

Vigor[®]

Autumn/Winter 2015-16

A Newsletter for Subscribers of
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont
and The Vermont Health Plan



Ditch *the* Diet

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**BlueCross BlueShield
of Vermont**

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont publishes *Vigor* for members and other interested parties.

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We'd like to hear from you.

This newsletter is for informational purposes only and is not intended to serve as medical or legal advice.

For information about any of the events listed, please email events@bcbsvt.com or call (802) 764-4858.

To find our up-to-date Community Calendar, visit www.bcbsvt.com/calendar.

Community events calendar

JANUARY

26–28

Vermont Farm Show

Come visit our Healthy Farmer, Healthy Farm booth for free massages and health screenings. Don't forget to sample the frozen fruit smoothies made on our blender bike!

9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Champlain Valley Expo, Essex
www.vtfarmshow.com

28

American Heart Association Go Red for Women Luncheon

Come join us for a morning of fun and education while supporting the American Heart Association. Celebrate our very own CEO, Don George as he receives the Crystal Heart Award.

8:45 a.m.–2 p.m.
Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center, Burlington
goredforwomen.org



Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont hosts its annual Snow Days events each winter at various Vermont locations. These free events give Vermonters the opportunity to try cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, in an effort to encourage physical activity during the cold winter months. We'll announce this season's Snow Days dates and other upcoming event details at www.bcbsvt.com/calendar.

Immunizations and Your Child

The school year is well underway, which means that flu and cold season is also ramping up. Help keep those students on track! Protect your children and other children from serious childhood illnesses by keeping their immunizations up to date.

Many parents have questions and concerns about immunizations. It is OK to ask questions and discuss your concerns with your primary care provider.

Another resource is oktoaskvt.org, an interactive and user-friendly website from the Vermont Department of Health. Here, you can find information on diseases, benefits and risks, watch videos and submit your own questions.

Send your children to school immunized and take childhood diseases out of the curriculum!



President's Message:

Heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women. It causes more deaths than all forms of cancer combined, and it impacts the lives of thousands of our members. On July 4, 2014, we at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont experienced a major loss when heart disease claimed the life of our beloved colleague, Bill Griffith.

So it was with great compassion that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont teamed up with American Heart Association this September for two heart walks in Central Vermont and Burlington. I was honored to serve as the Chair of the Heart Walk and, as a company, we were delighted to host our first heart walk at our Berlin headquarters.

On Saturday, September 19, at the Central Vermont walk, over 120 people gathered here in Berlin to walk in honor of Bill, raise money and come together for the fight against heart disease. I had the privilege of reading a letter that Bill's daughters wrote, sharing the family's gratitude and heart-felt appreciation regarding the support that our Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont family has shown over the past year.

Jennifer and Emily Griffith state, *"Your kindness and generosity have not gone unnoticed. In fact, the compassion that all of you have shown towards us has played a huge role in our healing... Thank you, to all of you, for spending your Saturday raising money and walking for such a great cause. It's because of you all, and organizations like American Heart Association, that other daughters won't have to write letters like this one."*

This heartfelt letter surely inspires me, and hopefully it will encourage others to join the fight against this deadly disease.



Thank you.



Don George, President and CEO

Get your EOBs online and you could win a FitBit®!

Trying to reduce the amount of paper that comes into your home? You can now get your Explanation of Benefits (EOB) documents on our member resource center. You can also choose to get notifications about EOBs via email or text messages. From those who opt for online delivery, we will select one winner each month through January 2016 to receive a FitBit. To opt into this planet-friendly option:

- Visit www.bcbsvt.com/mrc and log in or register.
- Find the "Go Green" button at the top of the page and let us know that you will forego paper EOBs.

- Select whether you want online delivery only or if you want email or text notifications.
- Log into the member resource center at any time to see copies of your EOBs from the last 18 months.
- You may also call our customer service team at (800) 247-2583 and opt into online EOB delivery.



Please note that each member age 12 or older must opt out of paper delivery separately.

For privacy protection, members age 12 or older see only their services on their paper or online EOBs. The subscriber (the member whose name is on the membership) sees his or her services and those of members under age 12.

