

WINTER 2017
LIVE

Healthy *Alabama*

What's Your Advantage?

Medicare Advantage Exclusives

Less Is More

*Controlling Portions and
Eating Healthier*

Do You Hear What I Hear?

Benefits of Hearing Aids



**FITNESS for
EVERYONE**

*Gay Rogers, 2016
Swanson Award Winner*



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How Are We Doing?

We welcome your feedback on the articles in Live Healthy Alabama.

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We provide free in-home routine tests such as fecal occult blood testing and diabetes testing for qualified individuals.



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Blue Advantage covers services not covered by traditional Medicare, such as Silver Sneakers gym membership and routine hearing and vision exams.

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In 2016, Blue Advantage received a four-star quality rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

This makes 2016 the second year in a row Blue Advantage earned this honor, **making Blue Advantage the highest-rated Medicare Advantage Plan available statewide in Alabama.**

CMS quality Star ratings help the Blue Advantage team deliver additional and enhanced benefits for you, our members.

Member surveys are one of the metrics used to maintain our high CMS star rating. If you've ever received one of these surveys in the mail about Blue Advantage, please complete the survey and return it! Continue helping us deliver the great service you expect.



The higher rated we are as a plan, the more services we can offer!



My Fitness

FITNESS FOR EVERYONE

Gay Rogers

*winner of the 2016
SilverSneakers®*

*Richard L. Swanson
Inspiration Award*

We all make our excuses,
sometimes, for not hitting
the gym or fitting in a workout.

If you're looking for excuses, Gay Rogers has two.

Both of her lower legs were amputated due to complications from Charcot arthropathy, a syndrome involving neuropathy and loss of sensation.

But she doesn't let that stop her! In fact, Gay learned the value of physical fitness first-hand from her life experiences, and now uses her voice and presence to inspire others to achieve their own fitness goals.

When she learned she would lose her lower legs, she knew she had to make changes. So she found a personal trainer and started working out.

She says she was determined to build her strength so that she could walk again once getting her prosthetic limbs. Through hard work and dedication, she achieved her goal. She walked on her prosthetics the very same day she received them!

Because of her inspirational story, Gay was recently awarded the SilverSneakers® Richard L. Swanson Inspiration Award. This national award is given to one individual every year who demonstrates healthy behaviors that make a positive difference in their community.

Live Healthy Alabama recently sat down to talk with Gay.

Tell us about your fitness routine.

GAY: I try to come to the gym at least three days a week. More if I can. I walk on the arc trainer and use weight machines for my arms and shoulders and ab machines. I know what to do that won't hurt me.



I became a heart
patient and kidney
patient in one month.
I know I have to stay
in good shape.

– Gay Rogers



Gay Rogers, her husband, Ronnie, and a workout friend
Centre, Alabama

To get healthy, you need
to exercise ...start out
slow and build up.
Get outside and walk.

– Gay Rogers

What are the benefits of your routine?

GAY: You know, last November they thought I had a heart attack. I will do anything to keep myself in better shape. I became a heart patient and kidney patient in one month. I know I have to stay in good shape. I try to eat the best food for me.

What kind of diet plan do you follow?

GAY: My husband is a diabetic. We know carbs are not always good. I can eat more sugar than he can, but I still try to cut back on carbs and eat more veggies. Both of my kids are health nuts. When we go out to eat, we try to eat somewhere more healthy than fast food restaurants.

Did winning the Swanson Award mean a lot to you?

GAY: It was emotional. I cried. I have never been nominated for anything in my life. To know that I was nominated for a nationwide thing was overwhelming. The celebration was out of this world beautiful; I had all my friends there.

Any advice for someone making a change in their fitness routine?

GAY: To get healthy, you need to exercise and go to the gym. You can start out slow and build up. I started working with weights and the bars. If you don't want to go to the gym, get outside and walk, or get on the treadmill or bicycle. My husband does weights sometimes, but even with a heel injury, he can still do the bicycle.

Live Healthy Alabama also had the opportunity to talk to Gay's personal trainer, Eva Garner.

Tell us how you became Gay's trainer.

EVA: Jeff (Gay's son) called and told me his mother needed a trainer. He also told me she had lost her legs to Charcot; I didn't know anything about training



When others see Gay working so hard, *it makes them push a little harder.*

– **Eva Garner**, owner of Odyssey Health Spa and Fitness Center in Centre, Alabama


an amputee. But Gay was full of spirit, very anxious and ready to go. She came in with the expectation that she would walk again. Her attitude and dedication showed she was determined to do this. So I did some research, and we implemented some exercises.

She pushed right through everything, never complained. She'd say, "When I get my legs, I'm walking as soon as I get them." And with her dedication, she was able to walk the very day she got her new legs.

What has training Gay taught you?

