



# BECOME YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF

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**M**ake better health your resolution all year round. You can learn simple ways to prevent disease and improve your relationships, emotional well-being, physical health, and surroundings. The National Institutes of Health offers “Your Healthiest Self: Wellness Toolkits” for science-based health tips in five different areas. Each area has checklists of tips you can print for yourself or share with others. The wellness toolkits also link to dozens of NIH resources, fact sheets, and articles for more information.

For example, find out how to limit your exposure to harmful substances in your home. Get advice for managing stress and adapting to change. Or learn how friends and family can help you gain better health habits. Good health means more than preventing and treating disease. It also means striving for well-being in all areas of your life. Small changes can add up fast. Find ways to start becoming your healthiest self.

## PHYSICAL WELLNESS

### GET ACTIVE

Sedentary behavior has been linked to many medical problems. Moving more



and sitting less can have major health benefits. Experts recommend adults get at least 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate physical activity a week. You can benefit from even a little activity at a time. Every minute counts when it comes to movement.

### MAINTAIN YOUR MUSCLE

Building muscle helps you keep up the activities you enjoy. Some types of strength training keep your bones healthy, too. Experts recommend doing strength training for all the major muscle groups two or more days a week for adults and three for kids and teens.

### EAT A HEALTHY DIET

We make dozens of decisions every day. When it comes to deciding what to eat and feed our families, it can be a lot easier than you might think to make smart choices. A healthy eating plan not only limits unhealthy foods, but also includes a variety of healthy foods. Find out which foods to add to your diet and which to avoid.

### BUILD HEALTHY HABITS

We know that making healthy choices can help us feel better and live longer. Maybe you’ve already tried to eat better, get more exercise or sleep, quit smoking, or reduce stress. It’s not easy. But research shows how you can boost your ability to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

### FIND A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Keeping your body at a healthy weight may help you lower your risk of heart

disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer that can result from carrying excess weight or obesity. Take charge of your weight and your health.

## EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

### BUILD RESILIENCE

People who are emotionally well, experts say, have fewer negative emotions and are able to bounce back from difficulties faster. This quality is called resilience. Learning healthy ways to cope and how to draw from resources in your community can help you build resilience.

### REDUCE STRESS

Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Stress can give you a rush of energy when it’s needed most. But if stress lasts a long time—a condition known as chronic stress—those “high alert” changes become harmful rather than helpful. Learning healthy ways to cope with stress can also boost your resilience.

### GET QUALITY SLEEP

To fit in everything we want to do in our day, we often sacrifice sleep. But sleep affects both mental and physical health. It’s vital to your well-being. When you’re tired, you can’t function at your best. Sleep helps you think more clearly, have quicker reflexes and focus better. Take steps to make sure you regularly get a good night’s sleep.

### STRENGTHEN SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Social connections might help protect health and lengthen life. Scientists are finding that our links to others can have

powerful effects on our health—both emotionally and physically. Whether with romantic partners, family, friends, neighbors, or others, social connections can influence our biology and well-being.

## **DISEASE PREVENTION**

### **GET SCREENED FOR DISEASES**

Some screenings can reduce your risk of dying from a disease. But sometimes, experts say, a test may cause more harm than good. Before you get a test, talk with your doctor about the possible benefits and harms to help you decide what's best for your health.

### **GUARD AGAINST GERMS**

For nearly a century, bacteria-fighting drugs known as antibiotics have helped to control and destroy many of the harmful bacteria that can make us sick. But these drugs don't work at all against viruses, such as those that cause colds or flu.

### **PROTECT YOUR BODY'S BACTERIA**

Microscopic creatures—including bacteria, fungi, and viruses—can make you ill. But what you may not realize is that trillions of microbes are living in and on your body right now. Most don't harm you at all. We tend to focus on destroying bad microbes. But taking care of good ones may be even more important.

### **PROTECT YOURSELF AND EVERYONE ELSE FROM DISEASE**

We share more than food and culture within our homes and communities. We can also spread disease. Luckily, we live in a time when vaccines can protect us from many of the most serious illnesses. Staying current on your shots helps you—and your neighbors—avoid getting and spreading disease.

## **ADDITIONAL MHBP RESOURCES TO ASSIST YOU**

MHBP has extensive resources to assist you and your family to support your optimal health!

If you have a health concern or need advice on what to do and where to go, MHBP offers a 24/7 Nurse Line, call 800-556-1555. If you have any questions or would like more information, please call MHBP at 800-410-7778.

## **UPDATE ON POSTAL SERVICE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM (PSHBP)**

Beginning January 1, 2025, Postal Service Active Employees and Annuitants will receive their medical health benefits through the Postal Service Health Benefits Program (PSHBP), which is a separate subset of the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHB), although it will still be administered through Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

### **HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PSHBP?**

MHBP's website contains up to date information from the Postal Service on educational materials and resources for the program at [www.mhbp.com/postal-service-health-benefits-program](http://www.mhbp.com/postal-service-health-benefits-program)

USPS and OPM, in consultation with the four Postal Unions, have developed Fact Sheets to provide basic information regarding the PSHBP. There are two Fact Sheets, one for USPS Active Employees and one for USPS Annuitants. These Fact Sheets are available on, LiteBlue, [usps.gov](http://usps.gov) and [KeepingPosted.org](http://KeepingPosted.org). The Fact Sheets are an introduction to further education programs from USPS.

The USPS has developed a five-part educational video series about PSHBP and Medicare. You can access it through [www.keepingposted.org/pshb-videos.htm](http://www.keepingposted.org/pshb-videos.htm) In addition, the Postal Service Benefits and Wellness Team hosts lunch and learn seminars via zoom every other Thursday with 2 sessions, held from noon to 1pm and 4 until 5pm eastern through December. The schedule is available on [www.keepingposted.org/pshb-lunch-learn-seminars.htm](http://www.keepingposted.org/pshb-lunch-learn-seminars.htm) Finally, to ask questions by phone, the

Postal Service has a PSHBP Navigator Line 833-712-PSHB (7742).

## **WHEN DO I NEED TO SOMETHING?**

The Special Enrollment Period is April 1 to October 30, 2024 for retirees who want to late enroll in Medicare Part B, without late penalty. Eligibility for the Special Enrollment period has been mailed to annuitants. If you have misplaced the notification letter or believe that you are eligible to participate in the Special Enrollment Period and did not receive notification letter, contact the PSHB Navigator Help Line's toll-free number at 833-712-PSHB (7742), or email [retirementbenefits@usps.gov](mailto:retirementbenefits@usps.gov).

Open Season 2024 occurs November 11, 2024 – December 9, 2024, when all Postal Service Active Employees and Annuitants can select a medical insurance plan in PSHBP.

In the meantime, please make sure the USPS and OPM have your current address, and, if you are an active employee, make sure you are able to access LiteBlue.

## **WILL MHBP BE A HEALTH PLAN IN PSHBP?**

MHBP has applied to be part of the Postal Service Health Benefits Program. OPM has indicated that it will not release information about which insurers are in the PSHBP until Summer/Fall 2024, but MHBP is a plan designed by NPMHU for Mail Handlers and other postal employees and retirees, and we plan to be in the program! We intend to offer the same three Plan Options in the Postal Service Health Benefits Program that we have now: Standard Option, Value Plan and Consumer Option. MHBP is your Union-sponsored health plan and Mail Handlers can count on MHBP to support their health!

### **SOURCES:**

- [National Institutes of Health: <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/>](https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/national-institutes-of-health)
- [MHBP.com](http://MHBP.com)