

THE BENEFIT

Housing Benefits Plan (HBP) is the medical plan provided to you by your housing authority. It is directed by housing authority Executive Directors from across Southeast and Southwest NAHRO for the benefit of housing authorities.

Please share this with all of your HBP employees, retirees, and COBRA members. Also share with the ED, HR, and Finance.

Colon Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer is one of most common cancers in the U.S. but it can often be prevented due to testing. Screenings can help detect abnormal growths called polyps, which can be removed before they turn into cancer.

You should be screened regularly, beginning at age 45. However, you may need to discuss testing earlier than 45 with your doctor if you have a bowel disease or a family history of colon cancer or polyps.

Your HBP medical insurance covers the first diagnostic colonoscopy in a year. If you need a second diagnostic one within the same year (a positive mail-in test requires an in-office follow-up colonoscopy) your deductible and coinsurance would apply.

Colorectal cancer doesn't always have symptoms in the early stages, although when symptoms show they might include bloody stool, persistent stomachaches or changes in bowel habits, and unexplained weight loss.

Welcome New Marketing Team Member

Heather Westbrook has joined HBP marketing! Heather has previously worked in environmental demolition, appraising, and property management. She works in HBP's Shreveport office with Jessica Strange and they share the HBP marketing phone number and email address (found at the bottom of this newsletter). She takes the place of Janice Nelson, 5-year HBP marketing team member, who retired at the end of 2025.



Please greet Heather when you see her at conferences this year!

Upcoming Webinar Trainings

Tues, Apr. 21, 10am (EST) Topic: [Eating Healthy for Less](#) *click to register*

Thurs, Apr. 23, 10am (EST) Topic: [Navigating Conflict with Compassion](#) *click to register*

Tues, May 19, 10am (EST) Topic: [Understanding Employee Wellbeing for Managers](#) *click to register*

Thurs, May 21, 10am (EST) Topic: [How to Beat Fatigue & Sleep Better](#) *click to register*

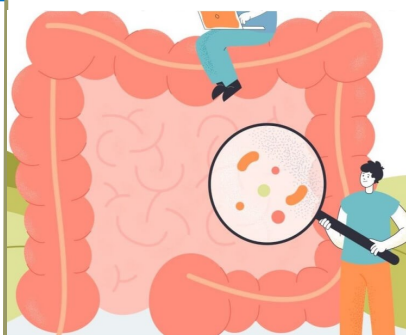
Thank you to everyone who voted on webinar topics for this year. You can find previous webinar recordings at <https://www.housingbp.com/links-2>

*Tip: Some HAs use the library of recordings to host staff trainings. They select a topic for the month and gather in a conference room to watch.

The HBP website at www.housingbp.com provides more information and helpful links. Questions or comments? Email us at hbp@callhsa.com or call 1-800-288-7623, option 5.



March 2026



March's Health Focuses

Each month, UHC — who offers incentives and well-being programs — provides information on their selected health focus. The March selections are:

National awareness — [Nutrition](#) & [Colorectal Cancer Awareness](#)

UHC's health tip — Everyday Nutrition

UHC Rewards challenges* — Schedule your colon cancer screening (\$50 value)

**Enroll in UHC Rewards and complete these challenges to earn money.*

March toolkit — Women's health

Additional information is attached.

Health tip: Everyday nutrition



A person's diet is an essential component of their current and future state of well-being. Healthy eating has many benefits. Eating a healthier diet may decrease the risk of getting diabetes, increase energy levels, improve heart health and help with weight management.¹

Healthy eating tips

Although there are countless “diets” and differing food philosophies, most agree on some basic healthy eating habits. Some healthy eating tips include:

- Eating at regular intervals
- Eating a variety of foods
- Aiming for balanced meals
- Drinking water regularly and abundantly
- Including a lot of vegetables and moderate amounts of fruits in many colors

A healthier diet should provide adequate nutrients, including micronutrients and macronutrients. Micronutrients include vitamins and minerals that the body requires in smaller amounts and must be acquired from one's diet. Macronutrients are large and visible to the eye and are needed in larger quantities. Macronutrients include fats, proteins and carbohydrates, and are responsible for creating energy and building up the body's cells.

The quality of the nutrients is important

Examples of high quality carbohydrates include: Starchy vegetables such as yams, sweet potatoes, winter squash, etc. beans and legumes; and whole grains.

High quality protein sources include: grass-fed meat (sparingly), skinless poultry, wild caught fish and seafood, eggs, tofu, tempeh, cottage cheese and yogurt.



The importance of water

Although not categorized as a micronutrient or macronutrient, water is vital for the body to function properly. Our bodies are made up of 50% to 60% water and states of dehydration, and even suboptimal hydration, may lead to symptoms such as fatigue, constipation, dry skin and brain fog.

A person's hydration needs vary depending on many factors; however, a good rule of thumb is to drink $\frac{1}{2}$ your body weight in ounces. For example, if you weigh 150 lbs., you should aim to consume 75 ounces of water or more each day.

When it comes to fats, they are not created equal. Certain fats are beneficial and important to health such as olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds, fatty fish and coconut. Other fats may be harmful to your health and should be limited. These include highly processed vegetable oils, soybean and corn oil, margarine, shortening and saturated animal fats.

Understanding portion sizes

Eating healthier is the goal; however, the portions of healthier foods are also important, especially for weight loss and maintenance. Calorie counting may be tedious and is not an exact science. A better strategy may be to use visual representations to ensure proper portions. Examples include:

- Fist = 1 cup, use for vegetables
- Deck of cards or computer mouse = 3 to 4 ounces, use for protein
- Tennis ball = ½ cup, use for grains such as rice or starchy carbohydrates such as potatoes
- Cupped handful = 1 ounce, use for nuts
- Tip of thumb = 1 tablespoon fat, use for butter or oil

In addition to utilizing the visual examples provided, using smaller serving dishes such as a salad plate instead of a larger plate may help manage portion sizes.

Another area to consider when eating healthier is to ensure you are eating a balanced diet. Fill your plate with a lean protein source, a complex carbohydrate and a healthy fat source; additionally, load up on colorful fruits and veggies. When considering fruits and vegetables, more is always better. Fruits and veggies are powerful allies in maintaining health. Consumption of fruits and veggies may help to prevent cancer, decrease oxidative stress, maintain a healthy heart and promote a healthier weight.²

A healthier diet does not occur overnight. Focus on making better choices bite by bite, day by day, and you may be on your way to a healthier diet and lifestyle!



Sources:

1 CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/php/resources/healthy-eating-benefits-for-adults.html>. 2024. Accessed June 2025.

2 National Cancer Institute. https://progressreport.cancer.gov/prevention/diet_alcohol/fruit_vegetable. 2025. Accessed June 2025.

This information is for general informational purposes only and is not intended nor should be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult an appropriate medical professional to determine what may be right for them.