

To Your Health

PHYSICAL



EMOTIONAL



SOCIAL



FINANCIAL



DEC 2021

Time is Running Out: Get Your Biometric Screening and Health Survey Done Now!

1... 2: Invest in You!

Step 1. Biometric Screening

Step 2. Health Survey



Follow the new process to get your biometric screening done today. **If you had lab work done through an annual physical or otherwise, this is not a guarantee that your lab work will be counted as a biometric screening.** The *new process must be followed* to record a successful completion of the screening.

If you have been enrolled in the County medical plan prior to July 1, 2021 and would like to earn the preferred \$500 premium for 2022, **the deadline for completing the biometric screening and health survey is quickly approaching.** Although the deadline is December 31, **we recommend completing both items by December 17** because there are several steps to complete and unforeseen delays could occur. Please don't wait until the last minute.

The new process offers two ways to complete your biometric screening.

- **Option 1 Quest Diagnostics Lab (this is the quickest method):** Create an electronic lab order and make an appointment using the Rally/Quest portal (see page 8 of the [Rally Help Guide](#) or the [Cheat Sheet](#) for instructions.) Keep in mind an immediate appointment for the time and lab of your choice may not be available. *The completion records on the date of your lab work.*
- **Option 2 Physician Results Form (this method takes more time):** If you get lab work done through your doctor, would like to use a lab other than Quest, or use a convenience care clinic, download the Physician Results Form (see pg 13 of the [Rally Help Guide](#) or the [Cheat Sheet](#)). If going through your doctor, allow

time to for your lab appointment, visit your doctor to fill out the form, and upload to the Rally/Quest site. *The completion records once you upload or fax the form.*

Once you complete the biometric screening, **remember to complete the Rally health survey.**

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To Your Health is a monthly publication by the Pinellas County Wellness Program. Contact us at wellness@pinellascountry.org or (727) 464-3367, option 1.

Hemoglobin A1C During the Holiday Season

By Amy Hertog, RN, BSN, Clinical Nurse Liaison

A hemoglobin A1C (also known as HgbA1C or glycated hemoglobin test) test detects your average level of blood sugar over the past 2 to 3 months. The A1C test is part of a biometric screening and is used to diagnose diabetes and to help diabetics see if their blood sugar levels are under control.

The A1C test is an important screening tool because many people are not aware that they have pre-diabetes or diabetes, which affects 10.5% of the U.S. population and is usually asymptomatic, especially in the early stages. Nearly 20% of diabetes diagnoses are undetected each year (see [Statistics About Diabetes](#)).

The sugar in your blood is known as glucose. When the glucose builds up in your blood, it binds to the hemoglobin in your red blood cells. The A1C test measures how much glucose is bound to hemoglobin. Red blood cells live for about 3 months so the test shows the average level of glucose in your body for the past 2 to 3 months.

For people without diabetes, the normal range for the A1C level is between 4% to 5.6%. These percentages equate to an average blood sugar of 68-97. A normal fasting blood sugar level is 99 or less. A fasting blood sugar of 100 to 125 may indicate pre-diabetes and 126 or higher may indicate diabetes.

For those who have higher A1C levels, it is important to understand what the A1C value means in terms of average blood sugar level.

A1C (%)	Average Blood Sugar
6	126
7	152
8	183
9	212
10	240
11	269
12	298
13	326
14	355

If you are monitoring your A1C levels, what you do during the holiday season may impact a future lab result. It isn't uncommon to consume extra sweets and treats and/or get derailed with exercise routines during this time of year. Don't beat yourself up over any slips but be mindful as you navigate through the season.



Your UHC Nurse

Amy

If you have a scheduled A1C after the holidays, do not delay your appointment. An unnecessary wait will only interfere with your health care goals and well-being. Knowing your numbers lets you know if you need to pay closer attention or make an adjustment.

Read Nikki's article on page 6 to learn [how eating your meal in a certain order can help control blood sugar](#). Also see [6 Tips for a Happy, Healthy Holiday with Diabetes](#) which are summarized below:

1. Timing of Meals

Holiday meals may be served at odd times. Plan in advance what to do if eating does not align with your regular meal schedule.

2. Be Physically Active

Try to keep up your regular physical activity. Consider starting new traditions, such as after dinner walks, active holiday events, or a little dance party.

3. Plan Your Snacks

Check with the host to see if there will be healthy appetizers to munch on. Consider packing a small snack like a few pieces of low-fat cheese, or offer to bring a healthy appetizer to share.

