

A publication for **AvMed Medicare** Members

# ASPIRE

Summer 2022



**Introducing  
Benefit Checker**

**Home Safety Tips**

**Keep Your Eyes  
Healthy**

AvMed Members  
Robert and Ketty K.

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# ASPIRE

**James M. Repp**  
President and COO

**Ana M. Eberhard**  
Vice President,  
Member Experience

**Felicia Lopez-Walker**  
Managing Editor

AvMed, one of Florida's largest not-for-profit health plans, provides quality health benefits throughout the state.

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# OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

## ***Dear Valued AvMed Medicare Member:***



**S**ummer can only mean one thing: fun-filled activities. It's also the perfect time to embrace better health and get a jump-start to a healthier you. We offer a number of valuable resources, tips and tools to help you take control of your health.

We'd like to introduce you to a new tool – Benefit Checker – a simple and easy way to access your benefits. You'll also find information on a big issue that affects older adults: falls. We've put together home safety tips to minimize your risk. Plus, our partner, SilverSneakers® provides creative ways to turn your daily activities into exercise.

On page 6, you'll read about Members Robert and Ketty K. who are maintaining a healthy lifestyle with the help of AvMed by taking advantage of virtual events, Healthyperks<sup>SM</sup>, and more. This issue of **ASPIRE**, like every issue is full of information you can use over the summer and beyond while focusing on what really matters – living. Send me an email with your comments. I look forward to hearing from you.

Be well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James M. Repp', written in a cursive style.

