

Health Matters

Member newsletter

WINTER 2024




FRAUD, WASTE OR ABUSE?

Report potential fraud, waste or abuse in the CHRISTUS Health Plan Network by submitting details to the Special Investigations Unit via email, secure fax or phone.

FWA HOTLINE: 855.771.8072

EMAIL: christushealthsiu@christushealth.org

SECURE FAX: 210.766.8849

If you prefer anonymity, call the Integrity Line at 888.728.8383 or visit CHRISTUSintegritylink.org.

For compliance questions or concerns, you can email us at chpcompliance@christushealth.org

Our newsletter is moving online!

You will still be receiving your newsletters in the mail! Starting with your spring 2025 newsletter, you will also be able to find it on our website, or in your "Member Portal". Haven't set up your member portal yet? It's easy! Register here right now:



Contact us

For any questions, contact member services at **1.844.282.3026**

Care Management

Our Care Management program can help you plan and manage care for complex, chronic health issues as well as acute, episodic or short-term needs. The goal is to provide quality care, enhance quality of life and manage health care costs.

What types of services does the Care Management team provide?

- Condition management
- Medicine support
- Coordination of appointments
- Health care provider support
- Self-management goal planning
- A Care Management referral can come from a provider, member, caregiver or discharge planner

Care Management is provided at **no cost**. Call 800.446.1730, option 2, from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (CST) to speak to a care manager nurse.

A 24-hour nurse line is also available at 844.581.3174.



Respiratory illness

As respiratory illness season approaches, it's important to stay informed with the latest updates on flu, COVID-19, RSV vaccinations and pharyngitis prevention.

Flu vaccination

- Get vaccinated by October or November for best protection.
- High-dose vaccines are recommended for adults 65+.
- It's safe to receive with the COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccination

- Updated vaccines target new strains.
- A booster is recommended if it's been 6-12 months since your last dose.
- It can be taken alongside the flu vaccine.

RSV vaccination

- Available for adults 60+
- Particularly important for those with chronic heart/lung conditions or weakened immune systems.
- Helps protect against severe RSV during peak season.

Pharyngitis

- **Viral:** symptoms include cough, runny nose, hoarseness—manage with rest and fluids
- **Bacterial:** Sudden sore throat, fever, tender lymph nodes—testing and timely treatment are crucial

Diabetic eye exam

Diabetes is a complex illness, that if untreated, can lead to serious complications like heart disease, kidney damage and eye damage. Managing diabetes involves working with your doctor, taking prescribed medications, eating a healthy diet and staying active.

Regular diabetic eye exams are crucial for preventing vision loss. Early detection and management are key.

Key diabetic eye exam information:

- **Annual exams:** The CDC recommends a comprehensive eye exam at least once a year.
- **Follow-up care:** Attend all follow-up appointments to ensure proper management of the condition.

Kidney disease

Kidney disease happens when the kidneys can't filter waste properly, leading to issues like fatigue, swelling and high blood pressure. Common causes include diabetes and hypertension. Symptoms often include decreased urine output, nausea, muscle cramps and difficulty sleeping. Early detection and treatment can help slow progression.

Common signs and symptoms can include:

- Changes in urination
- Fatigue
- High blood pressure
- Nausea and vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Swelling (edema)

If you or someone else is experiencing any of these symptoms, it's important to seek medical advice for proper diagnosis and management.

Smoking cessation

Quitting smoking is key to preventing tobacco-related diseases and improving overall health.

Smoking cessation tips:

- **Medication:** FDA-approved options like varenicline or bupropion can help.
- **Counseling:** Combining medication with behavioral counseling increases success.
- **Follow-up:** Regular appointments with your provider ensure progress and support.
- **Resources:** Use quit lines (1.800.QUIT.NOW), apps like Easy Quit or support groups like Freedom from Smoking.

Continuous support is crucial for success.

Colon cancer screening

Choosing a colon cancer screening test can be challenging, but it is potentially lifesaving. Screening for colon cancer is recommended starting at age 50, with follow-up screenings advised every five years beginning at age 60.

Pros and cons of tests

Colonoscopy:

- **Pros:** high sensitivity allows for full colon and rectum examination and enables polyp and tissue removal
- **Cons:** requires thorough colon cleansing, diet changes, sedation and may involve minor complications like bleeding or cramping

Fecal occult blood test (FOBT) and fecal immunochemical test (FIT):

- **Pros:** can be done at home, no colon cleansing or sedation needed
- **Cons:** less sensitive, certain foods and medications must be avoided before the test and positive results may require additional testing

Consult with your health care provider to determine which screening option is best for you based on your preferences and medical history.

RECIPE



Roasted butternut squash and quinoa salad



This recipe is packed with fiber, vitamins and protein, making it both nutritious and delicious.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 1 cup of quinoa
- 2 cups of vegetable broth (or water)
- 2 cups of fresh spinach, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup of dried cranberries
- ¼ cup of chopped walnuts (or pecans)
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 tablespoon of maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional: feta or goat cheese for topping

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Toss the butternut squash cubes with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, salt and pepper. Spread squash on a baking sheet and roast for 25-30 minutes until it's tender and caramelized.
2. Meanwhile, rinse the quinoa and cook it in vegetable broth (or water) according to package instructions. Fluff with a fork and set aside to cool.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together 1 tablespoon of olive oil, maple syrup, apple cider vinegar and a pinch of salt and pepper to make the dressing.
4. In a large bowl, combine the roasted butternut squash, cooked quinoa, spinach, dried cranberries and walnuts.
5. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss gently to combine. If desired, sprinkle with feta or goat cheese.
6. Serve warm or at room temperature.