



Vitamin D: The Sunshine Vitamin

LOOKING AHEAD...

A new AHEALTHYME platform is available!

The new Blue Cross Blue Shield AHEALTHYME platform offers a more modernized digital platform and new ways to earn incentive points. Register today!

A New Challenge Program is now available!

We've partnered with MoveSpring to offer incentivized Challenges and educational content to keep you motivated. Join the RCAB Strong Challenge for August!

Wellness Webinars

Don't forget this easy way to earn HRA or HSA points! This month we learn about managing social anxiety, the role of antioxidants, and building good habits.

Wellness Corner

An easy, nutrient dense Salmon Avocado Salad.

The latest health and wellness news, tips, and updates from the Lay Benefits Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston.

Vitamin D is a unique vitamin, essential for good health. Yet, it's estimated that more than 40% of American adults have a [vitamin D deficiency](#). Studies have also found that the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency was [35% higher](#) in those with obesity. Other health conditions such as Cystic fibrosis, Crohn's disease, Celiac disease, and a history of bariatric surgery make it difficult to absorb vitamin D.

Fortunately, the summer months—when daylight hours are longer—provide an opportunity to boost vitamin D levels. Did you know that sunlight exposure is the best way to increase vitamin D levels? For this reason, vitamin D is often referred to as the “sunshine vitamin”. When your skin is exposed to sunlight, the sun's ultraviolet rays target cholesterol in the skin cells, providing the energy for vitamin D production to occur. Vitamin D has many roles in the body and is [essential](#) for optimal health. For example, it instructs the cells in your intestines to absorb calcium and phosphorus — two minerals that are necessary for maintaining strong and healthy bones. It should be noted that [some populations](#) – such as people with disabilities, infants, the elderly, people with darker skin pigment, and those who live in the northeast during the winter – have a higher risk of having low vitamin D. Low vitamin D levels are linked to serious health conditions including osteoporosis, depression, low immune function, muscle weakness, Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease, dementia, and cancer.

So how can you improve your vitamin D levels this summer? While spending time outdoors is great for improving vitamin D levels, too much sun exposure can be harmful. Be mindful to protect yourself as you enjoy the warm summer sun.

1. Get at least 10-20 minutes of midday sun exposure during summer. Midday sun is the best time to get sunlight to boost vitamin D levels.
2. Generously apply a broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 to all exposed skin. Be sure to check the expiration date!
3. To reduce the risk of overexposure to UV rays, wear a hat, sunglasses, and when possible, clothes made from tightly woven fabric.
4. Can't get outside most days? Get vitamin D through a healthy diet and consider use of a high-quality vitamin supplement. Before taking any supplements, get your vitamin D levels checked with your primary care provider, and if deficient, use appropriate supplementation in addition to safe sun exposure.



A new **AHEALTHYME**® platform is now available!

The new Blue Cross Blue Shield **AHEALTHYME** platform offers an extensive resource library, a more modernized digital platform, and new ways to earn incentive points. As you know, in order to earn incentive points for participating in the RCAB Health Benefit Trust Wellness Program, you must be registered in **AHEALTHYME**. **Even if you were previously registered in *ahealthyme*, you must register after 7/1 in the new **AHEALTHYME** platform, or you won't be able to earn points. Employees/spouses who register by 9/1 will earn \$25 into their HealthEquity HRA or HSA!** Below are a few updates to the Wellness Program.

- One point equals 10 HRA/HSA dollars.
- Instead of earning points for one annual well visit per Plan Year, you can earn points for attending an annual well visit, a dental visit, **and** a cancer screening.
- If you complete a health assessment, you can earn 200 HRA/HSA dollars (major increase from \$50). You can access **AHEALTHYME** through your MyBlue account, the [AHEALTHYME website](#) or through a mobile app called Alaveda. Enter the code "Wellness".

Earn Cash Rewards with **SmartShopper**

SmartShopper is a voluntary financial incentive program offered through Blue Cross Blue Shield that rewards employees and dependents enrolled in the RCAB Health Plan for comparison "shopping" for in-network medical care at high quality, lower-cost providers. If a SmartShopper provider is selected, the RCAB Health Plans then pass along some of the savings in the form of cash rewards! **Cash rewards range from \$50 to \$250.**

Visit the [Benefits website](#) and learn more!

Register and shop with SmartShopper between September 1 and September 30 and the Benefits Department will enter your name in a raffle to win one of three \$25 gift cards!

MoveSpring Challenge Platform is now live!

Join us for the August Challenge: RCAB Strong

Deadline to Join: August 7

Complete 30 reps of one strength exercise for at least 28 days this month. Pick an exercise that is challenging for you (ex. push-ups, squats, lunges, planks). In the MoveSpring app, swipe to complete in order to log your exercise. With each rep, you will grow stronger every day! Not only does strength training protect your joints from injury, but when you build muscle, you reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

Register to participate and you can earn 50 HRA/HSA dollars for the completion of this Challenge (subject to HRA/HSA maximums). Remember that in order to be eligible to earn HRA or HSA dollars, you and your spouse must be registered in the new *ahealthyme* platform.