**James M. Repp**

President and Chief Operating Officer, AvMed

**[ASPIRE@AvMed.org](mailto:ASPIRE@AvMed.org)**

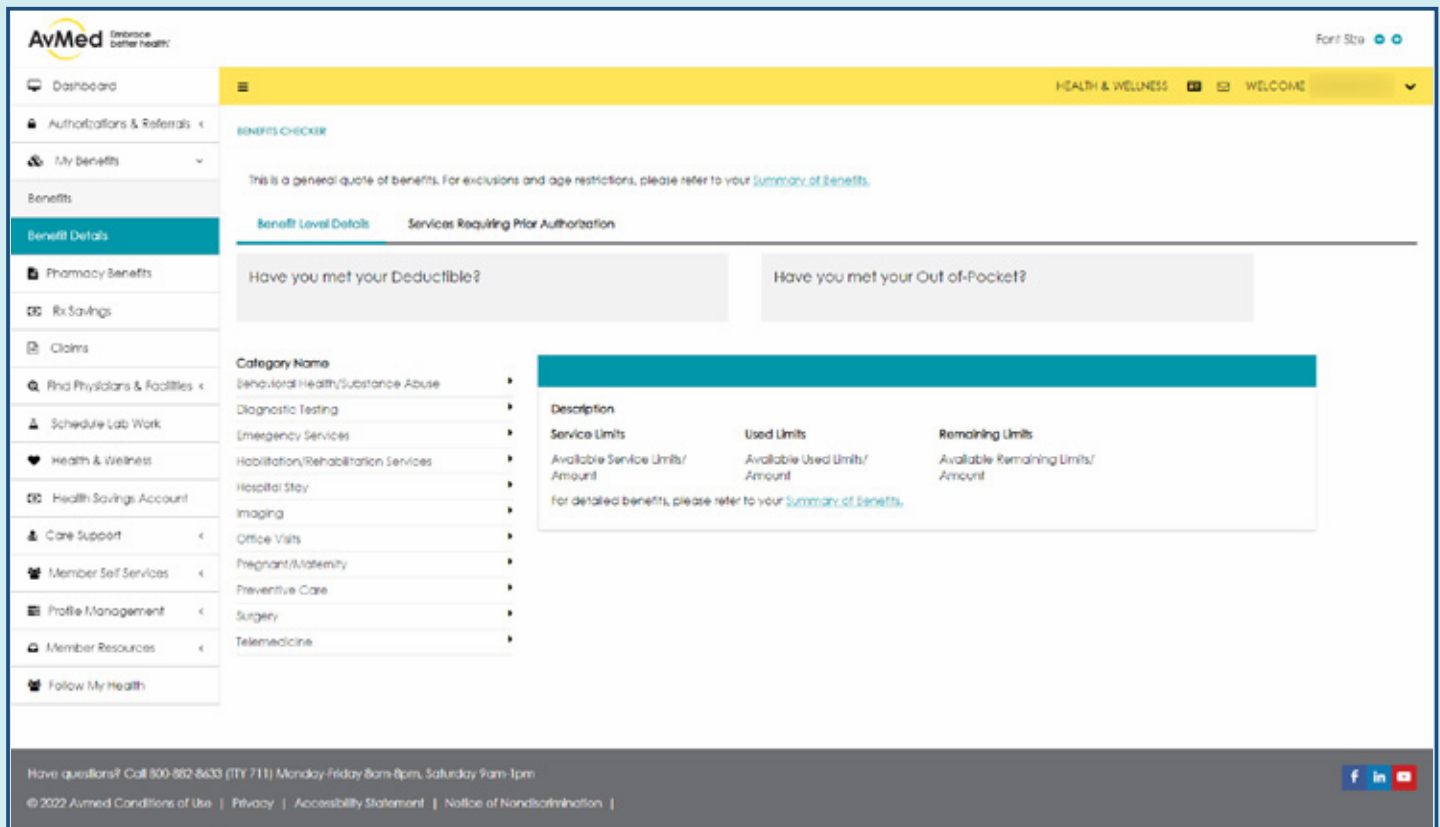


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## Introducing Benefit Checker

A simple and easy way to access your benefit information.

Once you're logged into your Member Portal, you can go to "My Benefits" and use the drop-down prompts to view your benefit details for routine checkups, hospital stays, surgery, and more. Visit [AvMed.org](http://AvMed.org)



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# Enjoy the summer with outdoor fitness

We all want to continue to do the things we want and need to do for as long as possible. Taking good care of your body and mind is one way to help build and maintain strength, balance, flexibility, and confidence. You may be thinking, "It's summer. I want to be outside, not in a gym." You're in luck. You can be active anywhere! Here are some creative ways to enjoy the great outdoors with **SilverSneakers®**.

Join a walking group or create your own. It's the perfect way to socialize and exercise at the same time!	<a href="https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/4-hidden-health-secrets-walking/">https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/4-hidden-health-secrets-walking/</a>
Turn your daily activities into exercise. Get some exercise doing things you already love to do!	<a href="https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/swimming-exercise/">https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/swimming-exercise/</a>
SilverSneakers members have access to live virtual classes and hundreds of workout videos through SilverSneakers LIVE and SilverSneakers On-Demand so you can exercise whenever you want, from wherever you want – even your own backyard.	<a href="http://www.silversneakers.com/live">www.silversneakers.com/live</a> <a href="http://www.silversneakers.com/ondemand">www.silversneakers.com/ondemand</a>

Make this summer different. Get active, make some new friends, and go outside and play every day! Go to [SilverSneakers.com](http://SilverSneakers.com) to get your ID number or find convenient locations\* and classes in your neighborhood. **Always talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.**

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## Schedule your wellness visit, get rewarded

Your annual wellness visit is one of your best tools for staying on top of your health. It gives you time to talk with your doctor about your health risks, preventive screenings, or chronic-condition-related testing. Your doctor might even recommend new habits for you to add to your routine. Plus, your visit will help keep you up to date on your preventive screenings and other tests.

Now is the time to schedule an appointment with your Primary Care Physician (PCP) in person or via telehealth for your annual wellness visit at no cost to you. In addition to this being best for your health, scheduling this visit also comes with a reward through AvMed's Healthyperks<sup>SM</sup> program. AvMed Medicare Members may earn a \$50 gift card for completing preventive care activities such as a wellness visit.



