

SPRING/SUMMER 2014

Live Healthy *Alabama*



A wellness publication for our
Blue Advantage (PPO) members

**Container
Gardens**

**Bone Health
Basics**

**High-Risk
Medicines**

**10
EASY
ALABAMA
DAY
TRIPS**

Look for the gold stars in this issue to see  how Blue Advantage is improving for you!



Dear Member,

Summer's just around the corner. It's time to get outdoors and get active in the warmer weather. This season is a great time to enjoy walks in the garden or plant some flowers.

This magazine is packed with helpful tips and information. We included a great list of parks and gardens throughout the state for a nice walk or picnic. Or maybe you prefer to stay at home and enjoy the season. It's a great time to plant that garden you always wanted. Look for some gardening tips and tricks in the next few pages.

We are happy you have chosen Blue Advantage as your Medicare Advantage provider. You deserve the best value and service from us, and we encourage you to take full advantage of your benefits. Get those preventive screenings, use the information in this magazine to help manage your conditions, and talk to your doctor on a regular basis.

As always, you can reach out to us if you have any questions. Blue Advantage is proud to offer Social Workers, Case Managers, Disease Management nurses, as well as a full Customer Service area dedicated to you.

Sincerely,

The Editors

P.S. We appreciate that you chose Blue Advantage, and we continuously seek out ways to better serve you as your Medicare Advantage provider. So tell us how we're doing. We'd love to hear from you! If you have a story idea, a question or any other feedback, please email **LiveHealthyAL@bcbsal.com**.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Blue Advantage (PPO) is a Medicare-approved PPO plan. Enrollment in Blue Advantage (PPO) depends on CMS contract renewal. The benefit information provided is a brief summary, not a complete description of benefits. For more information, contact the plan. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits, formulary, pharmacy network, provider network, premium and/or co-payments/co-insurance may change on January 1 of each year.

This information is provided for general informational purposes. Information contained in this communication is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider regarding your healthcare needs. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking medical advice because of something you have read in this informational piece. Always check your benefits for coverage information and limitations.

Live Healthy *Alabama*



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Medications

Live Healthy Alabama is a publication of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, Birmingham, Alabama.

BY THE NUMBERS

Many Americans suffer chronic dehydration— even though it's easy to prevent. To keep your body in a state of chronic dehydration is the equivalent of running your car without sufficient oil. Over time, it will simply wear out and stop working.



60% OF THE HUMAN BODY is water.

8

AVERAGE NUMBER of 8-ounce glasses of water recommended for healthy hydration.

3 out of 4

AMERICANS don't drink enough water each day.



all of them

HOW MANY of your cells and organs require water to survive.

1/5

AMOUNT OF YOUR DAILY FLUID INTAKE that comes from food. Fruits and vegetables have high water content; just another reason they're good for you!





Grow Your Own Container Garden

- The planting season generally runs from February to April. Bulb plants, such as onions, may be planted as early as January. Corn, cucumbers and peppers can be planted well into May and June.
- Always use containers with drainage holes in the bottom.
- Potting soil from a local garden center is ideal for container gardens, because it is relatively lightweight. Regular soil is too heavy for use in a container.
- It is easy and inexpensive to start plants from seeds. To save time, you can also purchase young plants from a garden store.
- Provide enough space in your planter for developing roots, and leave room around your container for spreading plants.
- Fertilize every other week.
- Containers can dry out very quickly, especially if they are in full sunlight. Smaller pots dry out more quickly than larger ones. Test your soil for dryness daily, and water your plants any time you notice leaves drooping or turning brown.

Sure, fresh fruits
and vegetables
are good for you.
But did you know
you can easily
grow them yourself,
even if you have
limited space?
Patio gardens and
indoor gardening
are easier than
you might think!

► **Bell peppers** are one of the best sources of vitamin C, an antioxidant that **helps protect against and manage arthritis, osteoporosis, cataracts, and macular degeneration.** They also contain vitamin B6, which may reduce the risk of heart disease.