4. Be Selective

Many holiday foods are high in carbohydrates. You don't have to sample everything. Focus on dishes that are "special" or that you only have this time of year.

5. Eat Smaller Portions

Being mindful of portions can help you better manage your blood glucose. One option is "Toby's Two Tablespoon Rule" which means take two-tablespoon "samples" of your favorites.

6. Don't Forget Your Vegetables

During holiday meals, vegetable selection tends to be limited. Offer to bring a green salad or a side of steamed or roasted vegetables.

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



Exciting New 2022 Wellness Program Updates

The Wellness team is excited about our new partnership with Cigna next year. Beginning in 2022, Cigna's wellness portal, **MotivateMe**, will house Wellness Incentive Program activities. You'll find the fresh new look easier to navigate.



Most aspects of the Incentive Program will remain the same, although you'll find a few changes that will enhance your experience. Employees, opt-outs and spouses (on the County plan) will still be eligible to earn **50,000 points or \$200 cash** every year.

With new resources, our Wellness Program will be better than ever!

What's Staying the Same

All previously accrued wellness points will stay with you. NOTE: Wellness incentive rewards are not the same as Rally Coins. Your earned wellness points stay with you, while Rally coins will no longer be available.

- **Reward Activities** – Where possible, we have kept reward activities generally the same, although your experience on MotivateMe will look different. You'll still be able to earn points for health coaching, preventive screenings, challenges, disease management and healthy pregnancy programs.
- **Tobacco Cessation** - Complete a cessation class using either online or phone coaching through MotivateMe, or attend a Tobacco Free Florida class.

What's Changing

- **Rally** - Incentive completion tracking on Rally will migrate to MotivateMe. Employees will use the new portal to track activities, complete the health survey, etc. NOTE: Complete this year's health survey and biometric screening process through [Rally](#).

- **New rewards** - Social Health and Wellness: Apps and Activities will replace GetFit, Nutrition Challenge, Fruit and Veggie Challenge, and Rally Missions and Quizzes. Complete up to six 4-week challenges in fitness, nutrition and resilience focused on a more balanced approach to well-being. This is a convenient mobile app that syncs to a variety of your favorite apps, including Fitbit®, Apple Health, Runkeeper, MapMyFitness, iHealthmyVitals, Garmin Connect™ and HealthKit™.
- **Real Appeal** – Employees currently enrolled in Real Appeal, as well as those who join prior to December 31st, will be able to complete the program. New enrollments will no longer be available after that date. The Omada Diabetes Prevention Program will replace Real Appeal.
- **Omada Diabetes Prevention Program** - This is a digital lifestyle change program that connects the dots between knowing how to get healthy and actually doing it. Qualified participants will get support from a health coach, interactive tools, a wireless scale, and more.
- **Cash Election** - You will now be able to elect cash directly in the MotivateMe website, where you will see immediate confirmation of your election.
- **New Onsite Resources** - We're very pleased to share that our Benefits/Wellness team will expand to include two Cigna Customer Service Claims Representatives, a Registered Nurse (RN) Health Coach, and other resources.

Stay tuned for more information on these exciting new enhancements.





TELL IT WELL

This testimonial is from Leslie Henry, Property Appraiser's Office, Volunteer Line Dancing Instructor, Clearwater Wellness Center. Thanks to Leslie for sharing her story!

I'm a single mom of 3 children, all of whom I had at the age of 18, 19 and 21. All are adults now, my oldest has given me 2 grandchildren, with one on the way!



Leslie Henry

Although I have been pretty active most of my life, I've also faced health challenges and my share of stress, which, at times, made it hard to exercise and eat healthy.

I have chronic allergies, and in my early 20s was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and then fibromyalgia after the birth of my third child. Facing both emotional and physical trials, there were times it was very difficult to keep moving and take care of myself.

While attending college with 3 young children (ages 7, 9, and 10), and going through a divorce, at age 29, I was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer. Post-surgery side effects included lymphedema in my left arm, and a 50 pound weight gain from medications. Later, I also developed osteoarthritis in both knees from the meds. With so many challenges, I was not in a good place. My past challenges with PTSD resurfaced, but I remembered my counselor at the time telling me to do something I enjoy in order to improve my mental health.

While I attended breast cancer survivor meetings, I found myself leading line dancing, which I really enjoyed. A friend told me about classes in St. Pete and I was hooked! Within 10 months of attending a class three times a week, I lost over 30 pounds and noticed my stress and emotional health improved.

Line dancing turned into a passion and now I teach Urban Line Dancing at the Clearwater Wellness Center and the Ridgecrest YMCA, as well as occasional special events.

