



AUGUST 2021 | ISSUE NO. 5

THE ADVOCATE

Health tips and resources for MCG employees and their families

BACK TO SCHOOL

Establishing routines and healthy habits to set you and your family up for success!



UNDERSTANDING & MANAGING EMOTIONS

Back-to-school can be a stressful and emotionally draining time for kids and parents, alike. While some are experts at the back-to-school routine, many parents and children, particularly those entering school for the very first time, struggle with new routines, new settings, new peers, or even separation anxiety. We want you to know you are not alone. There is a helpful team of LAMP advocates ready and willing to support you and your family during these stressful times.

In addition to in-house LAMP counselors located at the Employee Health Benefits building, your medical insurance benefits afford you the opportunity to see local off-site provider as well as a Teladoc health provider. Contact a LAMP advocate to learn more or visit manateeyourchoice.com/LAMP to learn more. For assistance during standard working hours (M-F 8am - 5pm), call the **LAMP line at (941) 741-2995**. You can search for a local behavioral health counselor by searching our [provider directory](#).

START WITH BREAKFAST

Breakfast is so important for you and your child for the following reasons:

1. Energy Boost. A sleepy weekday needs a push with a nutritious breakfast. High quality carb foods paired with protein means long-lasting fuel.

2. Improved brain power. We know that those students who eat a good breakfast have better concentration and improved memory. Researchers compared not eating breakfast to eating something and found better academic performance in general with breakfast-eaters. Even just handing a banana to your child to eat while walking to the bus will be helpful in supplying nutrients to the brain.

3. Better eating habits. Studies suggest that eating a morning meal tends to promote healthier food choices throughout the rest of the day.



Here are some easy breakfast ideas that include quality carbohydrates paired with protein:

- Yogurt and fruit
- Smoothies with added protein powder
- Hardboiled egg with fruit or a piece of whole wheat toast
- Toast or a tortilla spread with avocado and grated cheese
- Plain Cheerios – are one of the few cereals that contain a whole grain and is low in added sugar
- Apple slices with natural peanut butter
- Protein bar (different from a granola bar - protein bars have less sugar and more protein)
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- Whole grain waffle with nut butter or cream cheese
- Overnight oats: <https://downshiftology.com/recipes/overnight-oats/>

If your child is a picky eater, struggling with a food sensitivity or making healthful food choices, make an appointment to speak with one of our contracted dietitians. Your first 5 visits are at no cost to you each and every calendar year. Visit manateeyourchoice.com/wellbeing-programs/nutrition to learn more.



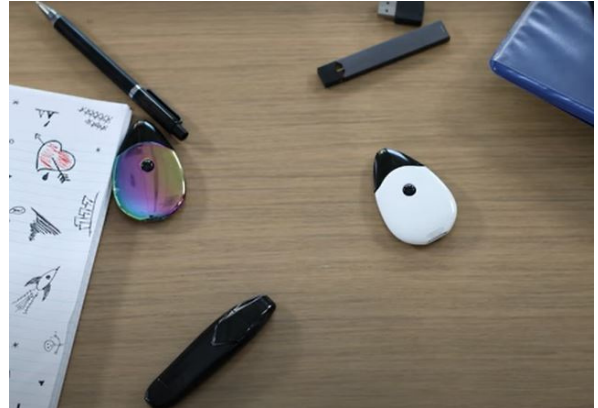
What do you do when your child is sick in the middle of the night? With Teladoc, you have 24/7 online access to Primary Care Doctors, Pediatricians, Allergists, Dermatologists and Therapists who can give you a diagnosis and treatment plan customized to fit your specific needs. Learn more at Teladoc.com/Aetna .

E-CIGARETTES

This picture looks like everyday school supplies.



But there are five e-cigarettes in plain view!



In 2019, 27.5% of high school students and 10.5% of middle school students said they use e-cigarettes. While getting your child ready for the return to school, it is a great time to have an open and honest conversation about e-cigarettes and the dangers of vaping. Vaping is the inhaling of vapor created by an e-cigarette or other vaping device.

The CDC found that 99% of the e-cigarettes they assessed contain nicotine. Nicotine can slow brain development in kids and adolescents. It can affect memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention, and mood. Adolescents can become addicted faster than an adult, and vaping can lead to other addictions later in life. E-cigarettes also contain cancer-causing chemicals, heavy metals like nickel tin and lead, and chemical flavorings linked to a serious lung disease.

E-cigarette use has skyrocketed among middle and high school students. Some e-cigarettes are designed to look innocent. JUUL is the preferred brand of e-cigarette for 25% of high school students and 35% of middle school students. It comes with pods that are flavored and contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. **JUUL looks like a USB stick. Suorin Vagon Black looks like a highlighter. The Pen Pal Stealth Vaporizer is a writing pen containing an e-cigarette. Suorin Drop looks very similar to a popular water flavoring. There are even vape-containing hoodies.**

Need help to quit tobacco or nicotine? Call Vanessa Rene at x6418 to learn more about free resources and classes that can assist you on your quit journey.



