



# May is Allergy & Asthma Awareness Month

## LOOKING AHEAD...

### Lung Health

Whether or not you suffer from asthma or allergies, lung health is important for everyone!

### Open Enrollment is Here!

Open Enrollment for the RCAB Health and Dental Plans begins on Monday, May 16. Join us for a webinar to find out more about benefits offered in the new Plan Year starting on July 1.

### Eat Plants

Calling all foodies! You're being challenged to log three servings of fruits or vegetables and limit yourself to one serving of meat per day.

### Wellness Webinars

This month we focus on preventing back pain, trying new superfoods, learning effective ways to manage weight, and preparing healthier comfort foods!

### Mental Health Benefits

#### Mental Health IS Health.

What benefits are available to you under the RCAB Health Plans?

### The Wellness Corner

An Italian-style Farmer's Frittata, anyone?

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



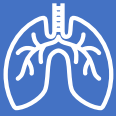
## Seasonal Allergies Have Arrived! What Can You Do?

May is [Allergy and Asthma Awareness Month](#)! With the spring season in full swing, air pollutants and allergens, like pollen, can have us running for our tissue boxes and avoiding the outdoors. Did you know that allergens can actually trigger asthma?

Almost [25 million Americans](#) have asthma, but what is it exactly? Asthma is a disease that causes swelling in a person's airway that may result in wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, and difficulty breathing. Asthma is more common in women than in men, and adults are five times more likely to die from asthma than children. According to the CDC, asthma accounts for [about 1.6 million visits](#) to the emergency department and nearly 200,000 hospitalizations a year. There is no cure for the disease, but it can be treated with medications and by managing triggers to prevent asthma attacks. Following your action plan, taking medications as prescribed, getting the flu vaccine, and avoiding asthma triggers like pollen, cold air, and outdoor irritants can all help prevent asthma attacks.

More than [50 million people](#) in the U.S. experience or suffer from allergies each year. Allergies are the [sixth leading cause](#) of chronic illness in America. An [allergy](#) is when "your immune system reacts to a foreign substance," like a type of food (peanut butter, soy, eggs), medicine, or something you touch or breath in (pollen, chemicals, latex). Oftentimes, allergies cause seemingly mild symptoms like coughing, sneezing, hives, rashes, itchy eyes, and runny noses, but severe allergic reactions can lower blood pressure, restrict breathing, trigger asthma attacks, or even worse, result in death (anaphylaxis). For airborne allergies like pollen, you can [prevent or relieve allergy symptoms](#) by removing or avoiding the source of the allergen, washing out your nose daily, or taking prescription or over-the-counter medicines.

If you believe you may have asthma or an allergy, please contact a doctor to discuss your specific concerns. Employees and spouses enrolled in the RCAB Health Plans can find an in-network provider by visiting <https://www.bluecrossma.org/>.



# Lung Health



How can we prevent lung disease and keep our lungs healthy for years to come? The [American Lung Association](#) offers the following recommendations!

- **Never smoke or stop smoking.** Cigarettes are a leading cause of lung cancer, as well as COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). The smoke from cigarettes can narrow your airways, making normal breathing more difficult.
- **Vaping also comes with risks,** according to [Johns Hopkins Medicine](#). Vaping can lead to Popcorn Lung (permanent scarring in small airway branches), Lipoid Pneumonia (fatty acids entering the lungs, causing an inflammatory response of the lung tissue), and Spontaneous Pneumothorax (collapsed lung).
- **Avoid Indoor Pollutants.** Inhaling secondhand smoke, chemicals, and radon can all cause lung disease, as well as worsen current symptoms. Talk to your doctor if you're worried about your contact with an air pollutant that has been making you sick or affected your breathing.
- **Minimize Inhaling Outdoor Pollutants.** Avoid exercising outside on "Bad Air Days". Many weather apps or websites can tell you what the air quality is outside!
- **Prevent Infections.** Many types of germs can affect the lungs, so make sure to wash your hands often with soap and water, avoid crowds (especially during cold and flu season), brush your teeth twice a day, and get the flu vaccine every year.
- **Exercise.** Being physically active can exercise your lungs, keeping them strong and healthy! If you currently have lung disease, talk with your doctor to find the best type of exercise plan for you.