EVA: Gay has inspired me to be a little tougher on some of my clients who are slackers. I look at her and see all she has overcome. When others see Gay working so hard, it makes them push a little harder.

What advice would you give someone starting a new workout routine?

EVA: You have to make up your mind that you want to be healthy. It's not about anyone else but you! 



If you've been out to eat lately, you may have noticed a problematic trend, especially if you're watching calories or trying to eat healthy.

Your plate and your doggy bag may be looking a little bigger. This growth isn't in your head; it's been going right to our stomachs. As America's obesity epidemic has grown, so have our portion sizes. On average, Americans are eating more calories per day. According to one study by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to return to our average body weight in 1978, Americans would need to reduce our average caloric intake by 220 calories per day.

According to the NIH, being overweight is the second-leading preventable cause of death in the United States, right behind tobacco use.

WHEN LESS



For more information,
visit **ChooseMyPlate.gov**.

IS MORE

In a world of super-sized value meals, America has tended to see more as better when it comes to food. But more is not always better; sometimes it's not even good. Waists and weights are increasing.

Here are just a few examples of how common portion sizes and calories consumed have increased over time:

PORTION DISTORTION

20 Years Ago



French Fries



Cheeseburger



Pepperoni Pizza

Today



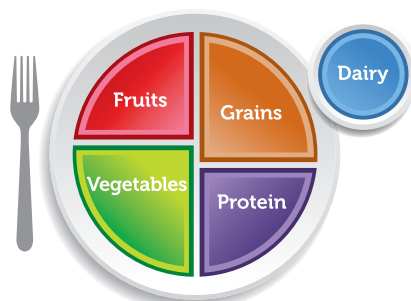
To Burn the Extra Calories



So, what can you do? We need to better control our portions and find ways to reduce our caloric intake. Here are just a few ways to combat portion distortion:



Go small. Serve food on smaller plates. Smaller plates equal smaller portions. Also, this combats the common phenomena often referred to as having “eyes bigger than our stomachs.”



Choose**MyPlate**.gov

Follow health guides.

Visit **ChooseMyPlate.gov** to help you follow a healthy diet based on well-researched and highly recommended USDA guidelines.



Exercise. Work off those calories! Take a walk, ride a bike, or try some chair exercises. It’s recommended to get at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity every day.



Count calories.

Use a calorie-counting app, like MyFitnessPal, or keep a food journal. Taking the time to write down calories for the foods we’re consuming can combat eating too much.



DON'T clean your plate!

As kids, you may have been told to “clean your plate.” While our mothers had loving intentions with this advice, it’s really backfired on us as a society.



Plan for leftovers.

If you love to eat out, ask your server to bring you a doggy bag when you order, or better yet, ask them to box up half before even bringing it to you. It’s a “free” meal the next day! 🍏


Need help getting started with a healthy eating plan? Call one of our dedicated case managers at **1-888-341-5030** or check out **AlabamaBlue.com/myBlueWellness**.

3 WAYS a HEARING AID improves MENTAL HEALTH

About one third of people over 65 experience hearing loss, nearly 48 million Americans!

Hearing loss can affect all areas of your life and even have a negative effect on your mental health. It has an adverse effect on all aspects of life — from putting a strain on relationships to increased risk of developing dementia and depression. Hearing aids have proven extremely effective at improving the lives of people with hearing loss.

If you'd like to take advantage of your benefit, call TruHearing at 1-844-330-8541 and a Hearing Consultant will verify your coverage and schedule a hearing exam with a provider near you.

We hope you'll take advantage of this benefit. Today is the day to address your hearing loss and experience the healthier, happier life that hearing aids can offer. 

Some styles from TruHearing connect wirelessly with your Apple® or Android™ smartphone to give you more control over your hearing experience. As part of the program, a TruHearing provider will consult with you to determine the best type and style of hearing aid to address your hearing needs.



Have you heard? A new Hearing Aid Benefit has been added to your coverage! For more information, check out [TruHearing.com](https://www.TruHearing.com)

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1 LOWERS YOUR RISK OF COGNITIVE DECLINE

People with even moderate hearing loss are three times more likely to experience symptoms of mental decline as they age. But, wearing hearing aids actually lowers your risk to the same levels as people with normal hearing.

2 IMPROVES YOUR MEMORY

Hearing loss makes it harder to process and remember the things you're hearing. Recent research found that people with hearing loss who started wearing hearing aids improved their mental processing after only two weeks!



3 WILL JUST MAKE YOU HAPPIER!

People with hearing loss are twice as likely to suffer from depression. Hearing aids can lower this risk. People who wear hearing aids report more satisfaction with their lives, and better relationships with their family and friends.

TruHearing is an independent company offering exclusive hearing aid savings for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama members.



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