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www.bcbsvt.com

Ditch the Diet



By Allyson Bartlett

Onsite lunch and learns are an enriching component of the STRIVE Health and Wellness program at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont. One to two times per month, an expert presenter visits our Berlin office to give a lunchtime presentation on a wellness-related topic. I had the pleasure of attending Dana Notte's recent onsite lunch and learn—

"Ditch the Diet:

An Alternative Approach to Healthy Eating."

Dana Notte, MS, RD, CD is a registered dietitian, nutrition coach and nutrition consultant who is passionate about helping individuals discover and develop healthy and positive relationships with food, while also working toward meeting health and wellness goals.

She began the session by defining diets and examining why they do not work. "What are some words that you associate with diets?" she asks the group.

"Regimen..."

"Pain and suffering!"

"Restriction!"

After reflecting on the descriptors, the group concludes that many words broached are negative in context, and that most diets share the common denominator of "elimination" or "reduction."

"Diets," Notte explains, "provide us with a set of rules to obey or a structure to follow." She warns, however, that diets typically do not lead to sustained weight loss in the vast majority of people who go on them. Why?

Notte shares that while diets usually tell us what to eat (good food vs. bad food), when to eat (or when not to eat) and how much to eat,

diets do not help us understand why we are eating in the first place.

"Boredom!" ... "Stress!" ... "Social occasions!" ... "Hunger!" ... "Because it tastes good!" Now the group is sharing why we eat.

Notte confirms, "We eat in response to physical, environmental and emotional triggers." She adds that you could easily list about 100 triggers for each category. "Yet, diets don't address these triggers and they don't remove them, either."

Another slew of negative words...

"Stressed!"

"Deprived!"

"Restricted!"

The group is now replying "how we feel when on a diet," and it's becoming more apparent that diets are not popular among participants! "We want to go on diets because we want them to fix all of our problems," Notte adds, but explains that diets are not intended to be a long-term solution to our health and wellness challenges. "People don't fail diets; diets fail people!"

Notte explains that when dieting, individuals find themselves constantly vacillating between two extremes: in control—"on the wagon"—or out of control—"off the wagon." She suggests a new approach: "ditch the wagon all together!"

She notes that many people ask "isn't success just a matter of willpower?" "No!" she asserts. "Think about a time when you overcame a challenge. Sure, it may have taken willpower to get there. But that said,

*People don't
fail diets;
diets fail
people!*

*-Dana Notte
MS, RD, CD,
Registered Dietitian*



willpower doesn't have a place in the diet conversation. Whatever challenge you achieved, there were roadblocks along way. And even if you didn't handle them the way you wanted to along the way, you didn't let them stop you. But it's different with diets. Let's say that you're at a work meeting and you've been "good" on a diet. Then someone shows up with donuts. Everyone is eating them, enjoying them and they smell good. You may have looked at those donuts and resisted them 49 times during that meeting but on the 50th time you reached in to grab one. In this situation, when you say yes, it 'erases' all that you did before. Now relate that to studying. If you were diligent in studying and then took a break to go on Facebook, would it erase everything you had learned already? No!"

So if not a diet, then what? Intuitive eating! Notte explains that intuitive eating is:

- getting back in touch with our body's physical hunger and satiety cues and responding accordingly;
- allowing physical hunger to drive our decision to start eating (most of the time);
- identifying when we feel comfortably full and letting that determine when we finish eating; and
- allowing ourselves to decide what we truly want to eat (even if it's not always the healthiest option).

Notte points out that often times, habit forces us to eat throughout the day, even when we aren't hungry. And, busy schedules lead to distracted eating (e.g., eating while working or driving), which often leads to eating more than our body actually needs. She offers a powerful visual. "Put your two hands together and open up your palms. This is about how much our stomachs can hold," she shows. "Now think about how much you eat. Think about the size of your dishware, how much it holds, and how it may determine how much you eat."

