

To Your Health

PHYSICAL



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SOCIAL



FINANCIAL



FEB 2023

FEBRUARY

BLACK

• HISTORY MONTH •

Soul Food: Cuisine Steeped in Community, Family, Tradition, and Love

By Jane Grannis, Wellness Manager



In the Black community, food is an expression of love that comes from caring for others, creating community, spending time together and making sure everyone gets fed. Black cuisine is a window to the past, traditions, and values. Here in the United States, soul food is the most recognizable type of Black cuisine.

America's beloved comfort food originated in the Deep South. This rich food's history has African roots and is tied to the struggle and survival of those who were enslaved. Families hand down "recipes" from generation to generation that are rarely written down or include exact measurements. Instead, meals are based on flavor, tradition, a "handful of this" and a "pinch of that".

Soul food highlights and creates a unique cuisine created by people of color who had to make the best from meager rations and substandard food which forced them to be creative and adapt with different ingredients and pioneer new cooking methods to foster the feeding of their

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Jet Dental Coming Soon!

We are excited to partner with [Jet Dental](#) to bring pop-up dental clinics to multiple worksites across Pinellas County, making getting a dental checkup more convenient. *Stay tuned for dates and locations.*



Soul Food Ingredient Substitutions

[Collard Greens](#)

- Substitute ham hock/fatback with smoked turkey

[Homestyle Biscuits](#)

- Substitute butter with oil

[Mac and Cheese](#)

- Substitute regular pasta with whole grain or legume pasta (chickpea or lentil)
- Substitute some of the full fat cheese with thick Greek yogurt
- Substitute whole milk with skim or any non-dairy milk
- Add chopped broccoli, carrots, or cauliflower

[Southern Fried Chicken](#)

- Substitute rub with fat free buttermilk and spices (paprika, chili powder, or cayenne)
- Substitute traditional breading with crushed cornflakes, thyme, and pepper
- Substitute skin-on chicken with skinless chicken
- Instead of deep frying, use an air fryer or bake in the oven

[Sweet Potato Casserole](#)

- Substitute whole milk with low fat, cashew, or oat milk
- Substitute marshmallows with pecans or dates

[Sweet Potato Pie](#)

- Substitute butter with oil
- Substitute milk and cream with low-fat and evaporated milk

Continued from [page 1](#)

families, fellowship, and community bonds.

Rice

Rice is the staple of many soul dishes, including [jambalaya](#), [jollof](#), and [Hoppin' John](#). These recipe links take you to healthier versions of these soul favorites.



Okra

Thought to originate from East Africa, this vegetable was added to various dishes, including soups and stews, as well as used as a coffee substitute and even as rope material.

Pork

Barbecue is a time-honored Black tradition and art form dating back generations and was a way to preserve and prepare the toughest, fattiest, and worst cuts of meat, which were the only ones available to them. Variations of seasonings and vinegar improved tenderness and flavor, and are the basis of today's barbecue sauces.

Collard Greens

A wide variety of dishes are made with this boiled cabbage-family staple. Collard greens were one of the few vegetables that Black people were allowed to grow for themselves pre-emancipation.

While delicious, due to the historical necessity of certain food preparation methods, soul food is high in calories, saturated fat, salt and sugar. Swapping out a few ingredients and changing preparation methods allows us to enjoy traditional southern cuisine while making healthier choices.

For example, pork BBQ is high in fat and sodium. Consider using dark meat chicken or turkey for some dishes. Although greens themselves are high in antioxidants, they are not the healthiest choice when boiling in fatback or ham hock. Our recipe on [page 6](#) trims the fat by using smoked turkey. For other suggestions, see the box on [page 1](#). Also, you can “veganize” greens for an equally tasty but healthier dish by using vegetable stock, smoked paprika, and Liquid Smoke.

Soul food has evolved into one of the most iconic cuisines the United States has to offer. [Immigrants](#) of African descent from all over the world joined this country and have brought unique dishes from the Caribbean, Central and South Americas, and new foods from Africa that are contributing to a new renaissance of the Black culinary experience.

