

To Your Health

PHYSICAL



EMOTIONAL



SOCIAL



FINANCIAL



JULY 2021



TELL IT WELL

This testimonial is from Olivia Burrell-Jackson, Project Coordinator, Office of Management and Budget. Many thanks to Olivia for sharing her story!

Going to college was the first time I was on my own and I went kind of crazy eating junk food my Jamaican parents never let me eat. The “freshman 15” were more like 50. In 2009, I recognized my weight was a problem and joined a weight loss competition at work which helped me lose it, only to gain it back, plus another 30 pounds during pregnancy. No matter what I did, it wouldn’t come off.

Even with the extra 100+ pounds I carried, I always exercised, but it really took a toll on my joints. My back hurt constantly, I was too tired to play with my child, and needed my asthma inhaler every day.

In 2019, a doctor determined I had hypothyroidism *just* enough to make it almost impossible to lose weight but not enough to need medication. She also discovered I was pre-diabetic. That information is what made me decide to begin researching bariatric surgery.

Once I learned how surgery would give my hormones the jump to start shedding weight, I knew it was right for me. In January 2020, I began the process to prepare for surgery and had a Vertical Sleeve Gastrectomy (VSG) in June.

Initially, I hesitated to tell anyone, including my family, that I was having the surgery because I was afraid they would judge me as “taking the easy way out” or that I hadn’t tried hard enough to lose the weight on my own. In my heart, I knew this was the right choice for me and I eventually had their support.

Anybody who says having bariatric surgery is “cheating” has NO IDEA. It is a serious investment—financially, mentally, and physically.

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What Does Depression Look Like?

By Jane Grannis, Wellness Manager

Depression is a mental health disorder that is more than just feeling sad. There is no shame or guilt in feeling depressed—it’s not your fault, and you are not alone.

Depression can be a single occurrence or reappear over time. There are many reasons why someone can find themselves feeling depressed including:

- Experiencing a trauma
- Genetics
- Life circumstance
- Changes in brain chemistry
- Medications
- Having a baby
- Drug and alcohol misuse



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July is Healthy Vision Month!



Your
UHC
Nurse

Amy

By Amy Hertog, RN, BSN,
Clinical Nurse Liaison

When was the last time you had an eye exam? If your eyes are healthy and vision is good, you should have a complete exam by your ophthalmologist once in your 20s and twice in your 30s.

There are some exceptions:

- If you have an infection, injury, or eye pain, or you notice sudden floaters and flashes or patterns of light, call your ophthalmologist.
- If you wear contact lenses or eyeglasses, see your eye specialist every year.
- If you have diabetes or have a family history of eye disease, talk with your ophthalmologist about how often your eyes should be examined.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends that adults get a complete eye examination at age 40. This is when early signs of disease or changes in vision may appear. It is important to find eye diseases early. Early treatment can help preserve your vision.

Getting a **dilated eye exam** is the single best thing you can do for your eye health. Dilating drops widen the pupil (the black part of your eye). The doctor then uses a magnifying lens to look inside and at the back of your eye. This is a way to find eye diseases early, making them easier to treat — before they cause vision loss. How often you need a dilated eye exam will be based on your health status and risks.

Some eye diseases can run in families, like glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration. Speak with your family about health history and be sure to share what you learn with your eye doctor.

Eat healthier foods to help prevent health conditions that can put you at risk for eye problems. Add more eye-healthy foods to your plate. Try dark, leafy greens like spinach, kale, and collard greens. Also include fish high in omega-3 fatty acids like halibut, salmon, and tuna.

The sun's UV rays can harm your skin, but did you know the same goes for your eyes? **Wear sunglasses** that block 99-100% of both UVA and UVB radiation to protect your eyes and lower your risk for cataracts. Add sunglasses to your must-have list before you leave the house.

Diabetes and high blood pressure can increase your risk for some eye diseases, like glaucoma. If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, ask your doctor about steps you can take to **manage your condition** and lower your risk of vision loss.

Quitting smoking is good for almost every part of your body, including your eyes. Kicking the habit will help lower your risk for eye diseases like macular degeneration and cataracts. Quitting smoking is hard, but it's possible — work with a coach or take a class to get help setting up a quit plan. The County offers [several options](#).

To find a provider and for more information about the County's vision plan, please visit: www.pinellascounty.org/hr/vision.

(Sources: [Nation Eye Institute](#), [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#))

Visit [Amy's web page](#) or contact her at 464-5579 or by email at amy_hertog@uhc.com.



We want to hear
from you!

