

# Partners in Health

A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE **WINTER 2018**



**Soundpath**  
HEALTH

Simple. Affordable. Personal.  
*Your local health plan*



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# WE APPRECIATE YOU!

Thank you to each and every one of you who chose Soundpath Health as your Medicare Advantage plan for 2018! Our goal is to improve the health and wellness of the diverse communities we serve. We're committed to continuously providing you with affordable high-quality health care coverage no matter your age or life circumstance.

## **NOW OFFERING ALL PLANS IN ALL COUNTIES IN OUR SERVICE AREA**

If you are a member living in Chelan, Douglas, Grant or Snohomish counties, we are pleased that so many of you took advantage of the opportunity to enroll in our Sound + Rx (HMO) plan, offered for the first time in your area!

## **LOWER MONTHLY PREMIUMS AND COST-SHARING**

We understand the financial challenges faced by so many Medicare beneficiaries, which was why we worked to reduce premiums on all of our plans with premiums and maintained our popular \$0 premium plan – Peak + Rx (HMO). In addition, we lowered the copays on drugs in Tier 1 and Tier 2. Review your Evidence of Coverage booklet that you received last fall for more detailed information or call Customer Service with any questions about your benefits.

## **OPTUMRX® – YOUR PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGER**

One of the ways we look to manage our operating expenses is to work with “best in class” partners who bring efficiency and value. This year, our pharmacy benefits will be administered by OptumRx which brings an extensive national network of pharmacies and online tools to help you manage your prescription drugs with ease. OptumRx tracks your prescription history, helps you renew or refill prescriptions, compares medication prices, sets up automatic refill reminders and more. OptumRx also offers the convenience of

home delivery, providing up to a three-month supply of the medications you take regularly. To start home delivery, log in to **OptumRx.com**, use the OptumRx app or call the number on the back of your member ID card. Just call **1-844-368-7174 (TTY: 711)** any time.



## **REAP THE MANY BENEFITS OF EXERCISE AT A SILVER&FIT PARTICIPATING FITNESS CENTER**

Regular exercise is one of the greatest keys to physical and mental wellbeing and is critical to helping older adults stay independent as they age. Strengthening bone and joint health to protect mobility is often what motivates many older adults to use their Silver&Fit® benefit. We offer all members a no-cost fitness center membership through the Silver&Fit network. There are hundreds of participating fitness centers here in Washington – and signing up for the program is easy. Check out locations online at **SilverandFit.com**, or give our Customer Service team a call. If you prefer working out in the convenience of your home, your benefit allows up to two fitness kits delivered to your home every year.

From all of us at Soundpath Health, thank you again for choosing us as your health insurance partner. We look forward to serving you in 2018 and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Steve Schramm  
CEO/CFO





## Medication Adherence Decreases the Risk of Hospitalization

Taking medication as prescribed may seem simple, but nonadherence (or not taking medication as directed) can create a host of problems. Unpleasant side effects, high cost of medicine, stopping your medications because you feel better, forgetting to take your medicine and lack of transportation can all contribute to medication nonadherence.

Nonadherence also increases the risk of hospitalization and other health concerns, particularly among patients with cardiovascular disease (CVD). For patients with CVD, taking your medications as directed is necessary to achieve control of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, as well as to reduce the risk of negative outcomes, such as stroke, heart failure, renal failure and myocardial infarction.

If you've recently been in the hospital, be sure to have your medications reviewed by your provider, pharmacist or a registered nurse.

Your provider will compare the medications you took prior to your hospitalization to any new medications prescribed during your hospital stay. This also gives you the chance to speak with your provider to make sure that you know why you have been prescribed these medications and how to take them to be most effective and ensure your safety. After leaving the hospital, be sure to contact your provider and schedule a visit to go over your medications.

### Did you know

that if you've recently had a hospital stay and have questions about your medications, you can speak to a health plan pharmacist? Just contact Customer Service for more information.

# HOSPITAL DISCHARGE CHECKLIST

You're probably excited to go home after a stay in the hospital. Sleeping in your own bed, eating a meal with your family — there really is no place like home. But don't rush out of the hospital too fast. It's important to understand your treatment plan before you leave and to be prepared for the days and months after you have been discharged. Otherwise, you may find yourself back in the hospital.