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2023 Biometric Screening & Health Assessment Deadline Change

Due to Quest's reporting schedule and year-end processing requirements, complete your 2023 [biometric screening and health assessment](#)



between **January 23 – November 30**. Employees who prefer the Physician Results Form are encouraged to upload, rather than fax, it **before November 1** to allow for longer processing time. A biometric screening scheduled directly through the Pinellas Quest portal is the preferred method, as it is quick, paperless, and always free. If you prefer to use the Physician Results Form and have your doctor order the blood work as part of your annual physical, you do not have to wait 365 days to schedule an appointment. The medical plan runs on a calendar year, which means insurance will cover the cost of the visit and preventive lab work any time during the year. For instructions, view the [Quest Help Guide](#) and the [Physician Results Form Help Guide](#).



Under Pressure

By Brittany Hartup, BSN, RN, Cigna Nurse Health Coach



Brittany Hartup

Did you know [nearly half of American adults](#) have high blood pressure (also referred to as hypertension), and don't even know it? Even scarier, hypertension is called a "[silent killer](#)" because there are typically no obvious symptoms indicating something is wrong. But what exactly is blood pressure, and why is it important?

Think of all the vessels throughout your body as pipes, and your blood as the water flowing through them. If the water pressure is too high when you turn on your faucet, you'll undesirably end up spraying water all around you. If the water pressure is too low, it isn't sufficient enough to take care of the task at hand. Hypertension can [lead to](#) stroke, vision loss, heart attack or failure, kidney disease, and even sexual dysfunction.

There are some [things you can do](#) to lower your risk for hypertension, such as eating foods low in salt, exercising, managing weight and stress, quitting smoking, and

limiting alcohol. Things you cannot change, called [non-modifiable risk factors](#), include age, gender, ethnicity, and genetics. As we get older, our blood vessels begin to thicken and stiffen, causing a natural increase in blood pressure. Interestingly, men are more likely to develop hypertension before the age of 55, and women are more likely to develop it after 55 years. When compared to Caucasian, Hispanic, and Asian adults, Blacks are most likely to develop high blood pressure.

Preventing and managing high blood pressure is an important part of your health, and the first step is [knowing your numbers](#). If you are enrolled in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or have a Health Savings Account (HSA), you can use those funds to pay for an at-home blood pressure monitor. Keeping a log on paper, phone, or an app can help you and your doctor see your blood pressure big picture to manage it well.



Cigna Nurse Health Coach [Brittany Hartup](#) provides coaching on preventing and managing chronic conditions.

Announcing the 2022 Maintain Campaign Winners!

Employees embarked on an 8-week challenge to maintain a healthy weight throughout the holidays in our annual Maintain Campaign. Through the support and motivation of teamwork and a focus on healthy habit challenges, 87% percent of participants that submitted both starting and ending weight not only maintained their weight but finished out the notorious weight-gaining season lighter than when they started. We've all made it through the holiday season, and two teams came out on top. Congrats on a job well done!

Honorable Mention – Best Team Name The Spaghetti Models



From left to right: Betsy Farley, Stephanie Hendrix, Renee Duffey, and Steven Clark

Most Spirited in the Challenge Chat

- Takira Black
- Charlie Jenkins

1st Place – Golden Girls



From left to right: Jemera Hollis, Shannon St. Jean, Wendy Isaacs, and Megan Bastian

2nd Place – Ctrl + Alt + Elite



From left to right: Jennifer Shawen, Jennifer Gundel, Rhonda Richardson, and Michelle Stegeby



February Wellness Webinars and Events

Semi-Homemade Meals



[Register now](#) for a 45-minute Cook Along Kitchen webinar on **February 15 at 12:15 p.m.** Shannon Parks shows how to cook 3 semi-homemade meals: quick chicken salad, chicken tortilla soup, and speedy chicken stir-fry.

Heart Healthy Family



[Register now](#) for a 30-minute webinar on **February 23 at 12:15 p.m.** and explore how the heart works and what we can do to help it stay strong. Together with Nurse Health Coach Brittany, you'll learn some everyday tips for keeping you and your family heart-healthy.

Refresh With Forest Bathing



[Register now](#) for an immersive nature walk experience at Eagle Lake Park on **February 28 at 12:30 p.m.** that promotes health and reduces stress. Learn a new way to be present in the moment and how this can be applied to our urban environment.