Notte suggests using mindfulness as a discovery tool for intuitive eating and talks through the following strategies:

- Keep an eating awareness journal. Track what you ate, if you were hungry before and after, how you felt before and after. Use a 1–10 scale to rate how you feel (1 = starving, dizzy, irritable; 10 = painfully full, feeling sick.) Record any other thoughts feelings and observations you may have, including your overall satisfaction with the meal.
- Before you eat, actually ask yourself: am I hungry? This can help you figure out what your body is really asking you. If the answer is no, consider what might be driving that desire.
- Give yourself unconditional permission to eat without restriction. After, you will realize that your body is much more satisfied eating less and savoring more and that you feel better when you fuel your body with mostly nutritious foods.
- Without judgement, notice the thoughts and feelings you have around food. Don't be critical.
- Savor your meals slowly, and without distraction.
- Create a few food-free zones in your environment. (Or alternatively, create a few designated eating places.)
- Divide the food on your plate in half, or start with half as much as you typically would to force a pause during the meal.
- Remember that seconds are always an option—if you decide you want more! Or pack up your leftovers for a later meal. Throwing food away is an option, too. "I know that most of us have grown up thinking that throwing your food out is unacceptable because there are starving people in the world. But neither finishing your meal nor throwing it away is doing anything to solve this issue."



Notte shares that these strategies have helped clients learn what is driving their desire to eat and recognize where they can benefit from change. She exemplifies one client who realized through journaling that she didn't like bananas—something she ate very regularly! Replacing these foods with ones we enjoy more can ultimately help us to eat less throughout the day because we are more satisfied from our choices. "It doesn't have to be a fancy diary—just get a piece of paper! In just a few weeks, you'll begin to really increase your awareness," she encourages.

Notte then guided us in a mindful eating exercise—dispensing dark and milk chocolate squares to each participant in the course. Following a short breathing exercise, she instructs. "Unwrap the chocolates slowly, listening to the noise of the wrapper. Put the squares on your desk. Think about how you would describe the chocolates."

She continues. "Now smell the chocolates. How do they smell? How does it make you feel?"

"Now take a small bite out of one of the squares—but do not chew! Let it melt in your mouth. Pay attention to the flavor and texture. Then, take time to chew and savor each bite to fully experience it, before going back for another," she suggests.

Her goal is to show us how to fully enjoy and savor the foods we

eat, emphasizing the importance of appreciating taste and experience. It's evident from the groups' observations, that the activity has been successful in accomplishing this.

Notte highlights some key nutrition messages to carry: balance, variety and moderation noting that all foods really can fit in a healthy, balanced diet.

And when you find yourself wanting to eat for reasons other than hunger? "Explore those experiences, identify the possible triggers, and then address those triggers in other ways that do not involve eating," she relates.

Notte asserts, "Diets are based on rules and restrictions that tell us what, when and how much to eat. They leave us feeling deprived and often defeated, cause stress, weight-cycling and obsessions with 'good and bad foods'—ultimately stripping away the pleasure associated with eating."

Conversely, Notte remarks that intuitive eating allows us to take charge of our feelings about food.

"It helps us to regain touch with our body's innate ability to regulate food intake, and it promotes freedom and flexibility when making food decisions," she adds. "Intuitive eating builds awareness about the true driving forces behind our desires to eat, so we can effectively cope with non-hunger cues and eat for pleasure and health, without abandoning health goals."

Best of all? Notte concludes, "Intuitive eating is sustainable. After time, you start eating less because your body realizes that it doesn't need that much food."

Resources:

Dana Notte, MS, RD, CD,
www.dananottecoaching.com

Evelyn Tribole, MS, RD & Elyse Resch MS, RDN,
CEDRD, Fiaedp, FADA; www.intuitiveeating.com

Michelle May, MD; amihungry.com

The Center for Mindful Eating;
www.thecenterformindfuleating.org



Turkey & White Bean Chili

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 lg red bell pepper, chopped
- 2 lg cloves garlic, minced
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and minced
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 (15 oz) can Great Northern beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 oz) can Cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (10 oz) bag frozen corn kernels
- 1 (7 oz) can diced green chiles
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp cornstarch
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. In a large pot, heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add ground turkey and cook through until no longer pink, stirring constantly and breaking meat up into smaller pieces. Remove turkey from pot and set aside.
2. Add the remaining 1 tbsp olive oil to the pot. Add onion, bell pepper, garlic, and jalapeno (if using) and cook until vegetables are tender and fragrant, about 5 minutes. Add vegetable broth, beans, corn, chiles, lime juice, and cumin. Bring to a boil then reduce heat to medium-low and add cooked turkey. Cover and simmer for 30-40 minutes.
3. In a small bowl, whisk cornstarch and water together; stir into chili and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring frequently, until chili has thickened, about 5 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste and stir in cilantro. Garnish with sour cream, shredded Monterey jack cheese, and fresh cilantro.

