



WHOLE you

2022 Winter Bulletin

Your healthy source for living well.

Happy New Year and welcome to another brand-new issue of *Whole You*, a newsletter from PA Health & Wellness. We're very excited to share this issue with you. It's filled with great advice to help you kick off a new year. You'll find tips for how to finally quit old habits and start new healthier ones. Plus there's a delicious recipe that will keep you warm. You can also read about how and why you should celebrate both National Blood Donor Month in January and National Heart Month in February.

Thank you for being our Participant, and for taking care of the whole you!

Participant Advisory Committee

You can help PA Health & Wellness with the way our health plan works. We have a Participant Advisory Council that gives Participants like you a chance to share your thoughts and ideas with PA Health & Wellness. The group meets every 3 months. This gives you a chance to talk about your concerns with a variety of people. You also have a chance to tell us how we are doing. You may ask questions or share any concerns that you have about the delivery of services. Call Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY/TDD 711) if you would like to attend.

WHOLE you

Commit to Quit Smoking

A new year means new resolutions. 2022 is the year you finally kick your smoking or vaping habit. There are so many benefits to quitting, including how much it can improve your overall health.

Quitting can be hard – especially if you're not prepared. But don't worry. We have a few simple steps you can take to help make it all a little bit easier.

Plan a quit date. January 1 is obviously a great time to start fresh, but it's not the only time. If you're not ready, rushing will only set you up for failure. Pick a date to quit and give yourself time to mentally prepare.

Calculate the savings. Smoking and vaping are expensive habits to keep up with. The website SmokeFree.gov reports if you smoked a pack a day, quitting would save you about \$2,200 a year or more depending on where you live.

Find your reason. There are so many good reasons to quit, but finding one that keeps you motivated is important. It could be something as simple as quitting for your health. You might want to do it to save money. Or you want to be healthy for a loved one or a new baby on the way. Knowing your reason will help you push through the stressful and hard times.

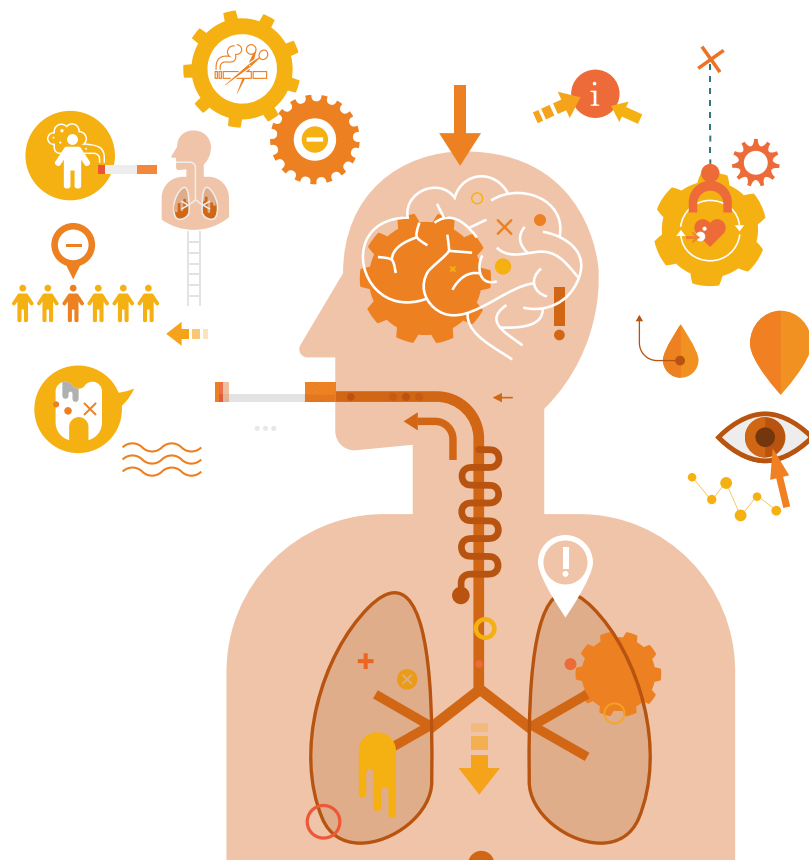


Know your triggers. If you're aware of the things that push you to smoke, you can better manage those triggers. Then, when you find yourself in those situations, you're prepared to handle them.



Fight cravings. The reality is that cravings will happen. But, if you know what you need to do to manage your urge to smoke, it will make all the difference. Find ways to distract yourself and curb your cravings until they pass.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. There is no shortage of tools out there to help you curb your habit. You can talk to your doctor about help that may be available. Look for support from a Quit Coach, Quitline, support texts, or even apps on your phone. Even though quitting is entirely your decision, it's important to remember you don't have to do this alone.



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New Year, New Whole You

Many New Year's resolutions revolve around physical health. Usually, the goals that come to mind are things like eating better, being more active, losing weight, or joining the gym. While all those are great to aim for, the new year is also a great time to refocus on the whole you. Don't just think about your physical health, but your holistic health as well. We put together a few actionable ways you could make this new year bring out a whole new you.



Be Creative

Some people like to write morning pages or journal as a way to process their thoughts. You could also paint, play an instrument, or dance. You could try baking or build something around the house. Creating something is a great way to get out of your head and help alleviate anxiety and stress.



Just Breathe

Yes, breathing is something we all do involuntarily. But sometimes we have to remind ourselves to do it. Even if only for a minute at a time. Or try a full 10-15-minute mindful meditation exercise. Whatever you can do to take a moment and pause. Allowing yourself to pay attention to your breathing and nothing else can help you refocus your mind.