Sometimes moving, much less dancing, is really hard, but I love it so much I will never allow anything to make me quit! I am very proud of myself for all my accomplishments and that I help others move in a fun way. Hopefully my story inspires you to keep moving and stay healthy!



Tell It Well



Caregiver Corner



High Five

Share Your Good News

Are you inspired by the stories of your coworkers, such as Leslie Henry? If so, please consider sharing your own stories and successes.

Tell It Well features stories of you or your spouse/ domestic partner making healthy life changes.

Caregiver Corner shares stories of caregiving experiences including resources that you found particularly helpful.

High Five is a feature that recognizes you for something wellness-related such as completing a race, quitting smoking, joining a fitness group, etc.

Email your photos and information to wellness@pinellascounty.org.



Best Wishes

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season!

Jane Grannis and Nicki Lanauze
Pinellas County Wellness Program



Mark Your Calendar: Wellness Activities for You

Managing Family and Relationships



Navigating relationships can be challenging at any time, and may be heightened during the holiday season. This one hour webinar looks at the key ingredients to building good relationships, overcoming blockages to effective communication, and ways to manage and nurture relationships in our busy lives. These skills will help manage holiday stress and beyond. [View the flyer to register](#) for **December 9** at 12:00 p.m. or **December 15** at 12:30 p.m.

Dealing with Grief and Loss



Employees are often left alone to deal with loss, leaving them feeling isolated and unsupported, which may be felt more deeply during the holidays. This one-hour webinar looks at various types of loss, identifies what coworkers can expect after a loss, explores the grief process, and provides guidelines for appropriate support. Participants will leave with useful tools to work through grief and loss. [View the flyer to register](#) for **December 13** at 1:00 p.m. or **December 16** at 12:00 p.m.

Tobacco Cessation Programs



To avoid a tobacco premium of \$500, employees on the Pinellas County medical 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 classes from **Tobacco Free Florida's Group Quit**, telephone coaching sessions and an online program.

Upcoming Virtual Classes

- Thursdays, Jan 13, 20, 27, Feb. 3, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Wednesdays, Jan 19, 26, Feb. 2, 9, 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

Register now for upcoming classes by calling the local Tobacco Free Florida agency, Area Health Education Center, at (813) 929-1000.

See [additional resources for quitting](#).

Missed these webinars? Watch the recordings.

Boosting Energy Naturally

Feeling tired all the time? Learn how to get more pep in your step. Find out how to improve your energy stores in this [one-hour recording](#) presented by EAP/ Optum.



Making the Holidays Happier

Watch this [one-hour recording](#) to identify factors that contribute to holiday stress and find coping strategies to promote well-being throughout the season.



Blood Drives



Wednesday, December 15

- Tax Collector Mid County, 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 16

- STAR Center, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- Clearwater Courthouse, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 22

- Tax Collector Gulf to Bay, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



Optimal Meal Order for Better Health

By Nicki Lanauze, Wellness Technician

When you sit down to eat a meal, do you have a particular order in which you like to eat? Maybe you like to dig into your favorite part first, or maybe you prefer to save the best for last. New research shows the order in which you eat your food can support better health by regulating blood sugar levels.



Whether you are managing diabetes or just striving for better health, managing your blood sugar effectively can have remarkable effects on your total health. You may experience fewer cravings, better energy, more restful sleep, slower aging, improved hormones function, better skin, fewer wrinkles, healthier heart, less cognitive decline, and fewer menopause symptoms.

To reduce rapid blood sugar spikes, start your meal with non-starchy veggies. They're full of fiber, which coats the intestinal lining and slows the rapid absorption of sugars into the bloodstream. Then, follow up with a protein. Protein has a very low effect on blood sugar levels and slows digestion. The slower rate of digestion preps your body for the absorption of carbohydrate-rich foods, meaning, you'll want to save carbs for the end of your meal. Carbohydrates have the biggest impact on your blood sugar levels out of all the nutrients.

When to Eat	Item	Examples
1. Start	Non-starchy veggies	Asparagus, broccoli, eggplant, leafy greens, summer squash, zucchini
2. Eat next	Protein	Chicken, turkey, beef, tofu, fish
3. Eat last	Carbohydrates	Potatoes, rice, beans, bread

Don't fear or skip your favorite bread, comfort food, or baked good. Feel comfortable and confident in keeping some of your favorite foods in your diet by incorporating an optimal food order when enjoying your meals.

WELLNESS CHAMPION SPOTLIGHT

Zachary Luchette

Tax Technician 2,
Tax Collector South County

Every department has a [Wellness Champion](#) who helps to communicate important wellness events, reminders and updates, as well as support you. They do amazing work and we'd like for you to get to know them!