We invest in a holistic wellbeing approach and offer programs and services in the areas of physical, emotional, financial, community, and career health. When each of these areas are well, our employees are able to bring their best selves to work and help us make Manatee County a premier place in which to live and work and play.

VACCINES

Vaccinations are one of the best ways to protect both children and adults from serious and sometimes deadly diseases. As children return to school for in-person learning, it is recommended that their vaccination records are up to date. Below is a list of the CDC-recommended vaccines for school-aged children. In addition to the routine vaccinations listed, the CDC recommends everyone 12 years and older to get a COVID-19 vaccination. Questions about vaccines can be directed to Vanessa Rene at x6418.

4 to 6 years:

- Chickenpox (varicella)
- Influenza (flu) every year
- Diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough (pertussis) (DTaP)
- Polio (IPV)
- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)

7 to 10 years:

- Influenza (flu) every year



11 to 12 years:

- HPV vaccine
- Influenza (flu) every year
- Meningitis
- Diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough (pertussis) (Tdap)

13 to 18 years:

- Influenza (flu) every year

ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

Diagnosing a child with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) requires a medical professional - usually a mental health professional, like a psychologist or psychiatrist, or an experienced pediatrician. Once ADHD is confirmed in a child or adult, it may take some time to find the appropriate treatment.

Commonly used ADHD medications include stimulants, non-stimulants, and antidepressants.

- **Stimulants** are the most common and help people focus and ignore distractions. This group of medications work for most people, however 20% to 30% of people do not achieve desired results from this treatment.
- **Non-stimulants** can help those who don't see results with stimulants by improving symptoms like concentration and impulsive behavior. These medications will take several weeks to take full effect.
- **Antidepressants** may help in people who also suffer from depression, anxiety, and/or bipolar disorder. This group of medications work by stabilizing neurotransmitters in the brain and improving overall mental health. It may take up to 6 weeks to see the full effect with this type of treatment.

Any questions regarding medication can be addressed to Alma Leon, PharmD at ext. 6406.

Get Back on Track With SmartDollar



Are school supplies part of your budget? What about braces, sports fees, and music lessons? Remember, it is never too late to start tweaking your budget! SmartDollar can help!

<https://www.smartdollar.com/enroll/manatee3320>

BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS

Kicking off the new school year is more than shopping for school supplies and new clothes. Consider these healthy tips for your kids:

- **TEACH GOOD HYGIENE HABITS.** Proper hand washing is the most effective way to avoid spreading germs. Singing the alphabet or Happy Birthday from beginning to end will teach them how much time to spend or hand sanitizer is a good alternative to soap and water.
- **VISIT THE DOCTORS OFFICE.** Annual check-ups and up to date immunizations ensure your kids are healthy before heading back to school. NEED HELP FINDING A DOCTOR? VISIT THE DIRECTORY! <https://manateeyourchoice.com/provider-directory>. Your health plan is "Aetna Choice POS II".
- **GET BACK INTO THE ROUTINE.** At least a week before school starts. Shift your kids back to a school-year bedtime routine and cut back on playing electronic games and tv watching. Encourage quiet activities such as reading.
- **STAY HYDRATED.** To prevent fatigue, improve mood, digestion and brain function, provide healthy drinks like water and milk. Avoid sugary drinks such as soda and energy drinks.
- **CHECK FOR HEAD LICE.** Check for head lice once a week, most often found behind the ears and near the neckline.
- **CHOOSE THE RIGHT SCHOOL BACKPACK.** Choose a backpack that will be comfortable and won't cause pain. Wearing it incorrectly can lead to back pain.



BACK TO SCHOOL - BACK TO FITNESS

Summer is always so much fun! There are lots of BBQs, beach time, travel and time spent with kids, family, and friends. However, the lack of structure around this time of year can really wreak havoc on your routine and health goals. Well, welcome Back to School! It is not only time for the kids to get back to routine and education, but also YOU!

With kids settling into their daily routines of learning, we ask that you embrace that same opportunity in your life. Use this time to dive back into school of fitness! Schedule an orientation at the Fitness Center and learn about the equipment, learn a new routine to do on your own, or speak to a Fitness Advocate about your goals and how they can help you achieve them. We offer 5 Free Personal Training sessions, Free onsite Group Classes, online videos that can be accessed remotely, and ways to address your muscle and joint discomfort with Hinge Health. We are here to help you get back on track as the kids back to school!

Contact the Fitness Center at (941)748-4501 x3969 to learn more or to speak to an Advocate.