Nutrition Information:

Calories: 350

Total fat: 11.5 g

Saturated fat: 2.5 g

Cholesterol: 60 mg

Sodium: 425 mg

Carbohydrate: 39 g

Fiber: 10 g

Sugars: 5 g

Protein: 24 g



Dana Notte

Dana Notte is a registered dietician with a Masters degree in Dietetics. She is an experienced nutrition and weight management counselor who is passionate about helping others to achieve their health and wellness goals. (She is also featured in this issue's article "Ditch the Diet" on pages 4-6.)



Member Social Security Number (SSN) Solicitation

As you may know, the federal Affordable Care Act requires individuals to maintain a minimum level of health coverage or face tax penalties. In order to determine which people will have to pay the assessments, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will require health plans to report on who has coverage. In order to comply with this requirement, we must try to collect social security numbers for all of our members.

Please help our efforts and ensure that your member profile contains an accurate social security number for each member of your family. We ask you to supply the missing information by logging into the Member Resource Center at www.bcbsvt.com/member and sending our enrollment services team a secure email with social security numbers for all members in your household. This is the most secure way to send us your information.

If you have not created an account on the Member Resource Center, visit www.bcbsvt.com and click "member" under the log in drop-

down box. Once there, you can create an account. Please note that you will need your BCBSVT ID card handy while creating your account. Once you are logged in as a member follow these step-by-step instructions to complete the secure message:

1. Click on the "**Message Center**" link. You will see this link on the front page of the Member Resource Center in the upper right hand corner.
2. Click the "**New Message**" button in the right hand corner of the screen.
3. Click "**Add Recipient**" located in the middle of the screen below the "**To**" field.
4. Next, scroll to the bottom of the page.
5. To send the mail to our enrollment services team, click "**Add**" next to "**Enrollment Services**" and that team should appear in the "**To**" box below.
6. Now select "**Add Recipients.**"
7. Type your message, including updates for missing social security numbers.
8. Finally, click "**Send.**"

Your employer is also mandated by the federal government to collect this same information. Please give your social security numbers to your benefits administrator, as well.

We understand that social security numbers are important confidential information and that many of our members might be sensitive about providing them. Please remember this information will be the best way to avoid tax penalties by ensuring the IRS can identify that you and members of your household have minimum essential coverage. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please call the customer service number on the back of your BCBSVT ID card. Our customer service team is available from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays.

Thank you for choosing coverage with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont. We appreciate the chance to serve you.





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Find the hidden symbol and win a prize

Just find the symbol shown at left hidden somewhere in this publication and send us a letter telling us where you found it. Use the address found on the mailing panel. We'll draw four lucky reader's names from the correct responses; each will receive a gift card to Amazon.com.

Last issue's hidden symbol (i.e. clover flower) was hidden on page 6 on the canoe. Thanks for playing and congrats to our winners: Linda & Larry, Daryl, Jody & Mike, Isidora and Estes!

Special challenge: Because of all the creative and unique responses (e.g. postcards, artwork, poems and notes) we've received over the years, we'll now present an additional winner with a gift card for the most creative entry for that issue's contest.

Electronic option: In an effort to be "green," we will accept your hidden symbol contest entry via email. Just email hiddensymbol@bcbsvt.com and we'll number your entry and enter you into the drawing!

Inside:

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Using this paper instead of virgin fiber in this edition reduces our ecological footprint by:

- 85 trees
- 8,389 lbs. of solid waste
- 81,997 gallons water
- 27,518 lbs. of CO₂ emissions
- 71 mmBTU of energy consumption
- 35 lbs. NO_x

It's the equivalent of saving:

- Trees: Six tennis courts
- Energy consumption: 344,939 60W light bulbs for one hour
- Emissions: CO₂ emissions of four cars per year

(Environmental savings calculations provided by Rolland Enterprises Inc.)



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