## OPEN ENROLLMENT BEGINS MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>!

The 2022 Open Enrollment period for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Health and Dental Plans is **Monday, May 16 to Monday, June 13, 2022**. During this period, you may review your Health and Dental Plan options and make changes to your elections based on your family's needs without a qualifying life event or the need to submit supporting documentation. During Open Enrollment, examples of election changes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ✓ Enrolling or terminating enrollment in the Health and/or Dental Plans
- ✓ Switching to or from the Blue Cross Basic, Enhanced, or High Deductible Health Plan
- ✓ Changing between Individual, Family, and Individual +1 coverage
- ✓ Adding or removing a dependent

If you would like to keep your current elections, no action is required. If you want to make changes to your Health and/or Dental Plan elections, you must make them **by 5:00 p.m., Monday, June 13** through the MyEnroll system, which can be accessed at [myenroll.com](http://myenroll.com).

Do you have questions about Open Enrollment? Check with your location's business manager if the Benefits Office is scheduled to deliver an in-person presentation at your location. You may also attend an Open Enrollment webinar by registering [here](#).

*Don't forget! If enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans, you can purchase allergy medicine, antihistamines, nasal sinus sprays, and eye drops with HRA or HSA dollars. For a complete list of IRS qualified expenses, please visit [http://catholicbenefits.org/PDF/2021/health/irs\\_qual\\_exp.pdf](http://catholicbenefits.org/PDF/2021/health/irs_qual_exp.pdf). Remember to save your receipts because you may need to submit them to HealthEquity!*



## EAT PLANTS

This month you are challenged to limit yourself to one serving of meat each day of the month and log three servings of fruits and vegetables per day, or an average of 20 servings of fruits and vegetables each week. Log your fruits and vegetables servings and see how your diet improves. People who eat mostly plant-based foods and occasionally eat meat face a lower risk of heart disease and other chronic diseases. Access your WellRight Account at [catholicbenefits.wellright.com](http://catholicbenefits.wellright.com) to get started!

## Wellness Webinars

Employees and spouses enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans and registered in the Blue Cross *ahealthyme* program can earn \$20 into their HealthEquity HRA or HSA accounts for attending a wellness webinar. Points are awarded for a maximum of five wellness webinars/family activities per Plan Year.

### Preventing Back Pain with Kara Lavertu, Wellness & Wellbeing Manager

**Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> @ 4pm**

Participants will learn about spinal anatomy, common back issues as we age or that may occur through everyday activities and preventing back pain to improve our daily lives!

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

### Go Global: Superfoods from Around the World

**Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm**

Learn how to incorporate into your diet healthy superfoods from a variety of countries around the world! The webinar will feature traditional cultural food and their health benefits, as well as offer recipes and shopping lists to turn your kitchens into a global destination!

[Click Here to Register](#)

### Seven Habits for Truly Effective Weight Management

**Wednesday May 18<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30pm**

This webinar will review seven fundamental behaviors that correlate with long-term weight management. Regardless of whether you are challenged with losing or maintaining weight, this webinar isn't about promoting a magic bullet or achieving immediate results. Instead, you will learn about the real work needed to lose weight in a healthy way.

[Click Here to Register](#)

### Online Cooking Class! Comfort Foods Made Healthy

**Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm**

"Comfort foods" can sometimes be loaded with butter, heavy creams, thick sauces, and processed ingredients. This online cooking class aims to redefine 'comfort foods' and introduces a new and healthier way of preparing mealtime favorites to be more nutrient-rich and beneficial to your health, without compromising on flavor!

[Click Here to Register](#)



## 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 Amanda Gately, Benefits Associate, at [agately@rcab.org](mailto:agately@rcab.org)** and you can earn 20 HRA/HSA dollars. Points are awarded for a maximum of five wellness webinars/family activities per Plan Year. **You can access webinars for 60 days following their live recording date.**

### NFP Webinar: All Things NFP Q&A

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

### Women's Health: From Life Balance to Hormone Balance

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

### James Parker-Ashley Fitness Class

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

### The Power of the Plant-Based Diet

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)



Let us know what you want to see!  
Please email Kara Lavertu at [klavertu@rcab.org](mailto:klavertu@rcab.org) with your webinar topic ideas or requests.



# MENTAL HEALTH IS HEALTH

[Mental health](#) is multifaceted, focusing on our psychological, emotional, and even social wellbeing. It helps us make decisions, control and understand our feelings, and influences how we relate to others. Sometimes our mental health seems impenetrable, but there may be times where we start to notice a change over a time, a “slow burn” in our mental health that affects our mood, thoughts, and behaviors. This change may be due to external factors, such as social media, work, or life experiences like trauma. The change could also be based on biological factors. Oftentimes mental health can take a toll on our physical health as well. Some signs include irritability, exhaustion, feelings of hopelessness, self-imposed isolation, and excessive sleeping.