How does your



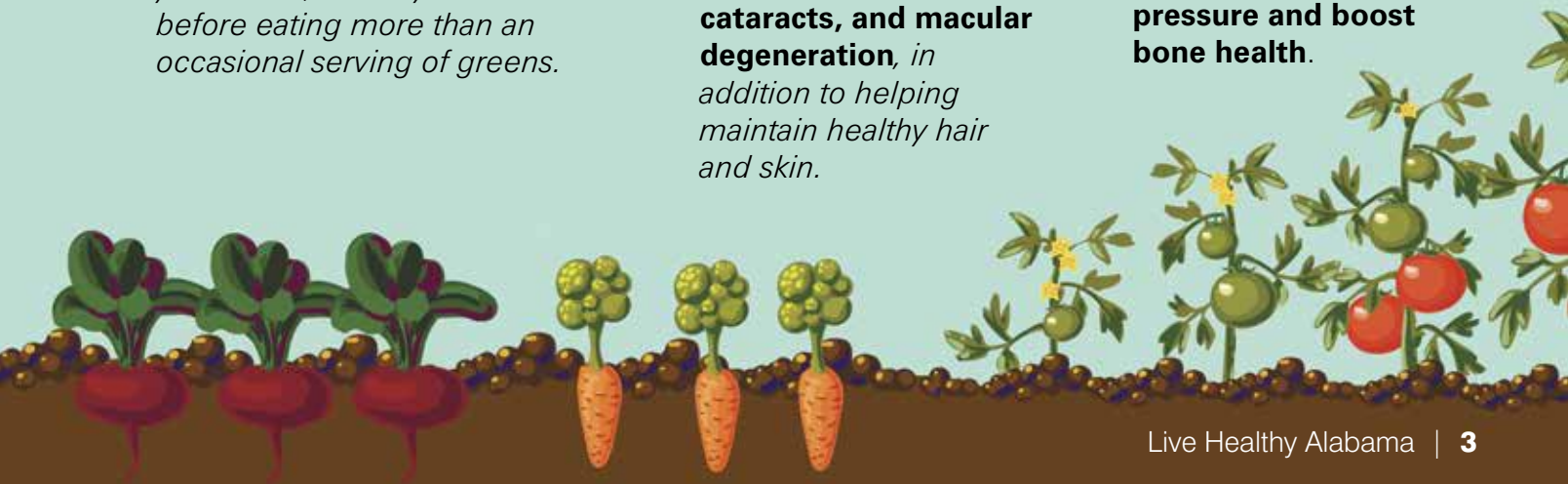
GARDEN GROW

Eating fresh foods from your own garden is a great way to take care of your health.

► **Dark leafy greens** such as kale and spinach are **high in fiber, which supports digestive health. They are also full of magnesium and calcium**, both good for bone health. *If you take medication to regulate the thickness of your blood, talk to your doctor before eating more than an occasional serving of greens.*

► **Carrots** are rich in beta-carotene, an antioxidant that may **help prevent arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration**, in addition to helping maintain healthy hair and skin.

► **Tomatoes** provide potassium, a mineral that **may help lower blood pressure and boost bone health.**





Eat Healthy!

EAT LOCAL

Have you visited your local farmer's market lately? It's a great place to find many healthy, locally-grown foods. Some markets even offer deliveries of fresh produce to your home or a central location nearby.

Here are some fruits and vegetables you'll find available each season in Alabama.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Apples								●	●	●		
Blackberries							●	●				
Blueberries						●	●					
Cantaloupe							●	●				
Figs								●	●			
Muscadines								●	●	●		
Peaches						●	●	●				
Strawberries				●	●	●						
Watermelon						●	●	●				
Beans						●	●	●	●	●		
Beets					●	●						
Cabbage					●	●	●		●	●		
Corn						●	●					
Cucumbers						●			●	●		
Greens		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Lettuce					●	●	●	●	●	●		
Okra							●	●				
Onions					●	●	●	●	●	●		
Peas					●	●						
Peppers						●	●	●	●			
Potatoes						●	●	●				
Spinach				●	●							
Summer Squash						●	●	●	●			
Sweet Potatoes							●	●	●	●	●	
Tomatoes						●	●	●	●	●		
Winter Squash									●	●	●	●

HERBS

Fruits and veggies aren't the only healthy produce – herbs from your garden are packed with benefits!