How long have you worked for Pinellas County?

As of December, I will be with the County for two years. I started at our Gulf to Bay Office where I served a brief tenure as Wellness Champion, and was able to resume those duties when I moved to South County in August.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I'm originally from Pittsburgh, where I worked in Financial Aid. Before that, I was an opera singer. I sang all over the country, and championed myself as the go-to guy on the 'D-List,' that is, after an opera company was refused by their 1st, 2nd, then 3rd choice, they'd land on hiring me. I'd do the gig for cheaper and usually sing better than their first choices, so it turned out OK. I was even featured in an opera blog called "Bari-Hunks." But that was 25 pounds ago, so they haven't asked again.

Why did you want to serve as a Wellness Champion?

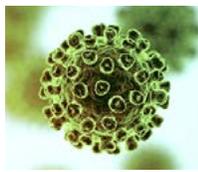
The County is very generous with what they offer, but there's a lot to know. Not only do I want to have a firm grasp on what's available to me, but I want to make sure my colleagues do as well. We work very hard and should know about what's out there and how to access it. That's what I hope to do for our office.

What do you do to take care of yourself?

During quarantine, I built a gym in my garage which has turned into something I really enjoy. I've got a weight bench, rowing machine, elliptical...but most importantly I have a TV out there that plays Hulu and Spotify. So instead of focusing on sore muscles or the nagging sense of obligation that goes along with working out, I can tune into some Cardi B to take my mind off things.



Important COVID-19 Updates



Vaccines

- All adults, regardless of age or health risk, are eligible to receive a [COVID-19 booster shot](#).
- The FDA has authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines for children ages 5 to 11.
- This vaccination is offered at many clinics, pharmacy locations and at the local [Department of Health for Pinellas County](#). See [Pinellas County vaccination sites](#).

Testing

UnitedHealthcare covers COVID-19 testing in full at no cost to you. View [Pinellas County COVID-19 testing sites](#).

Holidays

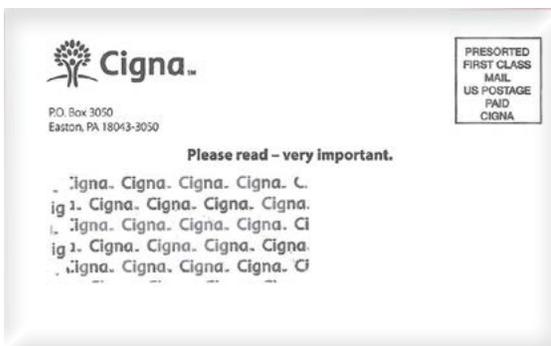
See [Safer Ways to Celebrate the Holidays](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for recommendations on holiday activities and travel.

New 2022 Medical Plan Administrator: Watch Your Mail for Cigna ID Cards



Cigna will replace UnitedHealthcare on January 1 for medical, EAP, and behavioral/mental health benefits. To learn more, see [Plan Administrator Change: UnitedHealthcare to Cigna](#).

Watch for important information in your home mailbox, including your plan information and new ID cards. Be sure to check your mail carefully before discarding.



Sample ID card envelope from Cigna



Creamy Vegan Mac & "Cheese"

Ingredients

- 12 ounces 100% whole-grain pasta
- 28 ounces sweet potato, peeled, diced
- 4 cups unsweetened almond milk (regular flavor)
- 12 ounces extra firm tofu
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 pinches cayenne pepper
- 8 ounces rice shredded cheese alternative

Directions

- Cook pasta in boiling water until al dente, remove, strain, rinse and set aside in bowl covered with plastic wrap.
- Meanwhile, in a saucepan, combine sweet potato with almond milk and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Simmer uncovered until sweet potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Strain sweet potatoes into bowl reserving almond milk. Measure almond milk and add new almond milk to equal 3 cups.
- Place sweet potatoes in blender with almond milk, tofu, salt, Dijon mustard, black pepper, nutmeg and cayenne and blend until smooth.
- In large bowl combine sweet potato sauce, pasta, rice cheese and mix well.
- Place in a 10"x12", two-inch deep baking pan, and bake at 350° F for 20 minutes. Remove and serve.

Nutrition Information

Calories: 220	Saturated fat: 0 g
Sodium: 570 mg	Fiber: 5 g
Sugar: 4 g	Protein: 10 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg	Carbohydrate: 39 g

Makes 6 servings.

[Source: Cleveland Clinic](#)