Annual maximum reward value applies, and the annual wellness visit reward is available only once per calendar year. [Learn more at AvMed.org/Healthyperks](http://Learn more at AvMed.org/Healthyperks)

# Robert and Ketty K.: Maintaining Healthy Bodies and Minds with AvMed

Robert and Ketty K. believe healthy lives start with regular physical and mental activity. “Exercising is what keeps us healthy,” said Ketty. “When we retired, we really did our research and chose AvMed so we could participate in virtual programs, like Dancing with TJ, to keep active.”

To stay fit, Robert is an avid runner and Ketty has participated in AvMed’s SilverSneakers program to attend spin and yoga classes at the YMCA. Together, they also enjoy going out dancing and riding their bikes.

In addition to exercising, the couple enjoys traveling to other areas of the world. Prior to the pandemic, Robert and Ketty had visited 47 countries. When the pandemic put a pause on many of their activities, they turned to AvMed’s Virtual Events and Club ASPIRE to remain active and engaged. Ketty added, “AvMed’s programs provided a fun and safe way to stay social – we had a nice group of people to talk with.”

Having taken full advantage of AvMed’s offerings, the couple enjoys sharing their experience with friends and family. Ketty said, “With all of the benefits of being an AvMed Member, we recommend them to everyone. Not only is the quality of care offered great, but we have so many great programs, events, and benefits – how many insurance companies do what they are doing?”

Beyond AvMed’s virtual events and programs, Robert and Ketty also maximize the benefits of AvMed’s Healthyperks program to spend quality time together. “You accumulate so many gift cards to stores and restaurants as well as movie passes which are very useful because we like to go out to together to eat and see movies,” Robert said.



Robert and Ketty enjoy traveling the world.



Feel inspired? Be sure to share your WELLfluent™ story with us by emailing [ASPIRE@AvMed.org](mailto:ASPIRE@AvMed.org)

# Flu shot myths — busted

## Flu season is coming. Don't miss out on the best protection.

If you're still wondering whether you need a flu shot, consider this: Only 5% of people wash their hands well enough to kill germs, according to a study in the *Journal of Environmental Health*. On top of that, 10% of people skip washing their hands altogether.

It's no wonder that flu can spread so easily and why getting vaccinated is so important. But only a little more than half of Americans get their shot during any given year. That's way below the 70% needed for maximum community protection.

One of the most important reasons to get the flu shot: to protect people who have chronic conditions. Those who have asthma, heart disease, diabetes, and many other conditions have a higher risk of developing serious complications, which can land them in the hospital or even lead to death. In fact, during recent flu seasons, 9 out of 10 people who were hospitalized with the flu had at least one underlying health condition.

"If you're going to be around people with chronic illness, you don't want to be the one to pass the flu to them," says Kisha Davis, M.D., medical director of the Casey Health Institute in Gaithersburg, Maryland. "And can you afford to take a week off work if you get sick?"

Don't think you need a flu shot or worried that the vaccination will make you sick? Keep reading to clear up any flu shot confusion.

### **Myth 1: Only babies and older adults need a flu shot**

Actually, everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It's especially important for adults 65 and older, pregnant women, and, of course, those with chronic conditions. Those groups are all at high risk of becoming seriously ill from the flu, and they're more likely to be hospitalized. And kids younger than 5 — especially those under 2 — are at especially high risk of developing serious flu-related illness.

According to the CDC, some 26,000 children under the age of 5 were hospitalized for the flu during the 2019-20 season. Even if you're not worried about yourself, get your shot to protect the little ones.

### **Myth 2: You can get the flu from a flu shot**

The flu shot uses dead viruses that can't make you sick. That doesn't mean the flu-like symptoms some people



feel after getting their shot are imagined. "Your body has to respond to the vaccine," Dr. Davis says. "So you might have some side effects that mimic the flu, such as runny nose, fever, and aches." These minor side effects usually last one to two days. If you're concerned about side effects, contact your doctor.