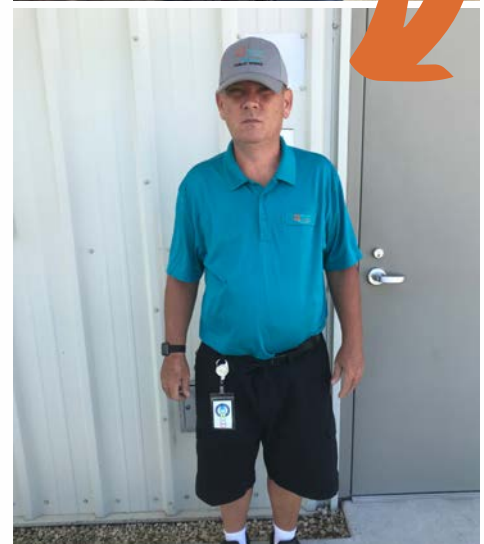
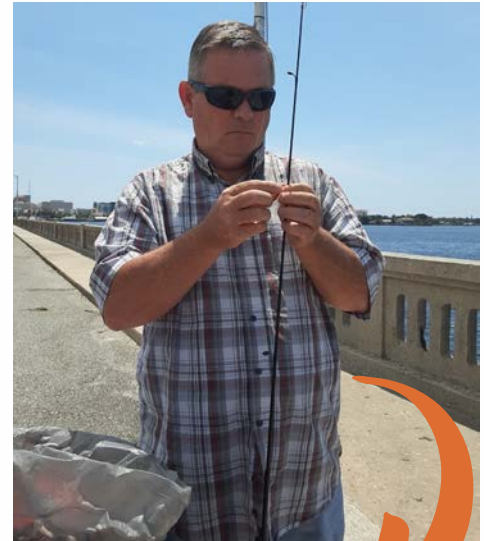


SPOTLIGHT ON REUBEN PARKER

Ruben started his health journey this year after dealing with several scares and concerns over the last few years. In the last few months alone, Ruben has made adjustments to his nutrition and movement resulting in 45lbs weight loss! Ruben works for our Transit team as a driver, putting in long shifts upwards of 10 hours per day. His message is clear: we all have the time, we just need to prioritize it!

Ruben aims for 20,000- 25,000 steps per day. He doesn't always make it, but finds time to move everyday, even while seated on a bus for 10-hour shifts. He sets an alarm to allow time to walk before his shift or commits to walking after, and when he parks for his longer stops and breaks, he walks. He utilizes the onsite employee Fitness Center at the Transit Building to get even more movement in.

Currently he prefers walking, but as his journey continues, he knows he has Personal Training options to consider and Registered Dietitian sessions to utilize. He is enrolled in the tobacco cessation program, working towards ending that habit as well. All of these resources are available to our employees and/or Health Plan members. To learn more, please reach out to Allison Minardi, Worksite Wellness Manager, at aminardi@manateeyourchoice.com or x3667 to learn about your worksite resources, your health plan benefits, and get started on YOUR personal health journey too!



UPCOMING EVENTS

[Learn more and register at manateeyourchoice.com/register](https://manateeyourchoice.com/register)

Women and Wealth

August 13

Planning for Retirement

August 20

Survival Skills Wrap Up

August 14 or August 24

Qualifying Events Deadline

August 31

T1 Listening Session

August 17

Successful Retirement Strategies

(2-class series)

Sept 11 & 18



YourChoice Advocates Are Available to Help!

**ALLISON MINARDI**

Worksite Wellness Manager
aminardi@manateeyourchoice.com
x3667

- Ergonomics & Desk Station set up
- Posture Assessments
- Pre-Work Stretch program

**ALMA LEON, PHARM D, RPH**

Pharmacy Advocate
aleon@manateeyourchoice.com
x6406

- Consultations
- Prior Authorizations
- Cost Saving Opportunities
- Compound Prescription Reimbursement
- Pharmacy or medication related questions

**CLARIBEL GILL, MS**

LAMP Counselor & Psychiatric Clinic Coordinator
cgill@manateeyourchoice.com
x6408

- Individual, couples, and family counseling.
- Schedules appointments for in-house counseling, Psychiatric ARNP, and assists with medication management calls.

**DEBBIE MISKELL, RN**

Nurse Advocate
dmiskell@manateeyourchoice.com
x6407

- Pre-authorizations
- Proper sleep, bone health, & heart health
- Healthy Pregnancy
- Provider Referrals
- Nurse Related Questions

**FLOREY MILLER, CDE, RD**

Nutrition & Diabetes Advocate
fmiller@manateeyourchoice.com
x6410

- Help managing diabetes
- Discuss nutrition and diet
- Assess risk for diabetes

**JENNIFER RUIZ, RN**

Nurse Advocate & Health First Coord.
jrui@manateeyourchoice.com
x6409

- Nurse Advocacy
- Health First
- Bariatric Program Coordinator
- Healthy Weight Resources
- General Health Guidance
- Community Physician Referrals

**JULIE DRACKETT**

Fitness Coordinator
jdrackett@manateeyourchoice.com
x3966

- Learn stretches and strengthening moves to support mobility and decrease discomfort
- workspace ergonomic assessments
- Fitness Programs

**RANDI MCDOWALL, LCSW**

LAMP Supervisor/Care Coordinator
rmcdowall@manateeyourchoice.com
x6469

- Worksite programing regarding Behavioral Health Topics
- Help finding in-network Therapists/ Psychiatrists
- Coaching sessions for members participating in certain wellbeing programs

**VANESSA RENE, CPHT, RPHT**

Pharmacy & Tobacco Advocate
vrene@manateeyourchoice.com
x6418

- Tobacco Cessation Aids
- Prior Authorizations
- Vaccination Questions
- Compound Reimbursements
- Pharmacy Related Questions



Visit us at manateeyourchoice.com