BASIL

High in fiber, antioxidants and antibacterial properties, vitamin K, vitamin A, manganese, and magnesium. *Use in Italian dishes such as pasta and bruschetta with garden-fresh tomatoes.*



DILL

Full of antioxidants such as beta-carotene. *Tastes great with chicken, on cucumber-dill sandwiches, in dressings, chicken salad or potato salad.*



MINT

A recent study found that essential oils in peppermint have a positive effect on exercise performance, respiratory rate, and blood pressure. *Add to fruit salads, iced tea and smoothies.*



OREGANO

Contains vitamin K, antioxidants and has antimicrobial and antibacterial properties. *Use on chicken, roasts, potatoes, in Italian dishes and stews.*



PARSLEY

A rich source of anti-oxidant nutrients as well as a great source of Vitamins A, C, and K. Use parsley as a simple garnish or add to your favorite salad and vegetables.



ROSEMARY

Contains vitamin K, antioxidants and has antimicrobial and antibacterial properties. *Use on chicken, roasts, potatoes, Italian foods and various stews.*



SAGE

Has antiseptic and antioxidant properties as well as vitamin K which may boost alertness and mood while decreasing anxiety. *Pair with lemon to season baked or broiled chicken.*



THYME

Has antiseptic properties and is used as a home remedy for respiratory ailments. *Goes great with salmon and other fish.*

Most herbs thrive May through November in areas that get at least four hours of full sunlight.



My Fitness

Alabama

the beautiful



Tell us about your favorite spots in Alabama. We may even feature you in the next issue! Email us at LiveHealthyAL@bcbsal.org

Walking *is one of the easiest and most effective forms of exercise, benefitting the mind, body and spirit. And a beautiful garden can provide a sense of serenity and peacefulness, a boon to your mental health.*

Double your benefits by walking through a garden. Here are 10 gorgeous Alabama gardens – each just a day trip away – where you can have a healthy, peaceful walk in the park.



10 EASY DAY TRIPS in ALABAMA

1 Aldridge Gardens HOOVER

A 30-acre site that houses many varieties of hydrangeas, including the Snowflake Hydrangea which was patented by founder, Eddie Aldridge. The grounds also include a seven-acre lake, boat house and walking trail.

3 Bellingrath Gardens NEAR MOBILE

This 65-acre garden estate offers many beautiful views and colorful seasonal blossoms. You can also tour the Bellingrath Museum Home or enjoy a relaxing river cruise on the Fowl River.

5 Noccalula Falls Park GADSDEN

This 250-acre park is named after an Indian princess who, according to local legend, threw herself off a cliff instead of marrying a man she didn't love. In addition to gardens and hiking trails, the park features its namesake 90-foot waterfall.

7 Botanical Gardens HUNTSVILLE

Features of this 112-acre network of themed specialty gardens and nature trails include an aquatic garden and the nation's largest open-air butterfly house.

9 Troy University Arboretum TROY

This 75-acre garden and nature preserve includes over 300 different species of trees, a 2.5-mile nature trail with swamp, a stream and a four-acre pond.

2 Botanical Gardens BIRMINGHAM

This public garden covers over 67 acres and features more than 10,000 plants from over 1,500 species, as well as fountains, sculptures, walking paths, a conservatory, greenhouse and Japanese garden.

4 Shakespeare Gardens MONTGOMERY

A park featuring the plants mentioned in William Shakespeare's plays and sonnets.

6 Jasmine Hill Gardens WETUMPKA

This 20-acre garden was inspired by the art and architecture of Ancient Greece and includes numerous replicas of famous sculptures and ruins from antiquity.

8 Botanical Gardens DOTHAN

This 50-acre complex combines a traditional botanical garden with many remarkable native plants in a mission to conserve the area's natural beauty.

10 The University of Alabama Arboretum TUSCALOOSA

This 60-acre park features Alabama's native flora and fauna, and includes miles of forest walking trails and a wildflower garden.



Many of the activities you enjoy would likely be impossible without this very important body part. Here's what you can do to take care of your bones!

BONE HEALTH BASICS



OSTEOPOROSIS: What you need to know

Women
are 4x
more likely
to develop
osteoporosis
than men.

■ 3 Warning Signs

- ▶ Back pain
- ▶ Loss of height
- ▶ Weak bones

■ 5 Risk Factors

Age - The risk for osteoporosis increases as we age

Gender - Women are more likely to have osteoporosis

Family History - Osteoporosis tends to run in the family

Bone Frame and Size - Petite women have a higher risk

Menopause - Changing estrogen levels may lead to osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a Greek word that means “porous bones.” This progressive disease weakens your bones and makes them easier to break.