Financial Well-Being

Retirement Income



[Register now](#) for a 1-hour webinar on **February 13 at 12:15 p.m.** for employees nearing retirement. You'll learn how to fund retirement from multiple sources and how to adjust as your retirement nears to help you reach your unique goals.

FRS: Income Tax Planning



[Register now](#) for a 90-minute workshop on **February 15 at 12:15 p.m.** to understand tax basics, deductions, taxpayer credits, and more. An action plan will be discussed about steps you can legally take throughout the year to reduce your taxable income.

Financial Football



[Register now](#) for this onsite 6-week workshop from **February 16 - March 30 at 7:00 - 8:00 a.m.** at the Public Works Complex in Clearwater. Learn how to devise a solid financial strategy, set goals, and outline a financial action plan.

Wellness Weekly Breaks: Just 15 Minutes a Day

Meditation Mondays



Pop in [every Monday](#) morning and/or afternoon for a 15-minute guided live meditation. Register now for either the **morning (9:00 a.m.)**, **afternoon (3:00 p.m.)**, or **both sessions**.

Decompress to Stress Less on Wednesdays



Join Onsite Nurse Health Coach Brittany [every Wednesday](#) for 15 minutes to enjoy word games, trivia, stretching, and more to give your brain a break. Register for **9:00 a.m.**, **2:30 p.m.**, or **both**.

Friday Stretch



Sitting for long periods of time can play havoc with your posture and health. Pledge to move more by dropping in [every Friday](#) at **10:00 a.m.** to take a quick 15-minute stretch wherever you are.



The Heart Truth: Salt vs. Sodium

By Shannon Parks, MPH, RD, CPH, Cigna Nutrition Health Coach



Shannon Parks

As it turns out, humans aren't the only ones that can feel salty from time to time. Did you know that table salt, sea salt, and sodium aren't the same thing? Though they all taste similarly (ahem, *salty*), and we may use them interchangeably, they're not actually one and the same!

Sodium is a mineral that supports vital body functions, whereas salt is a chemical compound made up of two minerals: sodium and chloride. In a [survey conducted by the American Heart Association \(AHA\)](#), 61% of Americans reported believing that sea salt is a lower-sodium choice than table salt. However, both sea salt and table salt both contain about 40% sodium by weight. So, what's the difference? Sea salt is obtained directly from evaporation of seawater and is minimally processed, thereby retaining trace minerals such as magnesium, potassium, and calcium. Table salt, on the other hand, is mined from salt deposits and processed to have the fine salt texture we're all familiar with. The processing strips the salt of any trace minerals, and additives may be used to prevent clumping.

Whether you choose table salt, sea salt, kosher salt, pink Himalayan salt, or any other salt option on the market, the AHA recommends Americans limit intake to 2,300 mg of sodium per day. That's roughly [one teaspoon of salt](#) daily. The [Food and Drug Administration](#) reports that

the average American consumes 3,400 mg daily. Whoa there, saltshaker!

Excess sodium can have a detrimental effect on our health in a myriad of ways. High blood pressure, otherwise known as hypertension, is directly impacted by sodium intake. Additionally, high blood pressure can damage vessels which can lead to easier buildup of plaque. Less considered, but more often felt, is the bloating and weight gain that can come as a result of water weight stored by the body after consuming a high sodium meal, or a routinely high sodium diet. Eating less sodium can decrease risk of high blood pressure, fluid retention, heart disease, stroke, kidney issues, osteoporosis, and cancer, [according to the AHA](#).

Some of the sneakiest sources of sodium in our diet are packed and processed foods. Though some food naturally contains sodium, the items we buy in bags, packages, cans, and bottles are just as much to blame as the saltshaker found on many dining room tables. Breads, pizza, lunch meat, canned soups, and savory snacks (chips, pretzels, snack mixes and the like) are top culprits. Dining out can be tricky too as one slice of cheese pizza has an estimated 600 mg of sodium!

Reducing your salt intake doesn't have to be hard – start by skipping the saltshaker and [reading nutrition labels](#).



Cigna Nutrition Health Coach [Shannon Parks](#) provides coaching on nutrition and wellness.