### **Myth 3: You shouldn't get a flu shot too early**

"It takes two weeks for the vaccine to be effective," Dr. Davis says. You'll get the most benefit if you get a flu shot as soon as they're available, since flu cases can pop up as early as October.

### **Myth 4: It's too late to get a flu shot in January**

Flu season peaks in January and February, but flu cases can occur as late as March or April. Though it's best to get a flu shot sooner rather than later, you may still benefit from getting one in late January or early February, Dr. Davis says.

### **Myth 5: A flu shot only protects you from certain strains, so there's no point**

Research shows that even if the strains included in a particular year's flu vaccine aren't a perfect match, a flu shot can still provide some protection against the circulating virus.

### **Myth 6: The flu vaccine is always given as a shot**

The flu vaccine is also available as a nasal spray. Usually, it's an alternative to the shot for people between the ages of 2 and 49 who are not pregnant and who don't have a health condition. Talk to your doctor about what's best for you.

# PROTECT YOURSELF AT HOME AND ON THE GO WITH THESE SMART FALL PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Falls are all too common among older adults. In fact, 1 in 3 older adults will fall this year. That's a big concern because bouncing back isn't always easy. Among seniors, falls are the top cause of injuries, including head injuries, fractures, and even spinal cord injuries, warns Dr. Cynthia J. Brown, director of the division of gerontology, geriatric, and palliative care at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Fortunately, some simple steps can safeguard your home and protect you on the go.

Your first step: Know the top home hazards. While a fall can happen anywhere, certain places invite more danger. One of the top places for concern: The bathroom. "I ask my patients to tell me one soft place they can land in their bathroom if they fall," says Brown. "All have answered that there aren't any." Dr Brown recommends installing grab bars in the shower or beside the toilet. It's also smart to use a nonslip mat in the shower. Stairs are another place where a fall can lead to a significant injury. Having

handrails on both sides and using them can reduce the risk of a fall, says Brown.

Don't let the fear of falling prevent you from walking, gardening, golfing, exercising and enjoying other activities. Here are some additional tips.

- Add good lighting and night lights
- Remove loose rugs, electrical cords, and other obstacles that cross pathways, especially between the bed and bathroom.
- **Ask your doctor for recommendations related to the following common fall risk factors: weakness, problems with balance or dizziness, vision or hearing problems, certain medications, and use of alcohol.**

Staying active and making your home safer can help you prevent falls. Take a look at the home safety tips on the next page.





# HOME SAFETY TIPS for the AvMed Community

Your home is your safe place. AvMed has suggestions to keep it safer. We recognize that your home is your sanctuary, we also know that accidents can happen. This list of safety tips has been created to ensure that home is not only where you belong, but where you can remain safe and comfortable.

## Medication Safety

- Keep all medications in labeled bottles
- Ask your pharmacist to print large letters on labels for better visibility
- Carry a list of all current medications
- Dispose of old and expired medications

## Bathroom Safety

- Add a non-slip surface to bathroom and shower floors
- Install grab bars in bathroom, near toilet and shower/tub

## Room Safety

- Make sure space heaters are at least 3 feet away from anything flammable (curtains, fabric, furniture.)
- Maintain good lighting in all walkways
- Install smoke detectors and check batteries monthly