Be GOOD to your BONES!

■ Eat for good health

Foods high in calcium and vitamin D can strengthen bones. Because it's hard to get enough vitamin D through your food, look for "Vitamin D fortified" milk, yogurt and cereal.

■ Consider a supplement

The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) recommends the following amounts:

Calcium (from all sources)

- 1,000 mg – Women under 50, men under 70
- 1,200 mg – Woman age 50+, men 70+

Vitamin D

- 400 – 800 IU – Adults under 50
- 800 – 1,000 IU – Adults over 50

If you feel you are not getting enough calcium, talk with your doctor about a supplement that would work for you.

■ Exercise

Weight-bearing exercises such as walking, running and working out with light weights will strengthen your muscles as well as your bones.

HIGH CALCIUM

milk	dark greens
cheese	almonds
okra	broccoli



TRY THIS TIP

Add just 5-10 minutes of stretching to your daily routine. Flexible joints can help prevent injury. Also, try changing up your fitness routine by adding some weight training in with your walking or jogging routine.



For more tips and resources, check out
behealthy.com



Here's another Blue Advantage benefit we've added to your health coverage.



A BONE DENSITY SCREENING

is recommended for all women age 67 and older. Did you know the screening is recommended for women *of any age* within 6 months after a bone fracture or break?

If you fall or fracture a bone, please visit your primary care physician. If you are unable to make it to your doctor, a Blue Advantage nurse may be able to come to your home and perform a heel bone density screening for you. *Please call Customer Service if you have any questions.*



▲ Renée Leonard, RN, Blue Advantage nurse, gives a member the quick and painless bone density test.

Your teeth are bones, too.

When we think of bone health, we sometimes forget our teeth.

Did you know that oral hygiene affects the entire body, not just our teeth?



tooth health BASICS

- ▷ Brush at least twice a day.
- ▷ Floss daily.

"Having regular dental checkups is more than just maintaining a beautiful smile. Diabetes, osteoporosis, and heart disease all have oral manifestations. Many times symptoms of these diseases present first in the mouth."

– Todd A. Honea, D.M.D.
Honea Family Dentistry
Westover, Alabama

11 WAYS

to avoid a FALL



1 Wear comfortable shoes that fit correctly with good traction and a sensible heel.

2 Have your vision and hearing tested.

If you are prescribed a hearing aid, wear it. If you are prescribed glasses or contacts, wear them. If you wear bifocals or trifocals, you should practice using them to prevent problems with altered depth perception.

3 Use canes or walkers when recommended by your healthcare provider.

4 Install handrails on all stairways and use them for added stability when necessary.

5 Know the side effects of medicines. Some medicines cause dizziness, disorientation or slowed reflexes.

6 Get enough sleep. A lack of sleep makes it hard to focus and concentrate on your surroundings. A lack of mental focus makes it easier for you to fall.

7 Clean house. Household clutter often trips people up. Make sure your floor is free from clutter, and walkways are clear of anything that could cause you to trip, including electrical or phone wires. Carpets or area rugs should be tacked to the floor or have a skid-proof mat.

8 Use adequate lighting. It is easy to trip over things when you can't see. Make sure light switches are easy to reach and use. Keep

a flashlight next to your bed in case the power goes out. If using regular switches

is inconvenient or impractical, consider voice- or sound-activated lights.

9 Watch out for slippery ground.

Be especially cautious on rainy or icy days if you must travel outside. Inside the house, bathrooms often become slippery. Use rubber bath mats. Consider installing grab bars in the shower and beside the toilet. Also, if you feel unstable when standing, you might want to use a plastic chair with a backrest that will not slip in the shower. Do not walk on floors that are still wet from being cleaned.

10 Reorganize. Move low-lying furniture away from walkways or the centers of rooms to prevent tripping. Try to organize your closets, storage areas and kitchen so the things you need are within easy reach. If unable to keep everything within easy reach, buy a stable step-stool with a handrail and wide steps or use a "reach stick." Never climb step-stools without another person present.

11 Watch out for pets. Our furry friends can trip us accidentally.

Remember, if you do fall, call for help. Keep a portable phone or cell phone with you at all times. Consider purchasing a medical alert system so assistance is available at the push of a button.



What You Need to Know About

YOUR MEDICINES

Why should I take medicine after I'm feeling better?

