



South Carolina

Medicare Advantage

THE PULSE

Medicare Advantage Member Newsletter

Summer 2022 / Issue 8

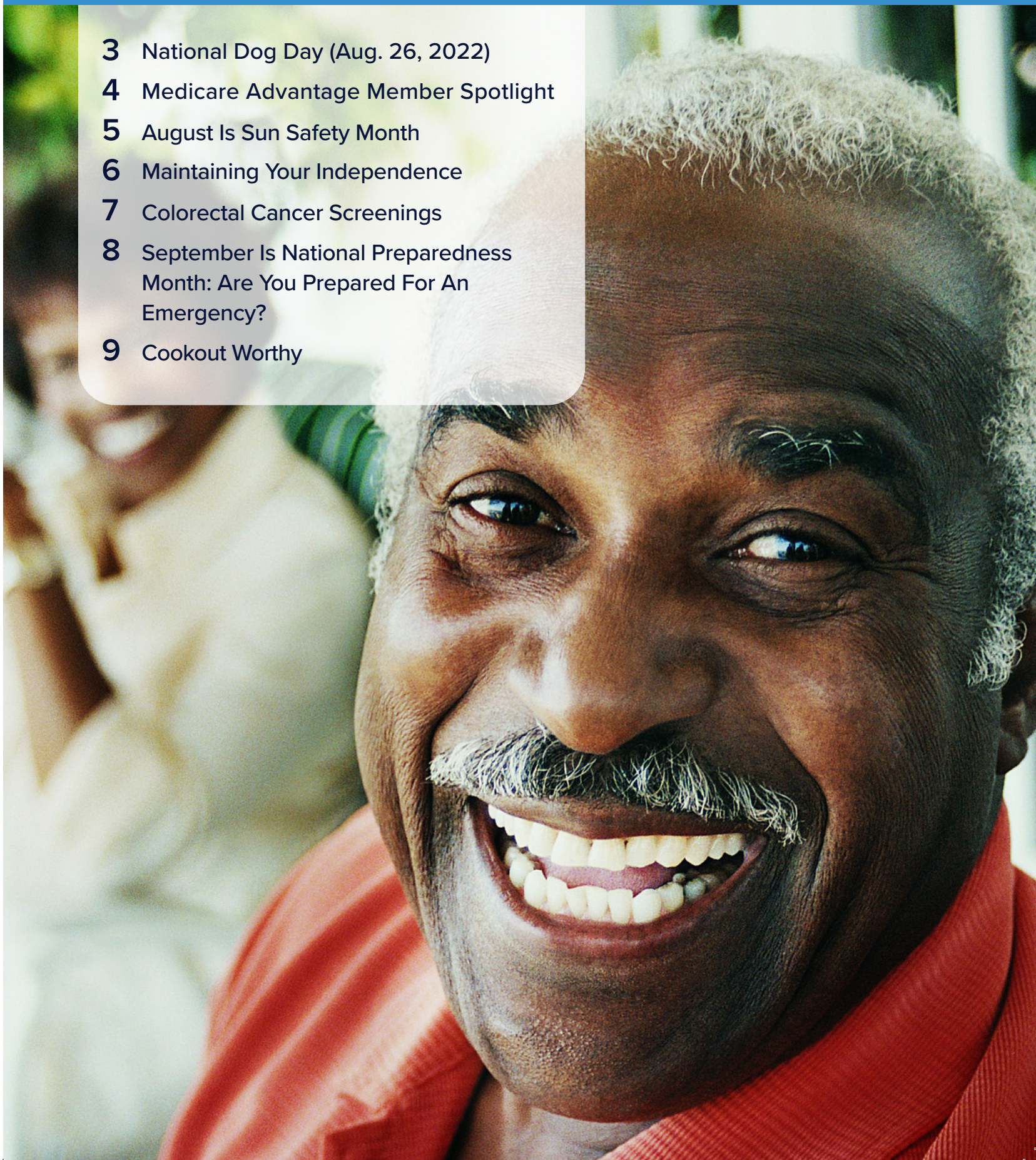


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NATIONAL DOG DAY (AUG. 26, 2022)

Did you know your mental health can benefit from pet ownership and animal companionship?

Studies have shown pet ownership is associated with positive mental health outcomes that contribute to healthy aging.