Take a Break

Give yourself a chance to take a break. Whether that's as simple as a break in the middle of your workday. Or unwinding with a warm shower or bath at the end of the night. You will be able to perform better and do more if you allow both your body and mind to get the rest they need.



Remember the Basics

Focusing on your whole health also means the basics. Make sure you drink enough water to stay hydrated. Get plenty of sleep. Stand up and take short walks. You might be surprised to see how much these little things can help you feel better.

WHOLE you

3 Ways to Subtract Added Sugar from Your Diet

Most foods we eat contain naturally occurring sugars. The bigger problem is with added sugars. Coming out of the holiday season, it's safe to say a lot of us had more than our fair share of sweet treats – all filled with sneaky added sugars.

So, what can you do to cut back? I'm glad you asked. Here are three quick and easy tips to help you be more aware of how much added sugar you have each day.

1

Swap out the sugary drinks.

Swap out the sugary drinks. When we think about sugar, the first thing that probably comes to mind is a sweet dessert. But many of the things we drink — like sodas, juices, or even coffees and teas — are loaded with added sugars. Try replacing a sugary refreshment with a glass of water. Trading even one of those drinks a day can have a big impact on your diet.

2

Feast on fruits.

Feast on fruits. Everyone has the occasional sweet tooth. Next time you get the urge for something sweet, reach for a piece of fruit instead. They can satisfy your sweet craving and are a good source of vitamins and nutrients.

3

Look at the labels.

Look at the labels. When you go to the grocery store, be cautious of how things are marketed to you. Foods that may seem “healthy” like granola or protein bars can be packed with added sugars. Thankfully, nutritional labels now include how much added sugar is in food. Check how much sugar is from the ingredients they use versus how much is being added.



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Warm Up from the Inside Out

While the weather is cooler, there's nothing better than a hearty soup to keep you warm. In fact, soups are winter's unsung heroes. If you know you have a busy week ahead, you can always make extra to freeze and reheat later. And if you have picky eaters at home – soups are an easy way to make sure they get a balanced meal with vegetables and protein.

For this issue, we've got a delicious and savory **Vegetable Beef Soup** recipe.

Ingredients

- 2 pounds ground chuck
- 1 small, sweet onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 (14-oz.) cans reduced-sodium beef broth
- 3 (29-oz.) cans mixed vegetables with potatoes, drained and rinsed
- 3 (14 1/2-oz.) cans diced new potatoes, drained, and rinsed
- 1 (15-oz.) can sweet peas with mushrooms and pearl onions, drained and rinsed
- 2 (26-oz.) jars tomato, herbs, and spices pasta sauce
- 1 (14 1/2-oz.) can diced tomatoes with sweet onion

Instructions

1. Brown ground chuck and onion in a large soup pot over medium-high. You might want to do this in batches. Stir for 5 to 8 minutes or until meat is cooked all the way through.
2. Drain it well and return to your pot. Stir in salt, black pepper, and beef broth while you bring it to a boil.
3. Stir in all the mixed vegetables. Bring to a boil. Then, cover and reduce heat.
4. Let it simmer for at least 20 minutes or until fully heated.



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Extend a Helping Hand and Donate Blood

According to the American Red Cross, every two seconds a person in the U.S. needs blood. Donating is a simple and safe process that can impact and save lives. But there are also a lot of health benefits for the person donating. This January is National Blood Donation Month, so we wanted to show you a few reasons you should consider donating.

Reduce risks. Studies show donating can help lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. The thickness of your blood can be harmful to the cells lining your arteries. Regularly donating can help reduce your blood thickness.

Burn calories. After you've given blood, your body needs to replace it. Making new blood cells requires a lot of energy, which is why it can help burn more calories.

Mini checkup. Before you donate, staff will make sure you're in good health. You'll have your pulse, blood pressure, and body temperature checked. This is a good chance to see what's going on in your body. But it shouldn't replace seeing your doctor.

A lasting impact. Take a moment to think about the people this will help. It's a simple gesture that can have a long-term effect on those who need it.



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**lower your risk of heart
attack and stroke.**



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WHOLE you

Show Your Heart Some Love

The heart is arguably the most important organ in your body. Keeping it healthy can impact your overall health and well-being. We wanted to help you celebrate **National Heart Month** this February with a few tips and habits to help keep your heart pumping at its best.

1

Eat Your Heart Out.

Find ways to add heart-healthy foods to your diet. Try topping your salad with fish high in omega-3s like salmon, trout, or tuna. Replace your regular snacks with berries, walnuts, or almonds.

**2**

Get a Move On.

The American Heart Association promotes a minimum of 20-30 minutes of daily exercise to help prevent cardiovascular disease. Take a walk or try an online workout class to get your body moving.

3

Stand Up.

If you find yourself sitting a lot, don't forget to stand up and stretch. A little movement can go a long way for your heart. Moving around will get your blood flowing and keep your heart pumping.

**4**

Relax.

Relax. Stress can directly impact your cholesterol and blood pressure levels. Both of these levels are contributors to cardiovascular disease. Finding ways to help manage your stress is key. Anything to help calm your mind and protect your heart.

5

Let Yourself Wine Down.

Let yourself wine down. A glass of red wine, in moderation, can be good for your heart. Try pairing it with a small serving of dark chocolate to unwind and enjoy a moment of your day. Talk to your doctor for specific health guidance.



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