



**BlueCross
BlueShield**
Nebraska

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

member newsletter

Fall 2024

[Medicare.NebraskaBlue.com](https://www.Medicare.NebraskaBlue.com)

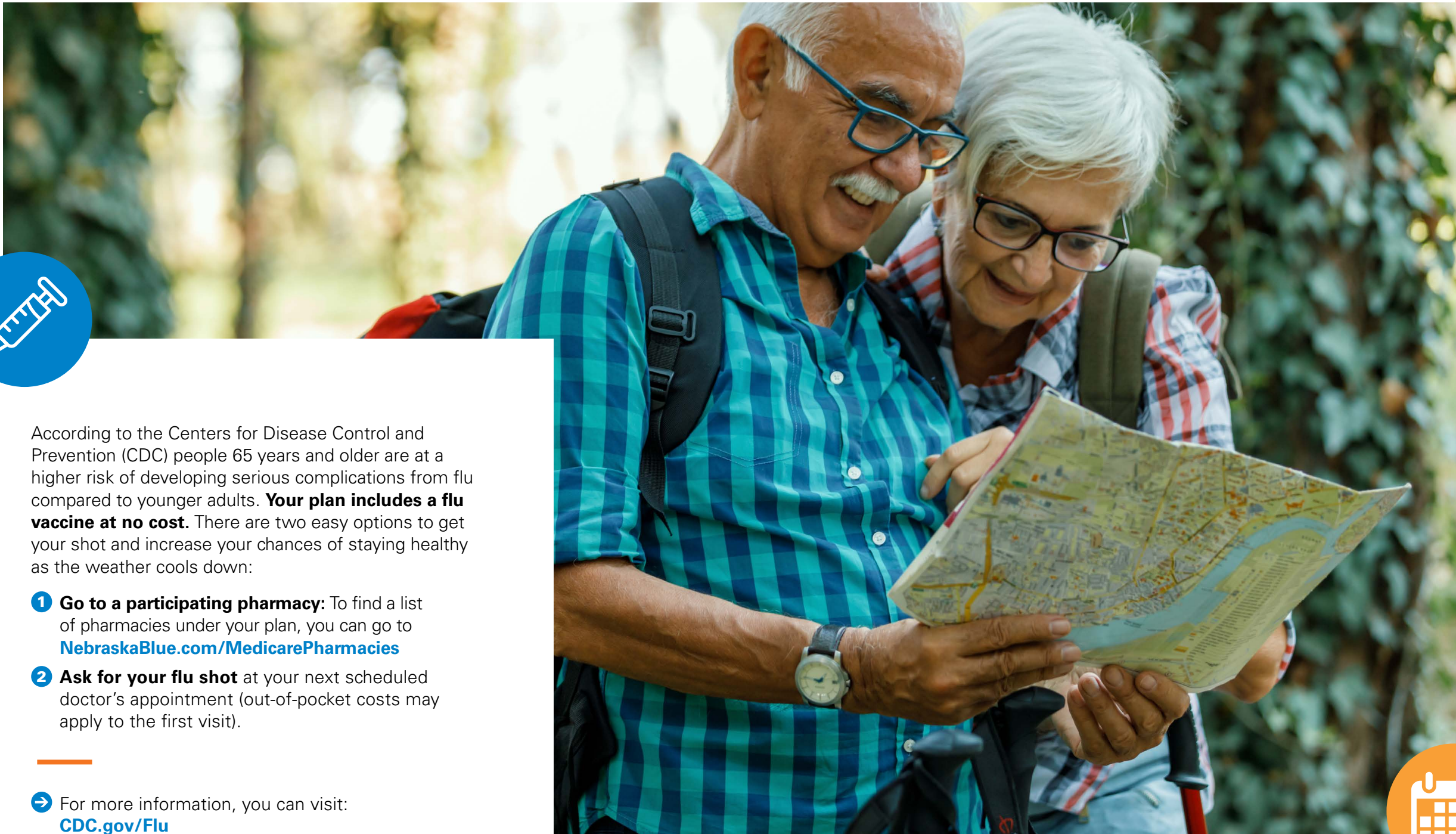


WELCOME!