Having an animal friend can benefit your mental wellness in many ways:

- ◆ The responsibility to care for your pet instills a sense of purpose.
- ◆ Spending time with animals eases feelings of anxiety and sadness.
- ◆ Pets offer social support, which helps to decrease your risk of loneliness.
- ◆ Pet care creates an outlet for physical activity through daily walks.

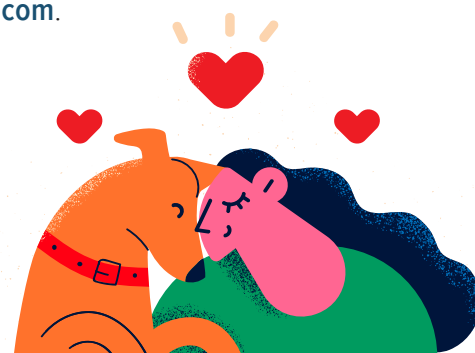
If pet ownership is not right for you, you may consider other activities, such as fostering a pet or volunteering at a local animal shelter.

Your mental wellness is important to us! To support your mental health, we encourage you to talk to your doctor about changes in your mood, participate in activities at local senior centers, or take advantage of services like Papa Pals.

Contact BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Medicare Advantage by calling the number on the back of your ID card to learn more about benefits offered to you.

Take a look at the furry friends of your BlueCross BlueShield Medicare Advantage team.

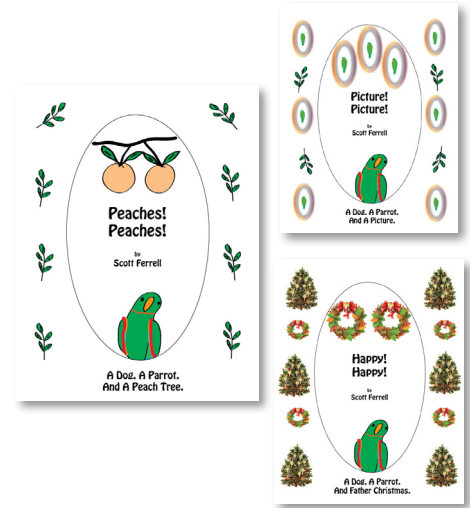
To send us a picture of your loyal companion, email Medicare.Stars@bcbssc.com.



MEDICARE ADVANTAGE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Each day, we are inspired by our members, and today we would like to highlight the experiences of Blacksburg, South Carolina, resident Jackie Ferrell as she shares her answers to the prompts below.

Jackie Ferrell, a lifelong writer, is an independent author who, along with her husband, writes, edits and designs children's books. In their first children's book, "Peaches! Peaches!," Ferrell used her childhood home in France as the setting of the story that went on to earn a Silver Award in the 2012 Readers' Favorite® contest. In her free time, Ferrell enjoys photography, reading and going for walks in local parks.



Tell us about the most memorable concert you have attended (who/what/when).

My most memorable concert was seeing Kenny Rogers in October 1980 at the Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Missouri.

Tell us about an accomplishment you are most proud of achieving.

The accomplishment I am most proud of achieving is becoming an award-winning children's book author. So far, my books have earned 12 awards and a special judge's merit, with our first book receiving a perfect score.

If you made a playlist of 10 songs, what would you include?

"Let It Be", "Here Comes the Sun", and "Hey Jude" by the Beatles, "Imagine" by John Lennon, "To Love Somebody", "Massachusetts", and "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart" by the Bee Gees, "Stand by Me" by Ben E. King, "Both Sides Now" by Joni Mitchell and "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" by Carole King

What advice would you give your younger self?

The advice I would give my younger self would be patience in some things, determination in everything worth fighting for. Never, ever give up. Listen to your feelings and always trust your gut.

Thank you, Jackie Ferrell, for sharing your unique contributions to children's literature and for being a valued Medicare Advantage member.



Want to be featured in a future newsletter?

Send us an email to Medicare.Stars@bcbssc.com with your answer to one (or all!) of the prompts below:

- ◆ Tell us about the most memorable concert you have attended (who/what/when).
- ◆ Tell us about an accomplishment you are most proud of achieving.
- ◆ If you made a playlist of 10 songs, what would you include (any genre, any time period)?
- ◆ If you're a veteran, what branch of the military did you serve in? What was your station/post?
- ◆ What advice would you give your younger self?



AUGUST IS SUN SAFETY MONTH

With summer in full swing, being mindful of sun safety and the amount of ultraviolet (UV) rays we are exposed to while outdoors is essential. In fact, sun protection for older adults often results in healthier and more active lives.

