CHRONICLES
The story of your good health throughout the year

COVID-19 UPDATE
What you need to know about Omicron

As the nation continues to battle the Delta variant of COVID-19, a new variant called Omicron has emerged. First detected in the United States in late November, Omicron is already the dominant strain, causing a surge in infections throughout the world. It is projected that in the next few weeks, the United States will shatter previous records and could reach more than 1 million COVID-19 infections per day.

The single most important thing that you can do to protect your health and that of your loved ones from the threat of Omicron is to get your booster dose as soon as possible. In addition to getting vaccinated, practicing good hand hygiene and wearing a surgical mask that covers your nose and mouth in public indoor spaces can also help protect yourself and others.

Get Boosted!
Omicron is far more infectious than previous variants and neutralizes much of the immunity provided by initial vaccines or prior COVID-19 infection. Fortunately, booster doses of mRNA vaccines have shown to provide strong protection against severe disease, hospitalization and death due to Omicron. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommends that all adults over age 17 receive a booster shot, even those who have been infected with COVID-19. Vaccinated individuals are eligible to receive a booster shot six months after completing a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine series or two months after receiving a Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Because COVID-19 continues to spread and flu season typically peaks in February, CareMore also recommends that you receive a flu shot to stay healthy this year. To schedule a flu shot, COVID-19 vaccine or booster, contact your doctor, in-network pharmacy or local CareMore Care Center, or visit info.caremore.com/vaccine.

The information in this article is current as of the date of publication. Because CDC guidelines are frequently updated, visit cdc.gov for up-to-the-minute news or talk with your provider.
The start of a new year is the perfect time to focus on creating new, healthy habits. Here are some tips to start 2022 on the right foot.

1. **Exercise daily, even if it's just for 10 minutes.** Walking, jogging, cycling, swimming or yoga are all great options to incorporate into your daily routine that will improve your health.

2. **Stimulate your mind with a new hobby.** Read more books, do crosswords or Sudoku puzzles, or join a book or card club.

3. **Quit smoking.** No matter your age or how long you've been smoking, by quitting, you'll likely add years to your life. Not to mention, you'll feel better, breathe more easily, and have more energy.

4. **Eat better.** Try to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Choose lean protein like chicken, fish, eggs and beans. Replace refined grains with whole grains like brown rice, quinoa and whole-grain bread.

5. **Stay on top of your routine screenings.** Call 888-291-1387 to schedule a Healthy Start™ or Healthy Journey exam with your Care Team. You can also complete a free virtual medication review with one of CareMore’s pharmacists. Call the Member Services number on the back of your ID card to schedule your review.

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**SLEEP BETTER IN THE NEW YEAR**

When life gets busy or stressful, sleep is usually one of the first things to be affected. Getting enough sleep is vital to staying healthy, alert and mentally fit. You should aim to get seven to nine hours of sleep every night. As you start the new year, here are some tips to improve your sleep, which will better your overall health.

1. **Keep a regular sleep schedule by going to bed and waking around the same time every day.**

2. **Avoid drinking too much caffeine and alcohol.**

3. **Before bed, limit your use of the television, phone or computer.** The blue light from the screens can send signals to your brain to stay awake.

4. **Use a white noise machine or fan to drown out distracting noises.**

5. **Contact your CareMore Team to talk about what's keeping you up at night.**
Winter can be a challenging mobility season. Icy sidewalks and bulky boots can lead to a risk for falling. According to the CDC, one in four American adults aged 65 and older fall each year, some resulting in serious injury, like broken bones and head trauma. As you get older, things like medications, physical changes and chronic conditions can make falling more likely. There are steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling.

- **Make your home safer.** Install railings on both sides of stairs, add grab bars to the bathroom, install extra lighting around the house and remove any tripping hazards like throw rugs. Also, keep items you use most often in cabinets or areas that are easy to reach.

- **Stand up slowly** and be careful when walking on wet or slippery surfaces.

- **Wear comfortable shoes** that fit and have nonskid soles.

- **Make an appointment with your doctor.** Be prepared to talk about any side effects from your medications, like dizziness and drowsiness. Ask your doctor if your health conditions increase your risk for falling.

- **Have your eyes checked at least once a year.** If you wear glasses, keep your prescription up to date and wear your glasses regularly.

- **Do exercises that help improve your strength and balance.** If you have stability concerns during physical activity, consider a monitored exercise program. Check out the **Nifty after Fifty®** program, which offers supervised fitness classes. Visit [niftyafterfifty.com](http://niftyafterfifty.com) for more information.