your online account anytime at [vnshealthplans.org/account](https://vnshealthplans.org/account) or call us toll free at **1-888-867-6555 (TTY: 711)**.

Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm

[vnshealthplans.org](https://vnshealthplans.org)

### If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us.

VNS Health MLTC is committed to finding and stopping fraud, waste, or abuse in our health care plans.

### Anonymous Reporting

VNS Health MLTC Compliance Hotline:

**1-888-634-1558 (TTY: 711)**.

File an online report at: [vnshealth.ethicspoint.com](https://vnshealth.ethicspoint.com).

Learn more: [vnshealthplans.org/compliance-program](https://vnshealthplans.org/compliance-program).

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## Loaded Hummus Pitas



A fiber-rich, no-cook meal packed with fresh vegetables.

### Ingredients

- ½ cucumber
- 1 cup grape tomatoes
- ¼ red onion
- 8 Kalamata olives
- 1 Tbsp chopped parsley
- 2 oz. feta, crumbled
- 4 pitas
- 1 cup hummus
- 2 tsp olive oil
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of black pepper

### Instructions:

Chop the cucumber, tomatoes, red onion, and parsley. Crumble the feta. Spread 1/4 cup hummus on each pita. Add the cucumber, tomato, red onion, salt, and pepper. Top with crumbled feta, parsley, and a little olive oil.

Source: *Budget Bytes*