The Five S's of Sun Safety:

As we age, our skin thins, allowing UV rays to reach deeper levels of the skin, which increases the risk of skin cancer. By practicing sun-smart behaviors, we make sure we can enjoy the great outdoors safely.



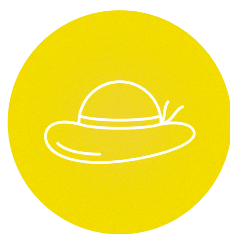
SLIP

on sun-protective clothing, such as a long-sleeved shirt with ultraviolet protection.



SLOP

on a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. Be sure to apply sunscreen to all exposed skin at least 20 minutes before sun exposure and reapply every two hours, especially after swimming or intense sweating.



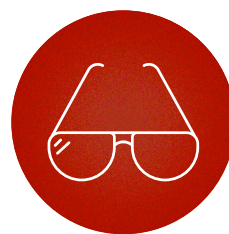
SLAP

on a wide-brim hat to shade your face, head, ears and neck.



SEEK

shade or shelter during times when UV rays are the most intense, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If possible, schedule your time spent outdoors in the morning or early evening.



SLIDE

on sunglasses with UV protection to protect your eyes.

In addition to these tips, remember to avoid dehydration and overheating. Check with your doctor or pharmacist about your medications—some may make your skin more susceptible to UV damage.

Be sun smart! We encourage you to stay safe in the sun and enjoy outdoor activities with family and friends.



MAINTAINING YOUR INDEPENDENCE

As you have gotten older, you may have noticed some changes to your overall health and well-being. You may find it uncomfortable talking to your doctor about what you are experiencing, such as your inability to do daily activities, trouble controlling your bladder, loss of balance or feelings of loneliness.

It's important to be honest and open with your doctor about your experience, even if you feel embarrassed or fearful. Schedule an appointment to talk with your doctor so you can discuss your options and improve your overall well-being.

If you have had concerns about any of the following, remember to write them down and discuss them with your doctor at your next appointment.

1. Are you having a problem with balance or walking?

In the United States, 1 in 4 individuals ages 65 and older will have a fall-related injury. The more risk factors an individual has, the more likely he or she is to fall.

Falls can be a sign of a medical problem, including muscle weakness, balance problems, medication side effects, or a combination of these and other problems. The good news is that falls are preventable. Talk to your doctor about ways to reduce your risk of falling.

2. Do you have a difficulty controlling your urine?

Urinary incontinence, a loss or leaking of urine due to faulty bladder control, is a common problem that affects many older adults. Each day, adults pass about a quart and a half of urine through the bladder and out of the body. It's important to note that urinary incontinence is not a disease; it is a symptom. It may

include leaking a small amount of urine when coughing, sneezing, exercising or laughing. Talk to your doctor about suggested lifestyle changes or medical treatments to improve bladder health, such as bladder training, exercise and medications, to help you regain control and have a healthier bladder.

3. Are you able to lift or carry objects as heavy as 10 pounds?

Physical activity is an important part of healthy aging, and the human body responds to physical movement at any age. A sedentary lifestyle can lead to an increase in injuries, obesity, cardiovascular problems and other chronic diseases. Increasing your physical activity can reduce the risk of dementia, arthritis pain and falls. Speak to your doctor about your recommended activity options.

4. Are you having difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions?

One in 4 older adults will experience mental or emotional health issues. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act as we cope with life. Recognizing your feelings and talking to your doctor can make a big difference in your overall health.



COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENINGS

Colorectal cancer is a disease of the colon or rectum caused by abnormal cells that grow uncontrollably, creating a tumor. Colorectal cancer is the third most common type of non-skin cancer in both men and women, but it is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths, because most cases aren't diagnosed until the person reaches a later stage and is showing severe symptoms.

Colorectal cancer is most prevalent in people ages 65 – 74. It is now recommended that men and women begin preventive screenings starting at age 45 to identify any abnormal cells long before symptoms begin showing.

Because everyone's health is different, there are multiple approved tests that screen for colorectal cancer. All options are covered at no cost to you.