2022 Wellness Incentive Semi-Annual Payout

If you completed eligible wellness activities between July 1 and December 31, 2022, rewards will be deposited into your points bank or, if you elected for cash, paid in your paycheck, at the end of March.



To view your 2022 completed activities, visit [myCigna.com](#), select *Wellness* from the top menu at the right, then select *Wellness & Incentives*.

2023 Cash Election Reminder

All employees' wellness incentives default to points at the beginning of each year. You must elect cash if you prefer to receive money in your paycheck. Follow the [Cash Election Help Guide](#) to make the election.

EAP Wellness Webcast

We are pleased to offer national webcasts through Cigna EAP on **Wednesdays at 2 p.m.**



[Sign up now](#) and stay tuned for more throughout the year.

- **February 22 – Under Pressure: Managing Workplace Stress** – Sometimes your job can seem like your entire life. We will teach you ways to keep stress from getting out of hand, and increase productivity to make the most of your time in and out of the workplace.



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Celebrating Black History Month: Collard Greens

Ingredients

- 1 lb smoked turkey, cut into 1-inch strips
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 bunches of collard greens, washed, de-stemmed, and rough chopped
- 1 quart of unsalted chicken or beef stock
- 1-2 tablespoons of white vinegar
- Red pepper flakes (optional)



Directions

1. In a heavy bottomed stock pot over medium heat, brown the turkey for 1-2 minutes.
2. Add in onion, sauteing until softened.
3. Add in garlic; continue cooking until fragrant—about 1 minute.
4. Add in collard greens and toss to evenly coat, cooking until they start to wilt.
5. Pour in chicken or beef stock, white vinegar, and season with black pepper and (optional) red pepper flakes.
6. Bring the mixture to a boil and then reduce the heat to low and simmer until the greens are tender—about 45 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings

Recipe adapted from [A Taste of History](#).

Nutritional information per serving:

Calories 127 calories, Total fat 9gm, Protein 4gm, Carbohydrate 8gm



Tell It Well



Caregiver Corner



High Five

Share Your Good News

Are you inspired by stories of your coworkers? 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@pinellas.gov

BIKE YOUR CITY 2023 - OLDSMAR
BIKE YOUR CITY OLD SMAR
REGISTER TODAY!
MARCH 10, 2023 @ 8:30AM
ForwardPinellas.org/byc

Calling all bike lovers! Hop on your bike for a guided and slow 6.5-mile tour around Oldsmar. Everyone from around Tampa Bay is encouraged to join. **Space is limited and registration is required.** [Register today.](#)



WELLNESS CHAMPION SPOTLIGHT

Colby Cole

Tax Collector's Office

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?

4 years.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I am a lifelong Pinellas County resident, born in Seminole, but spent my childhood and college years in Palm Harbor and since then have lived in Dunedin, Clearwater, and bought a house in St. Petersburg

last year. I am a big sports fan and my favorite teams are the Tampa Bay Rays, Bucs, Lightning, and Orlando Magic. I graduated USF St. Petersburg with a bachelor's degree in mass communications, so I'm also a fan of all USF sports teams. I also have three dogs named Penny (Maltese), Sheldon (Poodle), and JT (Maltipoo).

Why did you want to serve as a Wellness Champion?

I participated in a wellness class in 2019 on how to get better sleep and it was very helpful and a game changer for me. Also, I do like to walk outside every day and get as many steps as possible, so I feel like this team is a good fit for me. Plus, I feel like this is an opportunity to connect with other parts of the County outside of the Tax Collector's Office.

What do you do to take care of yourself?

As mentioned above, I do enjoy walking and getting steps in. I also enjoy swimming in the pool and at our amazing beaches. I've also been trying to eat healthier, and eat less red meat and go to other sources for protein.

Upcoming Blood Drives



Did you know that one blood donation can save up to three lives? You can donate whole blood, red blood cells, platelets or plasma. Please consider donating! Walk-ins are welcome or [schedule an appointment](#).

- **Clearwater Courthouse**
315 Court Street (west parking lot)
February 21, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- **STAR Center**
7887 Bryan Dairy Road, Largo
February 22, 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- **Public Works**
22211 U.S. Highway 19 North, Clearwater
February 16, 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tobacco Users – Time is Running Out!