CLIP &  
SAVE



- Have a friend or family member join you if possible to ask questions and take notes when you get your discharge instructions.
- Expect that you won't be allowed to drive home from the hospital. Make plans for someone else to give you a ride.
- Your doctor or nurse should review your medications with you before you head home.
- Write down the names and phone numbers of the doctors you should call if you have questions and any home care professionals who will be helping with your needs.
- Carefully follow the directions you receive for taking medications, tending to the surgical wound, responding to symptoms and so on.
- Consider whether you will need any help at home. If you're likely to require home health care, find out in advance what your health insurance plan will cover.
- Keep follow-up appointments with your surgeon.

Remember, the more you pay attention to the things you can control, the more in control you will feel — and the sooner you can get your life back to normal after surgery.

## Annual Wellness Visit

If you have not yet had your Annual Wellness Visit (or New to Medicare Visit if this is your first year on Medicare), we encourage you to schedule an appointment with your primary care provider as soon as possible. The visit gives you the chance to address your questions regarding health care needs and provides an opportunity to create or update your personalized prevention plan.



## Get Your Preventive Health Screenings Done **Early**

It's a new plan year, and that means it's time to get your no-cost preventive care services done and over with. The best place to start is your Annual Wellness Visit to develop a personalized plan for preventive screenings. We cover this visit every calendar year and an Annual Physical every 12 months. Schedule your appointment with your provider today!

Important tests to complete during the year include:

### **BLOOD PRESSURE AND BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)**

Get them checked at every visit.

### **COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING**

Frequency of retesting depends on the type of test you receive; see tests and schedule below:

- Fecal occult blood test (FOBT) is a noninvasive stool test that should be completed annually.
- FIT DNA test is a noninvasive stool DNA test that should be completed every three years.
- CT Colonography is an X-ray test of the colon/rectum that should be completed every five years.

- Flexible sigmoidoscopy is a partial exam of the colon using a sigmoidoscope that should be completed every five years.
- Colonoscopy is an exam of the entire colon using a colonoscope that should be completed every five years.

### **IMPORTANT DIABETIC SCREENINGS**

Diabetes puts you at higher risk for a number of serious conditions. To keep you at your healthiest, be sure to include these tests as part of your good health regimen:

- Blood sugar (A1c) checked every three months; twice a year if stable and at goal
- Kidney functioning (urine protein tests) checked annually
- Eyes examined by an eye care provider (ophthalmologist or optometrist) every year
- Cholesterol (lipid profile) checked every year
- Feet checked for open wounds

### **BREAST CANCER SCREENING**

Women ages 50 to 74 should have a screening mammography every two years.

## Flu Season Isn't Over Yet – There's Still Time to Get Your Flu Shot

Adults ages 65 and older are at greater risk of serious complications from the flu. A flu vaccine is still the best way to protect yourself, but annual revaccination



is necessary because flu viruses change every year. Also, hand washing is the single most important means

of preventing the spread of infection. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 54 to 70 percent of flu-related hospitalizations occur in people ages 65 and older. We provide coverage for a flu shot each year free of charge at most local network pharmacies and doctor offices to keep you healthy and out of the hospital. Check with your pharmacy today to see when you can get your flu shot!

Other items to discuss with your provider include:

- All prescription and nonprescription medications you take
- Mental and well-being, including depression
- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Immunizations, including the flu shot
- Bladder control issues (if any)
- Falls or balance-related issues

# Paleo Diet vs. Whole30:

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THESE POPULAR DIETS

If you made a resolution to eat healthier or lose weight this year, then you may have heard about two popular diets – the Whole30 and the Paleo Diet. In many ways, the diets are very similar. They're based on eating whole, unprocessed foods and eliminating certain food groups. Could one of these diets be right for you? Read on to learn more.

### HOW DID THE DIETS START?

Certified Sports Nutritionist, Melissa Hartwig co-created the Whole30 program in 2009. It started as an experiment with her own diet over 30 days. She's since authored several best-selling books, including *It Starts With Food* and *The Whole30*.