Thank you for being a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) Medicare Advantage member. This newsletter is designed to provide you with tools and resources to keep you healthy, update you on plan information and connect with us.

Would you like to view this communication electronically? Go to [Medicare.NebraskaBlue.com/MedicareAdvantage/ResourcesAndCommunications](https://www.Medicare.NebraskaBlue.com/MedicareAdvantage/ResourcesAndCommunications)

Have you received your **flu shot**?



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) people 65 years and older are at a higher risk of developing serious complications from flu compared to younger adults. **Your plan includes a flu vaccine at no cost.** There are two easy options to get your shot and increase your chances of staying healthy as the weather cools down:

- 1 **Go to a participating pharmacy:** To find a list of pharmacies under your plan, you can go to [NebraskaBlue.com/MedicarePharmacies](https://www.nebraskablue.com/MedicarePharmacies)
- 2 **Ask for your flu shot** at your next scheduled doctor's appointment (out-of-pocket costs may apply to the first visit).

➔ For more information, you can visit:
[CDC.gov/Flu](https://www.cdc.gov/Flu)



Using your **Benefits**

It may sound strange to hear an insurance company tell you to go to the doctor!

But here at BCBSNE, we want you to stay healthy. We appreciate our members, and we want the best for you and your family. That is why it is so important for you to take advantage of your **annual wellness visit and physical exam.**

Studies are showing that older adults who have had an annual wellness visit had less fall and fracture risks. And since fall-related injuries lead to an increase in frailty, disability and early death, the emphasis on these visits cannot be understated.

Taking control of your own health care is the most important thing you can do for yourself and your loved ones. **You pay nothing out of pocket** for this benefit, and it is a great way for you to communicate with your care provider on your current health and how to stay healthy for years to come.



**MAKE YOUR
APPOINTMENT
TODAY!**

Medicare Prescription Payment Plan

The **Medicare Prescription Payment Plan** is a new payment option to help you manage your out-of-pocket drug costs, starting in 2025.

This new payment option works with your current drug coverage, and it can help you manage your drug costs by spreading them across monthly payments that vary throughout the year (January – December). This payment option might help you manage your expenses, but it doesn't save you money or lower your drug costs.

For more information, visit NebraskaBlue.com/M3P



Cancer Screenings - a plan for prevention

Nutrition News

Protein plays a crucial role in staying healthy

As we age, a main concern for older adults is something called sarcopenia. This is a natural decline in our muscle strength and it can begin as early as your 30's.

Eventually, sarcopenia can lead to frailty, reduced mobility and an increased risk of falls or fractures. When our muscles get weak, there is not enough support to our skeletal system. Bones are made of a complex matrix of minerals and proteins. Adequate protein intake allows our bones to absorb calcium, contributing to bone density. Increasing our bone strength can prevent major damage if a fall does happen to occur. Mild strength training can also assist in building our muscle support for injury prevention.

Did you know that protein also plays an important role for our immune system? Without enough protein, the body's ability to respond to infections and recover from illnesses is compromised.

Protein can also benefit our brains! Amino acids, which are the building blocks of protein, help produce neurotransmitters, which is crucial to the communication between our nerve cells. Upping your protein intake could reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

How much protein should I get?

Everyone's protein needs vary, but studies suggest that your personal intake in grams should equal your body weight multiplied by .36. For example, if you are 160 pounds, your daily protein intake should be at least 58 grams of protein per day. You may need even more than that if you are recovering from an illness or injury.

So how many grams of protein are in the foods I eat?