TELL IT WELL Employee Feature

If you or your spouse/domestic partner has improved their life by making healthy changes, *To Your Health* wants to feature and congratulate you! Contact Jane Grannis at wellness@pinellascounty.org for details on how to share your story.



VSG makes your stomach smaller, but that is not a fix-all, it is only the physical part of the process. I had to have the mental strength to change my attitude and beliefs around food. Unfortunately, many people regain their weight or never really lose it after surgery because they think the surgery is the solution, but it is NOT.

It requires you to start making changes immediately. There's no starting your diet next Monday!

My biggest barriers were and are my own mind. With the help of a therapist, I explored my relationship with food.

I've chosen to make healthier choices because my body and mind feels better when I do. I'm healthy enough to play football with my son and see the shock on his face when I catch him! My back pain and pre-diabetes is gone, and I don't need my inhaler. My 95-pound weight loss (during a pandemic no less!) has inspired my husband and my sister to start their own health journey. The best gain I made was knowing that I have the inner strength to overcome challenges, improve my life, and inspire others.



Olivia before and after.

If you experience these symptoms for two weeks or more, seek help.

- Changes in sleep
- Changes in appetite
- Lack of concentration
- Loss of energy
- Lack of interest in activities
- Hopelessness or guilty thoughts
- Changes in movement (less activity, or agitation)
- Physical aches and pains
- Suicidal thoughts

How to Get Diagnosed

Make an appointment with your primary doctor who will perform a complete checkup. If other conditions are ruled out, s/he diagnoses depression by having you take a short quiz called the PHQ-9. A general practitioner can prescribe medication, but keep in mind that medication alone is not a "fix all." Learning to deal with feelings and obtaining tools and strategies to manage depression are equally as important.



Find the Right Care

There are different types of mental health professionals that can, through therapy and perhaps medication, help you to manage depression. Your doctor may refer you to a therapist, or you can look for one yourself. [Search in-network providers.](#)

- Psychologists
- Counselors, clinicians, and therapists
- Clinical social workers
- Online therapy
- Psychiatrists (if you need medication)

For a more in-depth specialist description, [read the full article](#) from our Optum, our EAP provider.

Whether you've been struggling for a while or happen to be going through a rough period in life, there's no shame in needing (and getting!) help. The information you share when you call the EAP, as well as your mental health practitioner, are all 100% confidential. Pinellas County NEVER receives any of your personal health information.

Take action to feel better today!



Virtual Visits are Convenient and Confidential

Talk with a counselor by phone or video-conference.

Visit www.pinellascounty.org/hr/EAP.



Mark Your Calendars: Wellness Activities for You

Financial Well-being Webinar: Preparing for Retirement

What will life look like when you reach your golden years? Most of us have a dream, but without a plan, we risk not getting there.

It's time to prepare yourself and learn what you need to do today so that tomorrow is the life you want.

[View the flyer](#) to learn more and register for the **July 19** webinar at 12:30 p.m.



Cook Along Kitchen Series: Quick Weeknight Meals

Cooking healthy meals can be quick, fun and creative! This session will feature tips on working faster in the kitchen.

[View the flyer](#) for more information and to register for the **July 14**, 12:00 class.



Cancer Prevention for Men: Healthy MENTality

Be proactive about cancer prevention! Learn about common cancers, screening tests, and how men can improve their overall health.

[View the flyer](#) for more information and register either the **July 20**, 12:00 class or the **July 28**, 12:30 class.

Presented by the Moffitt Cancer Center.



Spotlighting Menopause: I'm Postmenopausal. Now What?

Discuss what one can expect in a healthy menopause and how to best support yourself in this time of life. [View the flyer](#) for more information and to register for either the **July 13**, 1:00 p.m. or **July 22**, 12:00 p.m. webinar.



Tobacco Cessation Programs



To avoid a tobacco premium of \$500, employees on the Pinellas County health plan who use tobacco have between August 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 to complete a qualified tobacco cessation program. The premium does not apply to spouses.

[Tobacco cessation program options](#) include virtual and in-person classes from **Tobacco Free Florida's Group Quit**.

Series completed between August 1 and March 31, 2022 will qualify for the 2022 premium waiver.

Current Classes

Virtual: Tuesdays, 12 to 1:00 p.m. August 10 - 31

In-person: Tuesdays, 7:00 - 8:00 a.m.

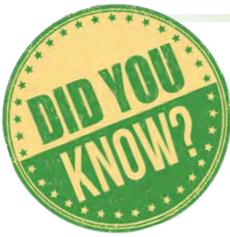
August 10 - 31,

Mosquito Control, 2100 118th Ave. N., Clearwater

To register for a class series, call the local Tobacco Free Florida agency, Area Health Education Center, at (813) 929-1000.