Colonoscopy/ Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

- ◆ Requires preparation to clear the bowels
- ◆ Requires some level of sedation and must be completed under the care of a physician, usually in an office or outpatient setting
- ◆ Doctor uses a small camera inserted in the rectum to view the large intestine
- ◆ Can remove and biopsy any unusual growths
- ◆ Results within 1 – 2 weeks
- ◆ Repeated every 3 – 10 years, depending on the outcome

CT Colonography

- ◆ Must be completed in an imaging center, office or hospital with a CT scan machine
- ◆ Requires preparation to clear the bowels prior to test
- ◆ Air pumped into your intestines through the rectum prior to the CT scan
- ◆ May need a colonoscopy for diagnosis if abnormal growths are seen on the test
- ◆ Results within 1 – 2 weeks
- ◆ Repeated every 3 – 5 years

Stool Tests

- ◆ Noninvasive
- ◆ No preparation required
- ◆ Stool sample (either in a cup or smeared on a card) mailed to a lab
- ◆ Can be done in an office or at home
- ◆ May need a colonoscopy for diagnosis if blood or DNA changes are found
- ◆ Results within 2 – 3 weeks
- ◆ Repeated every 1 – 3 years to be consistent with other choices

We recommend you talk with your doctor to ask which screening test is best for you. One of the no-cost options available to you is the fecal immunochemical test (FIT). This kit is mailed to your home with instructions on how to complete and return the sample. Our lab partner will send results to both you and your doctor so your doctor can review your results and let you know about any additional testing that may be required. If you are interested in learning more about this type of test, please email us at Medicare.Stars@bcbssc.com.



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH: ARE YOU PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY?

Emergency kit checklist

- ☐ Nonperishable food and water
- ☐ Changes of clothing
- ☐ Glasses
- ☐ Dentures
- ☐ Daily needs, including prescriptions and oxygen tank
- ☐ Payment methods, including cash in case of power outages
- ☐ List of medications with dosages
- ☐ Blanket
- ☐ Flashlights and batteries
- ☐ Important documents, including your Medicare Advantage card
- ☐ Contact list of relatives and doctors' offices
- ☐ Can opener
- ☐ Matches
- ☐ Toilet paper
- ☐ Pet food and supplies



COOKOUT WORTHY



Mexican Street Corn Salad

Ingredients

- ◆ 4 cups of corn (fresh, frozen or canned) approximately 5 ears
- ◆ 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ◆ 3 tablespoons reduced fat mayonnaise
- ◆ 3 tablespoons nonfat Greek yogurt
- ◆ juice of 1 limes
- ◆ ½ teaspoon granulated garlic (can use 1 clove fresh minced)
- ◆ ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ◆ ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ◆ ½ cup cotija cheese (can substitute feta)
- ◆ 1 jalapeno, seeded and diced (optional)
- ◆ ¼ cup cilantro, chopped (approximately ½ bunch)
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Heat the oil in a skillet or heavy sauté pan.

If using fresh ears of corn, carefully shave the kernels from the cob. If using frozen corn, thaw and pat dry. If using canned, drain and pat dry.

Add corn to the heated skillet and cook for 3 – 4 minutes or until a light char starts to form.

Mix all remaining ingredients together in a bowl and add the corn.

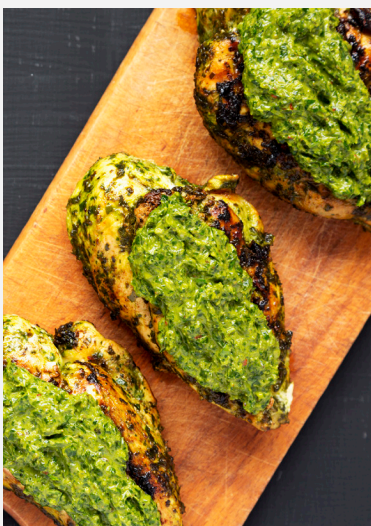
Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary.



Recipe adapted from Southern Food Service



Basil Pesto Roasted Chicken



Recipe adapted from Southern Food Service

Ingredients

- ◆ 1 whole roasting chicken
- ◆ ½ cup basil pesto
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste
- ◆ 1 orange, quartered
- ◆ 1 lime quartered
- ◆ ¼ cup fresh basil

Instructions

Heat oven to 425 degrees.

Using half of the pesto, stuff it into the cavity and under the skin. Rub remaining pesto on the outside of the chicken. Season with salt and pepper.

Stuff the cavity with the quartered orange and lime and the fresh basil leaves.

Roast at 425 degrees for about 15 minutes, and then reduce the heat to 350 degrees and continue cooking for about 20 minutes per pound or until a thermometer inserted into the thigh reads 165 degrees.

Let rest for 10 minutes before slicing and serving.



THANK YOU FOR BEING A VALUED
MEDICARE ADVANTAGE MEMBER.



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