Here is a list of some common foods you can eat that have protein:

- Chicken breast – 32 grams
- Salmon – 22 grams
- Eggs (2) – 12 grams
- Cottage cheese (2%) – 1 cup – 12 grams
- Canned tuna – 27 grams
- Greek yogurt (plain), nonfat – 1 container – 16 grams
- 2 tbsp. peanut butter – 7 grams
- Milk – 2% – 1 cup – 8 grams
- Kidney beans, cooked – 1 cup – 15 grams

Sources:
www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2019/how-much-protein-do-you-need.html
www.reallifenutritionist.com/high-protein-foods/

Almost everyone has been affected in some way by cancer. According to the National Cancer Institute, if there was just a 10% increase in colorectal cancer screenings, we could see a 21% reduction in deaths from the disease. Did you know that your plan covers early detection cancer screenings? Take advantage of this crucial benefit. We cover screenings for the following:

- Breast cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Cervical/vaginal cancer
- Prostate cancer

Sources:
www.cancer.gov/news-events/cancer-currents-blog/2024/more-cancer-screening-modeling-study-knudsen



Be sure to get your **regular screenings.**

This can bring peace of mind that you are doing all you can to stay healthy in the coming year!



Practical Tips for Increasing Protein Intake

For seniors looking to boost their protein intake, there are several strategies to consider:

- **Include Lean Proteins:** Incorporate lean meats like chicken, turkey and fish into meals. Plant-based sources such as beans, lentils, tofu and quinoa are also excellent options.
- **Snack Wisely:** Opt for high-protein snacks like Greek yogurt, cottage cheese or nuts between meals to help meet daily protein needs.
- **Utilize Protein Supplements:** If dietary sources are insufficient, protein supplements such as whey protein powders or fortified nutritional drinks can be a convenient way to increase intake.
- **Balance your Diet:** Combine protein with other essential nutrients such as carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals to ensure a well-rounded diet.
- **Consult a Professional:** For personalized advice, consider consulting with a registered dietitian or nutritionist who can help create a tailored eating plan based on individual needs and health conditions.

Protein is a cornerstone of a healthy diet for seniors, impacting everything from muscle and bone health to immune function and cognitive well-being. By paying attention to protein intake and making thoughtful dietary choices, older adults can enhance their quality of life, maintain their independence and enjoy a more vibrant and active lifestyle. Prioritizing protein is not just about eating more—it’s about eating smart and making every bite count towards a healthier future.

Sources:
www.healthline.com/nutrition/14-ways-to-increase-protein-intake
www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating-nutrition-and-diet/healthy-meal-planning-tips-older-adults



Here is a tasty **protein-packed** recipe that you can try at home:



INDGREDIENTS

- 1 3/4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1/4 cup heavy cream (or half & half)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/8 teaspoon ground pepper plus 1/4 teaspoon, divided
- 1 1/2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup whole-wheat orzo
- 4 cups lightly packed baby spinach
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/4 pounds center-cut salmon, cut into 4 portions



15-MINUTE SALMON & CREAMY ORZO WITH SPINACH & MUSHROOMS



Total Time:
15 mins



Servings:
4



DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 450°F.

NUTRITION FACTS

459 Calories

Fat 18g

Carbs 35g

Protien 38g
- 2 Stir broth, cream, garlic powder, 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper together in a large skillet. Add mushrooms and orzo, cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Stir in spinach, reduce heat to maintain a lively simmer, cover and cook until the orzo is tender and the sauce has reduced and thickened, 10 to 12 minutes.
- 3 Meanwhile, brush oil on both sides of salmon pieces. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Place on a baking sheet and roast until just cooked through, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve the salmon with the orzo.



Important RESOURCES

Member Services

Update your contact information
and ask questions about your plan

888-488-9850 (TTY users call 711)

Oct. 1 – March 31: seven days a week
from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Central Time

April 1 – Sept. 30: Monday – Friday from
8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Central Time

Prime Customer Care

Call for questions related to prescription
drug coverage or to set up home delivery
for your prescriptions

855-457-1349

24 hours per day / 7 days per week

24/7 Nurse Line

833-968-1764

OTC Card Questions

To ask questions about benefits related to
the over-the-counter (OTC) pharmacy card

800-706-5058



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➔ **Learn More Online**
NebraskaBlue.com/MA