See [additional resources](#) for quitting.





20,000 Acres of Parks

Did you know that Parks and Conservation staff maintain 20,000 acres of parks and preserves? Start enjoying them! Learn about [local parks, trails and recreation options](#) then view [more ways to stay active](#).

Wellness Center Orientations

To access the Wellness Center, schedule an orientation by using the [Orientation Sign-up](#).

Questions?

Contact Wellness at wellness@pinellascounty.org or 464-4049.



COVID-19 Resources

Visit our [COVID-19 for County Employees](#) page for these links and more.

Want to Feel Better?

Take advantage of Pinellas County's beautiful outdoor spaces!

Spending time in nature is good for the body, mind and soul. Researchers have shown over and over that even a little time spent in nature clears the mind, reduces stress and gets bodies moving.

[Pinellas County parks, trails](#), preserves, beaches and playgrounds provide beautiful play spaces where relaxation, fun and exercise abound. Explore, take a walk, roller blade or kayak at a County outdoor space.

Celebrate **National Parks & Recreation Month** at an outdoor space near you!

[Watch this fun video](#) from Parks and Conservation Resources!

Total well-being is also about community and service. Volunteering is a great way to stay connected to the people and places that hold meaning for you. **Keep Pinellas Beautiful** organizes beach and park clean-up events across the County. Volunteer today to give back and preserve these spaces with Keep Pinellas Beautiful. [Check out their upcoming events](#).



Enjoy a Night Out at the Ball Park, August 7!



Enjoy a Fun Night Out at the Ballpark!

BayCare Ballpark - 601 N. Old Coachman Road, Clearwater

Saturday, August 7
6:30 p.m. Game
5:00 p.m. Gates



VS



Bradenton Marauders

Clearwater Threshers

Enjoy a fun night out at the ballpark with family, friends, or co-workers at a discounted rate!

\$14 per person
(ages 4 & under are FREE)

For tickets and info:

Dan Madden
(727) 712-4403

Your tickets include:

- Seating in the Hot Corner Cafe from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- All You Can Eat and Drink (hot dogs, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, peanuts, popcorn, chips, ice cream sandwiches, soft drinks and bottled water)
- \$2.50 draft beer from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Pinellas County has arranged this discounted rate for employees. No strings - just grab your tickets and have fun!

Tickets can also be purchased the day of the game at the "will call" window. Just show your County ID to get the special rate.



Enjoy post-game fireworks!



Banish Your Anxiety About Lockdown Looks: The Pandemic Inner Critic

If you're feeling a bit hesitant emerging from pandemic life because it's been a while since you've worn pants with a button and discovered they no longer close, you're not alone! Many of us find re-entry into society and work environments to be worrying if we've let ourselves go in the self-care department. Instead of hyper-focusing on insecurities, get a few helpful tips from Rally on how to [Banish Anxiety About Your Post-Lockdown Looks](#).



Miss Your Mammogram Last Year?

The Advent Health mammography bus returns in August. Don't miss this chance to catch up with your annual care. For locations and to schedule your appointment, [view the flyer](#).



Don't Forget Your Incentives!

Don't forget! You can make healthy choices **AND** get rewarded for it. Earn up to \$200 or 50,000 points when you complete Wellness Incentive activities. [Read the program guidelines](#) to learn how it works.

Are You Caring for Someone with Dementia?

The [Savvy Caregiver Virtual Training Program](#) is a free, live online training program designed for caregivers who assist persons with dementia. This is a seven-week training designed to help caregivers lessen their own stress and improve their particular situation.



Improve your caregiving experience. [Register online](#) or call (352) 692-5277. Savvy Caregiver is sponsored by Elder Options and the State of Florida, Department of Elder Affairs.

Additionally, there are two 4-week **Coping with Caregiving** free, live online training programs for individuals in caregiving situations. The program helps to find ways to both help you with your needs and help with the needs of the person you care for. [Register online](#) or call (352) 692-5277.

Important!

New Biometric Screening Process in 2021

Before you get your screening, be sure to watch the [tutorial video](#). Also, review the [web page](#) including [FAQs](#) and the [Rally Help Guide](#) with step-by-step instructions and screen shots for every step in the process.

Save \$500 in 2022 with the preferred health plan premium by completing the biometric screening and Rally health survey by **December 31, 2021**.

To Your Health

A monthly publication by the Pinellas County Wellness Program. Contributors: Jane Grannis and Amy Hertog. Layout: Mary Sault. Contact us at wellness@pinellascounty.org or 464-4049.