Who is eligible to participate?

Employees and spouses enrolled in one of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Health Plans are eligible to participate.

How do I sign up?

The Benefits Department sent eligible employees a registration link and code via their work email address on July 18th. Employees should share this link and code with their spouses if they are eligible and interested in participating. Can't find the email? Click [here](#) to join!

Wellness Webinars

Employees and spouses enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans and registered in the Blue Cross *AHEALTHYME* program can earn a total of \$50 into their HealthEquity HRA or HSA if they attend three wellness webinars per Plan Year. For Learn to Live webinars, please self-report your viewing to benefits@rcab.org.

Why Do I Care So Much What They Think?

Learn to Live

Wednesday, August 9th: 11-11:30 am

[Click Here to Register](#)

Use access code **RCAB** to view the webinar.

Increased heart rate, sweaty palms, self-conscious thoughts, feeling isolated and lonely? Do you worry about other's judgement of you too much? You aren't alone. Break through your social anxiety and fear of other's judgment by learning evidence-based strategies to help you live more fully!

All About Antioxidants & Cancer Prevention

Wednesday, August 16th at 12 pm

[Click Here to Register](#)

Participants learn about the important role of antioxidants found in both food and supplements. The program includes information on the best sources of antioxidants, the nutritional benefits of consuming local and seasonal fruits and vegetables, facts about organic foods, and tips to overall wellness.

Habits: Building the Good, Breaking the Bad

Learn to Live

Tuesday, August 22nd: 3-3:30 pm

[Click Here to Register](#)

Use access code **RCAB** to view the webinar.

Want to build a new, healthy habit? Ready to break an old one? We'll explore how to take the next big step toward a better life, whether that's creating new habits or working on eliminating an unhealthy habit.

In Case You Missed It...



You can still view the recorded webinars from last month below. After viewing these webinars, please self-report your viewing to benefits@rcab.org. You can access webinars for 60 days following their live recording date.

Too Many Sheep to Sleep

[Click Here to Access Recording](#)

Don't Let ANTS Ruin Your Lunch

[Click Here to Access Recording](#)

Cholesterol Counts: Reducing Cholesterol through Good Nutrition

[Click Here to Access Recording](#)



For all questions related to the RCAB Health Benefit Trust Wellness Program, please email Lisha Bethel, Wellness Program Manager, at LBethel@rcab.org.



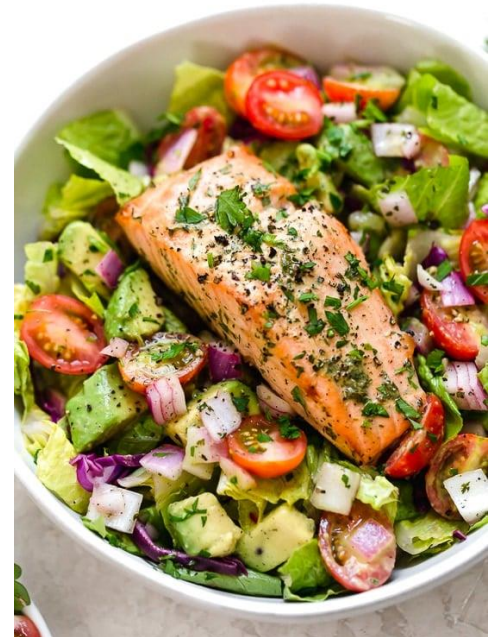
Salmon Avocado Salad

Recipe from [Skinnytaste](#)



Ingredients:

- 4 wild salmon fillets, 4 oz each
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, divided
- 3/4 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- fresh black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion
- 4 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar, recommend: Bragg's
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 8 ounces avocado, diced (from 2 small)
- 4 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 1/2 cups red cabbage, shredded



Instructions:

1. Season salmon with 2 teaspoons of the Dijon, 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley, 1/4 teaspoon salt and black pepper.
2. Adjust the oven on the second rack. Broil salmon for 6 to 7 minutes, until cooked through.
3. In a large bowl, combine the red onion with olive oil, 1 1/2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar, 1 teaspoon remaining Dijon, garlic powder, 1/4 teaspoon parsley, 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste; let it sit about 5 minutes, so the flavor of the onion mellows.
4. Add the tomatoes, avocado and toss. When ready to serve, toss in chopped lettuce and cabbage, finish with the remaining 1/2 tablespoon of vinegar, taste for salt and pepper, and adjust as needed.
5. Divide the salad in 4 bowls and top each with salmon. Enjoy!

In good health,

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Benefits Department



AHEALTHYME®