To avoid a tobacco premium of \$500, employees on the Pinellas County health plan who use tobacco have until March 31, 2023 to complete a qualified tobacco cessation program. The premium does not apply to spouses. If you would like to complete a program prior to the deadline, make sure to sign up for one of the [available program options](#), including Cigna Health Coaching and virtual classes from Tobacco Free Florida.

Call Tobacco Free Florida, at (813) 929-1000 or use the *new* [online registration form](#).

- This is the **last series of classes offered prior to the deadline**: Thursdays 12:30-1:30 p.m., Feb 23, March 2, 9, 16

Please note, you must attend all 4 classes in the series to receive credit.





Pinellas County Wears Red

February is American Heart Month. Employees wore red on [National Wear Red Day](#) to spread awareness about cardiovascular disease and help save lives.



Regional 9-1-1



Clerk of the Circuit Court



Human Resources



Human Services



Human Services Community Connections



Parks & Conservation Resources



Parks & Conservation Resources



Solid Waste



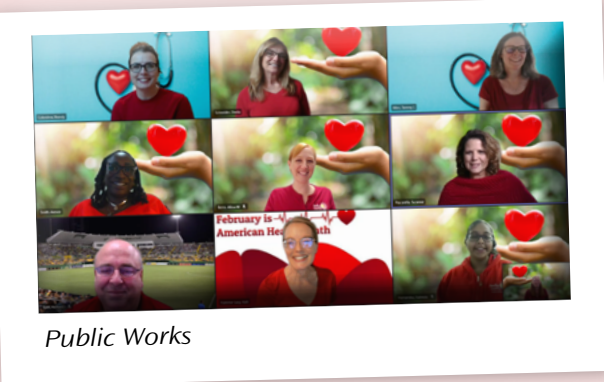
Supervisor of Elections



Supervisor of Elections





Public Works



Public Works



February 2023 Group Fitness Classes

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
			6:30 to 7:10 a.m. Walk & Talk (Outdoor) Shannon 2/2, 2/9, 2/16, 2/23
12:15 to 12:45 p.m. Core & Balance Shannon 2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27		 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. Spin Shirley (new instructor) 2/1, 2/8, 2/22 (no class 2/15)	
	5:15 to 6:15 p.m. Solely Strength Janan 2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28	5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Urban Line Dancing Jolanda 2/1, 2/8, 2/15, 2/22	5:15 to 6:15 p.m. Yoga Kelli 2/2, 2/9, 2/16 (no class 2/23)  5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Step 'n' Sculpt Lisa 2/23

Classes are held at the [Wellness Center](#), 324 South Fort Harrison Ave., Clearwater.

Pre-Registration Required

- To sign up, visit [Fitness Class Registration](#).
- Sign up opens one week before class.
- Registrants who do not show up for class within 5 minutes of start time will lose their spot.
- If a class is full (8-person limit), you can wait on standby and join the class if a spot opens up.
- If unable to attend, cancel your registration or email wellness@pinellas.gov.

Class Descriptions

Core & Balance (30 minutes): An all-level workout to strengthen mid-body muscles which help maintain range of motion and a healthy back.

Solely Strength (1 hour): An all-level workout that focuses on building endurance, strength, lean body mass, bone strength and decreasing body fat.

Spin (30 minutes): Get an intense cardio workout which can be modified for all fitness levels. You control your resistance and speed.

Step 'n' Sculpt (1 hour): *Weekly class canceled.*

Keep your eye out for pop-up classes. Get your heart rate up with step cardio, tone your core and abs using a variety of equipment, and show your muscles some love with a feel-great stretch.

Urban Line Dancing (1 hour): Fun dance class suited for all levels that's an excellent stress reducer, muscle toner and leg strengthener.

Walk & Talk (40 minutes): Start your day off on the right foot by walking and talking with Shannon, your [Cigna Onsite Nutrition Health Coach](#). Get your steps in while discussing nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and being the best version of yourself. Meet inside the Wellness Center at the front desk.

Yoga (1 hour): All fitness levels are welcome. Take a pause in your day and roll out your yoga mat. Recover from stress and develop strength and flexibility in this smooth yoga flow that unites breath and movement and ends with a deep, relaxing stretch.

Bookmark the [Group Fitness Class Schedule](#).