Everyone’s mental health journey is different. Some may be ready to start therapy or try a medication, and others may not be ready to make a change in their lives or acknowledge their mental health is suffering. Wherever you are on your journey, the RCAB Health Plans have resources for you.

## Available Resources

Log into your [MyBlue account](#) to find in-network providers who can help you on your mental health journey. After logging in, go to the My Care tab, select “Find A Doctor & Estimate Costs” and search “Licensed Mental Health Counselor” to find an in-person counselor near you.

Prefer a telehealth visit? No problem! BCBS offers telehealth therapy and psychiatry services through **Well Connection**. You can choose what day, time, and provider you’d like to see without leaving home or having to wait weeks for an available appointment. To sign up and schedule your first appointment, please log in to your MyBlue account at <https://www.bluecrossma.org/>, select “My Care”, and click on “Well Connection Video Visits”.

The RCAB Employee Assistance Program offers additional health and wellness resources and support! Please visit our [website](#) to find out how to access the resources online through your personal portal. Some of the wellness resources available to all RCAB employees through EAPEssentials address emotional well-being, grief and loss, personal growth, stress, and anger management.

### ***Coming Soon in July: Learn to Live!***

Starting in July, the RCAB Health Plans will offer self-directed online mental health programs through **Learn to Live**. The program helps to address mild to moderate mental health conditions and issues like anxiety, depression, insomnia, and substance abuse. The Learn to Live program is based on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques. More information will be available soon!



This Memorial Day (May 30), please express your heartfelt gratitude to the men and women who have fought for and dedicated their lives to this country.

To those who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, we remember your sacrifices today and every day.

Thank you for your service!

THE  
WELLNESS  
CORNER

New health and wellness topics covering exercise routines, recipes, tips, and tricks to spark motivation in your life every month!



# THE FARMER'S FRITTATA

*Serves 6*

## INGREDIENTS

- 2½ cups cubed zucchini
- 2½ cups cubed yellow summer squash
- 8 large eggs
- 2 TBS of sliced green onions
- ½ cup of diced red onion
- 1 cup of diced sweet peppers
- 2 ounces of sharp Cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 slice thick-cut bacon, cut crosswise into ¼-inch strips
- 2 TBS of kosher salt
- 2 TBS of olive oil, divided
- ¼ tsp of kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper (to taste)
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper
- 4 ounces goat cheese, crumbled (optional)

## DIRECTIONS

1. Combine the zucchini and summer squash in a bowl and sprinkle 2 TBP of kosher salt on top. Toss zucchini and squash until coated and let sit for 15 minutes with occasional tossing.
2. Rinse squash with cold water to remove the salt and transfer to a colander to drain for 15 minutes.
3. Set an oven rack approx. 6 inches from the oven's heat source and preheat the oven's broiler.
4. Using an over-proof skillet, heat 1 TBP of olive oil in the pan over medium heat. Add bacon strips and cook until almost crisp and look brown, which should take about 5 minutes.
5. While bacon is cooking in the pan, mix together the eggs, black pepper, cayenne pepper, ¼ tsp of kosher salt, and green onions in a bowl.
6. Raise the heat on the bacon to medium-high heat, then toss in the red onion and peppers with a pinch of salt. Stir and cook until the peppers start to soften and the onions turn translucent. Add drained squash, stir, and cook until squash is barely tender (approx. 5 minutes).
7. Add cheddar cheese into the skillet and pour egg mixture over the top. Stir until mixture starts to thicken, approx. 30-45 seconds. Shake the pan to settle the mixture and turn off the heat. Push the edges of the skillet down with the spatula. Sprinkle goat cheese over the top if desired.
8. Place under the broiler until the surface is lightly browns and firm to touch (approx. 2-3 minutes).
9. Remove skillet from broiler and sprinkle with green onions.
10. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

Recipe by AllRecipes:  
<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/285263/the-farmers-frittata-italian-style-omelet/>

Enjoy!

In good health,  
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Benefits

Do you have a favorite healthy recipe? Share it with us! Email Kara Lavertu at [klavertu@rcab.org](mailto:klavertu@rcab.org) and it could be included in one of our future newsletters.