Medicines are prescribed by your doctor to keep you healthy and prevent other health conditions from occurring. Not taking your medicine as prescribed can lead to illness, hospitalization and possibly death. This is why it is important to take your medicine, even if you feel you no longer need it.

Always
talk to
your
doctor
before
you stop
taking
any
medicine.

What should I ask my doctor?

- ▶ *Why am I taking this medicine?*
- ▶ *Are there possible risks or side effects?*
- ▶ *How often should I take it?*
- ▶ *What time of the day should I take it?*
- ▶ *What should I do if I forget?*
- ▶ *Should I follow a healthy eating plan?*
- ▶ *Is there anything I should avoid?*
- ▶ *How about interactions with common over-the-counter medicines?*
- ▶ *How will I know my medicine is working?*
- ▶ *Is there a generic or alternative available?*
- ▶ *How often should I refill this medicine?*
- ▶ *Can I combine or reduce the number of medicines I currently take?*



DO YOU TAKE THESE?

ASK YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE:

Antacids	•Kidney disease	•Milk allergy
Antiemetics (drugs often prescribed for nausea, vomiting or dizziness)	•Breathing problems	•Glaucoma
Nasal decongestants	•Enlarged prostate	•Heart disease
	•Thyroid disease	•Diabetes
	•High blood pressure	
Cough medicine	•Glaucoma	
Antihistamines	•Breathing problems	•Glaucoma
	•A prescription for depression or high blood pressure medications	
	•Alcoholic beverages	

*SOURCE: Food and Drug Administration. "Drug Interactions: What You Should Know." <http://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/ucm163354.htm>. Retrieved April 15, 2014.

Keep
a list of
your
medicines
and take it
with you
when you
visit the
doctor.

How can I be sure to remember to take my medicines?

Develop a routine and take your medicine at the same time as another regular activity, such as brushing your teeth, drinking coffee or eating a meal.

Set your alarm clock or timer as a reminder.

Use a pillbox that has compartments for the pills you should take each day at a specific time.

USE THE FORM
ON PAGE 17

Keep a calendar with your medicine schedule and make a note when you take each dose.

Color-code your medicine bottles with stickers. Use different colors for different times of the day.





Why is my medicine now considered high-risk?

What You Need to Know About

Even if you have been taking your medicine for many years, it may not be as safe as it once was. As we get older, our bodies change in ways that can affect our response to medicines. Our metabolism gets slower, so it may take longer to break down medicines. Our bodies may also become more sensitive to certain drugs.

This is why some medicines are considered high-risk and more likely to cause side effects or harm, especially for those over the age of 65.

The table on the following page contains a partial list of common high-risk medicines.



MEDICINES

If you are taking any of these, we encourage you to talk to your doctor, who will determine if you are at risk – and may prescribe a safer alternative.

High-Risk Medication Guide

DRUG CATEGORY	HIGH-RISK MEDICATION	OFTEN PRESCRIBED FOR	REASON FOR CONCERN
Hypnotics	Eszopiclone (LUNESTA) Zaleplon (SONATA) Zolpidem (AMBIEN) Chloral hydrate	Sleep	Increased risk of falling and confusion
Skeletal Muscle Relaxants (as a single agent or as part of a combination product)	Carisoprodol Chlorzoxazone Cyclobenzaprine Metaxalone Methocarbamol Orphenadrine	Pain/Muscle spasms	Highly anticholinergic (can cause dry mouth, flushing, dry skin, confusion, or difficulty urinating); Sedation; Increased risk of falling
Tertiary TCAs (as a single agent or as part of a combination product)	Amitriptyline Clomipramine Doxepin (>6mg/day) Imipramine Trimipramine	Depression, Chronic Pain and Sleep	Highly anticholinergic (can cause dry mouth, flushing, dry skin, confusion, or difficulty urinating); Sedation leading to extremely low blood pressure; Increased risk of falling
Estrogens (with or without progesterone; oral and topical patch products only)	Conjugated Estrogens (PREMARIN, PREMPRO) Esterified Estrogens Estradiol Estrogen Patch (VIVELLE-DOT) Estropipate	Osteoporosis and Menopause symptoms	Increased risk of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) and Cancer in older adults
Cardiovascular Agents	Digoxin (>0.125mg/day)	Heart Failure	Increased risk of toxicity at higher doses due to slow elimination from the body
Antihistamines (as a single agent or as part of a combination product)	Brompheniramine Carbinoxamine Chlorpheniramine Clemastine Cyproheptadine Dexchlorpheniramine Diphenhydramine (oral) Hydroxyzine Promethazine Triprolidine	Allergies, Itching/Rash and Sleep	Highly anticholinergic (can cause dry mouth, flushing, dry skin, confusion, or difficulty urinating); Sedation
Antiemetics	Promethazine Trimethobenzamide	Nausea/Vomiting and Cough/Cold	Highly anticholinergic (can cause dry mouth, flushing, dry skin, confusion, or difficulty urinating); Sedation
Hypoglycemics	Chlorpropamide Glyburide	Diabetes	Risk of prolonged hypoglycemia
Antibiotics	Nitrofurantoin (increased risk with long-term use >90 days)	Infection	Potential for lung damage or peripheral neuropathy (numbness, tingling, or pain in the hands, feet, or toes; muscle weakness; difficulty walking and/or problems with balance or coordination)