The Paleo Diet is based upon eating like our hunter-gatherer ancestors did. Founder Loren Cordain, Ph.D., professor emeritus in the Department of Health and Exercise Science at Colorado State University, was first introduced to the paleo concept in the 1980s and has since authored numerous books, including *The Paleo Diet* and *The Paleo Diet for Athletes*.

### WHAT CAN YOU EAT ON THE DIETS?

Foods that are permitted on the Whole30 and Paleo Diets include:

- Meats, fish, and seafood.
- Eggs.
- Fruits and vegetables.
- Nuts and seeds.
- Healthy oils (including olive oil, avocado oil, and coconut oil).

### WHAT CAN'T YOU EAT ON THE DIETS?

- Grains – wheat, rye, oats, corn, quinoa.
- Legumes – beans, peas, chickpeas, lentils, and peanuts.
- Dairy – milk, yogurt, cheese, and ice cream.
- Sugar – the paleo diet cuts out refined sugar; the Whole30 eliminates all sugar, including maple syrup, honey, and artificial sweeteners.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING A WHOLE30 OR PALEO DIET?

Proponents of the diets say that eating this way can help you:

- Lose weight.
- Reduce your risk for chronic diseases.
- Optimize your health.

### HOW DO THE DIETS DIFFER?

- The Whole30 is designed to be followed for 30 days, while the Paleo Diet is a long-term diet change. Other differences include:
- Alcohol – it's banned on the Whole30; the Paleo Diet permits it in moderation.
  - Strictness – the Whole30 is meant to be followed 100 percent for 30 days; the Paleo Diet is a little more flexible.
  - Potatoes – the Paleo Diet eliminates all types of potatoes; the Whole30 allows them.

### WHAT DO THE CRITICS SAY?

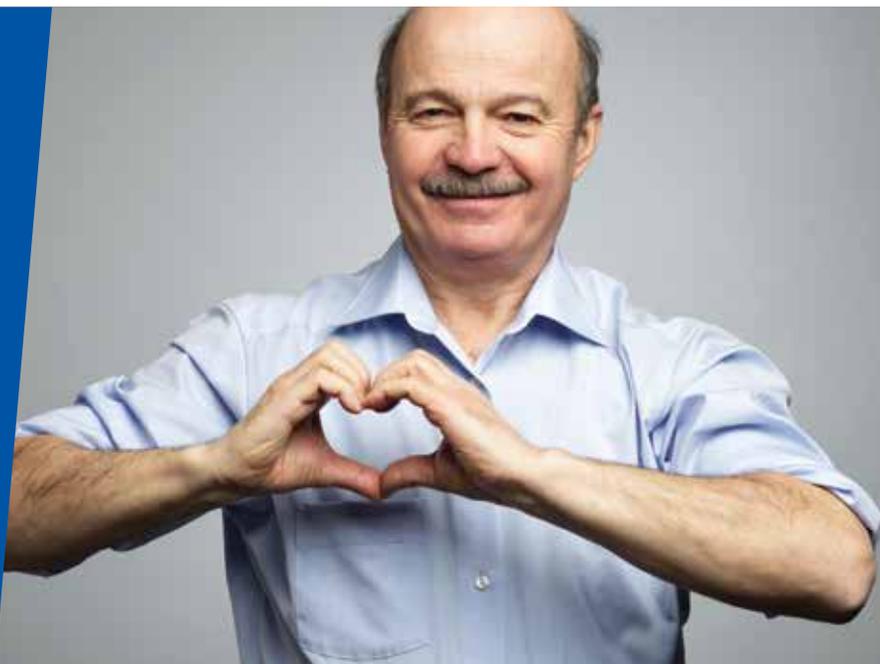
A review of the Paleo Diet gives it kudos for its emphasis on eating lots of fruits and vegetables and cutting down on sugar and salt.<sup>1</sup> However, critics point out that this diet is very high in fat and protein and low in carbohydrates. Whole grains, legumes and dairy products – foods on the Paleo Diet's "do not eat" list – contain important vitamins and minerals your body needs, such as calcium and vitamin D. If you follow this diet, you may need to take supplements to make sure you're getting the recommended amounts. While this review did not mention the Whole30, both diets share similarities in what they allow and restrict.