This list of high-risk medications is provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama as recommendations to improve medication management with elderly patients. It is not intended as a substitute for the clinical judgment of the attending physician.

6 QUICK FACTS

about URINARY INCONTINENCE

- Urinary incontinence is defined as an inability to control the release of urine.
- Over 13 million Americans live with incontinence.
- Incontinence can happen to anyone at any age.
- Women have incontinence more often than men.
- It is a symptom, not a disease.
- Incontinence can be treated or even cured!

There are a number of ways to manage incontinence. These methods include certain drugs, bulking agents that can be injected to help constrict the opening of the bladder, medical devices, surgery and undergarments. If you or a loved one suffers from urinary incontinence, talk to your doctor. There are

now more treatments for urinary incontinence than ever before. It is a condition that can be treated, managed and possibly cured. Your healthcare provider can often suggest a treatment plan that can help you feel more comfortable so you can keep living your life with confidence.



Here's another way we are improving coverage for Blue Advantage members.



► free shipping

Order prescriptions by mail for delivery to your home with no added fees.

► save time

Skip a trip to the pharmacy by having prescriptions mailed to you. Or pick up a 90-day supply in one visit.

► save on copays

Purchase a 90-day supply of your medicine and save money.

Preferred Extended Supply Pharmacy or Mail-Order is **easy, convenient** and **can save you money.**

Start using a Preferred Extended Supply pharmacy: Look for the "PXT" Pharmacy Type in our Pharmacy Directory or ask your pharmacy if they participate.

OR

Switch your medications to mail-order: Call one of these pharmacies or visit their websites to get started.

Walgreens

1-800-489-2197 (TTY: 1-800-925-0178)
24 hours, 7 days a week
www.Walgreens.com/MailService

MyPrimeMail

1-800-731-3588 (TTY: 711)
24 hours, 7 days a week
www.myprimemail.com

Name: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____

My Pharmacy: _____

Pharmacy Phone: _____

I am allergic to: _____

My Medication List

FOR DOCTORS, DENTISTS & OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

If there is an emergency, please call:

Contact: _____

Phone: _____

These medicines can cause me problems:

Drug name and strength (Example: Zocor - 20mg)	Time of day I take it	How many I take	Why I take it	Doctor's name
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I also take this vitamin, mineral, herbal or over-the-counter medicine	Time of day I take it	How many I take	Why I take it
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Please maintain an up-to-date list of all your medications including non-prescription, vitamin/mineral, and herbal/natural products. Be sure to show this list to your medical providers: doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, hospitals, ERs, etc.



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Alabama**

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1-888-234-8266 (TTY 711)

Did you know? ► **Your Blue Advantage contract OFFERS ROUTINE VISION CARE**

When you use an in-network provider:

- **No copay** for one supplemental eye exam every year.
- **\$0 - \$30 copay** for Medicare-covered exams, including an annual glaucoma screening for those at risk.
- **No copay** for one pair of Medicare-covered eyeglasses (lens and frames) or contact lenses after cataract surgery.



Take advantage of this Blue Advantage benefit and protect your vision.

Out-of-network providers are covered at 70% of the Medicare-allowed amount for Medicare-covered services.

For more details, please refer to your benefit booklet or contact Customer Service by calling the phone number on the back of your ID card.

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