*Members should consult their doctor before beginning any diet or changing their eating patterns.*

1. "Should We Eat Like Our Caveman Ancestors?" Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. <http://www.eatright.org/resource/health/weight-loss/fad-diets/should-we-eat-like-our-caveman-ancestors>



# DON'T MISS A BEAT WITH THESE Heart Facts



Heart attack, heart failure and heart disease sometimes go hand in hand, but they are very different conditions. Learn the symptoms and how to manage them.

## HEART ATTACK

A heart attack occurs when the flow of oxygen-rich blood becomes blocked from a section of the heart.

- **Symptoms:** May include pain or a feeling of squeezing or fullness in the center or left side of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back. Other symptoms may include unusual tiredness (especially for women) and pain

or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck or upper part of the stomach.

- **Manage it well:** Call 911 at the first sign of heart attack symptoms.

## HEART FAILURE

With heart failure the heart doesn't pump blood as it should, so the body's need for blood and oxygen is not being met.

- **Symptoms:** May include shortness of breath, tiredness, and weight gain from fluid buildup.
- **Manage it well:** Good strategies include weighing yourself daily to check for weight gain caused

by increased fluid and taking medicines as prescribed.

## HEART DISEASE

Heart disease is a lifelong disorder of the blood vessels of the heart that can lead to heart attack.

- **Symptoms:** Angina. Men often experience as pressure or squeezing in the chest. Women tend to describe a sharp, burning pain in the neck, jaw, throat, abdomen or back.
- **Manage it well:** Eat a diet that is low in fat and salt and full of fruits, veggies, whole grains, fish, fiber and lean poultry.

## Exercise Is About to Get Easier

Did you know that, as a plan member, you can go to a local gym for FREE? Your plan membership includes the Silver&Fit® program, giving you full access to fitness centers.

If you are not a member of a Silver&Fit gym, you can enroll at

any participating gym for FREE. You must show a Silver&Fit fitness card when you enroll. Print one at [www.SilverandFit.com](http://www.SilverandFit.com), or call Silver&Fit at 1-877-427-4788 (TTY/TDD 1-877-710-2746) to request one. Call Silver&Fit or visit

[www.SilverandFit.com](http://www.SilverandFit.com) to find a participating gym nearby.

To work out at home, enroll in the Home Fitness program. Choose up to two Home Fitness Kits per year, which include DVDs, guides and other items to help you get fit.

*The Silver&Fit program is provided by American Specialty Health Fitness, a subsidiary of American Specialty Health Incorporated (ASH). Silver&Fit, Silver&Fit Connected! and the Silver Slate are registered trademarks of ASH and used with permission herein. All programs and services are not available in all areas.*



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# Shingles and the Vaccine That Can Lower Your Risk

Shingles is a painful rash caused by the same virus that's responsible for chickenpox. After you've had chickenpox, the virus lies inactive and may come back as shingles years later.

While it's not life-threatening, shingles can be very painful and is contagious. A person with shingles can pass the virus to anyone who isn't immune to chickenpox, including newborn children, pregnant women, and even your family and friends. Once infected, the person will develop chickenpox.

One way to protect yourself and your loved ones from shingles is to get a shingles vaccine (Zostavax). It is recommended for adults age

60 and older, whether or not they've already had chickenpox or shingles. Although the vaccine is approved for people age 50 and older, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention isn't recommending it until you reach age 60.

Soundpath Health covers Zostavax (Tier 3) under the Part D prescription drug benefit. We always recommend you go to a local network pharmacy to receive preventive vaccines, including the shingles vaccine. You will usually pay more of the cost of these vaccines when delivered in your provider's office.

Call our Customer Service Department for more information on how vaccines are covered.

## Tell Us How We're Doing Through Medicare's Annual Surveys

We have contracted with SPH Analytics to administer the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) required Health Outcomes Survey (HOS) and Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers & Systems (CAHPS) survey. These surveys will be mailed to a randomly selected portion of our membership asking them to rate their experiences with their health plan and their providers.

Selected members will begin receiving materials over the next month, which include the prenotification postcard, survey (questionnaire) and thank-you postcard (after the survey is returned). These materials are developed and required by CMS.