## Miscellaneous Safety

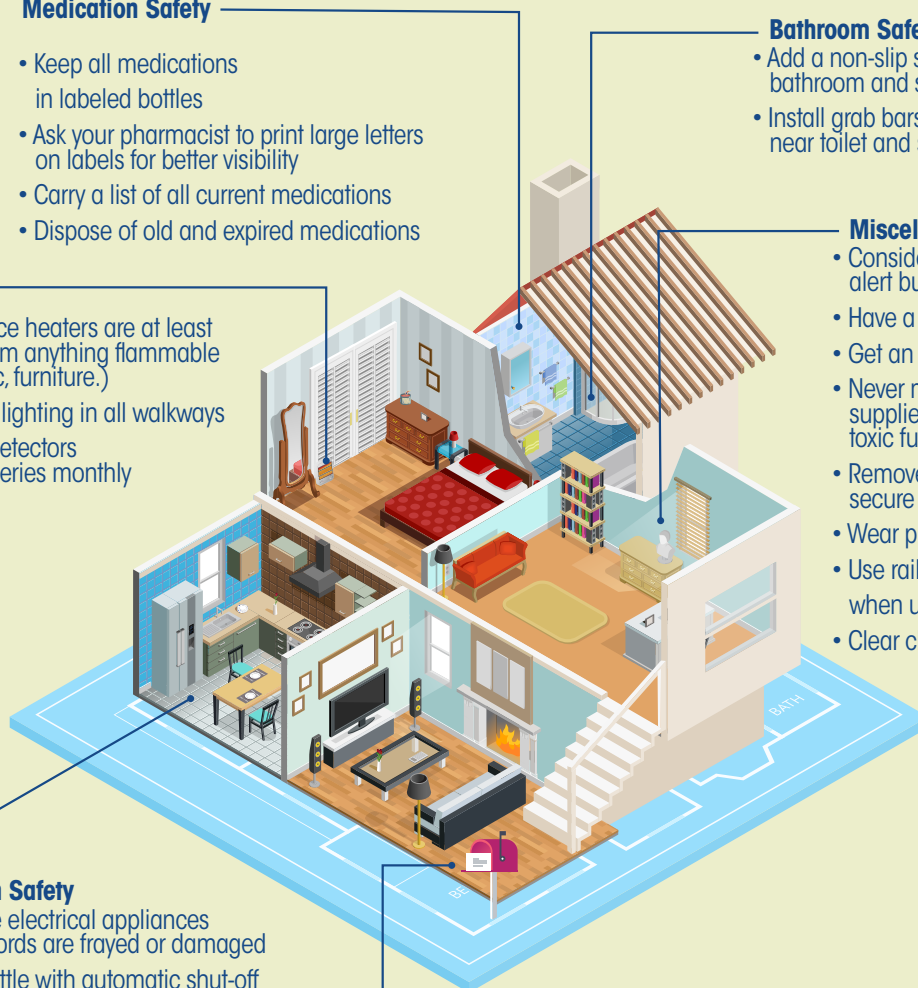
- Consider wearing a medical alert button or watch
- Have a first aid kit
- Get an extra pair of glasses
- Never mix home cleaning supplies, they can create toxic fumes
- Remove area rugs or secure them to the floor
- Wear proper fitting shoes
- Use rails and banisters when using the stairs
- Clear clutter

## Kitchen Safety

- Replace electrical appliances when cords are frayed or damaged
- Use a kettle with automatic shut-off
- Keep a fire extinguisher easily accessible
- Wipe up spills quickly

## Personal Information

- Do not respond to unsolicited requests for contests, prizes, or charities without verifying the source
- Never share personal or financial information



# Looking for ways to save this summer?

## Lower your prescription prices today.

Summer is finally here! Many of us have big plans for the warmer months—vacations, weddings, and home renovations among them. Free up space in your budget for these fun activities by lowering your prescription drug costs today.

AvMed can help! We've partnered with **Rx Savings Solutions** to offer you—and anyone covered on your plan—a way to find lower-cost prescription drugs covered by your insurance.

People who use Rx Savings Solutions save an average of \$459 per year\* for themselves and their plan. Those who regularly take prescriptions often save even more. Start saving today.

1. Log in to your AvMed Member Portal account.
2. Once logged in, select the Rx Savings Solutions on the left menu.

Don't let the cost of your prescription drugs get in the way of a healthy and happy summer!



\*Based on average annualized savings when individuals choose a lower-cost prescription recommended by Rx Savings Solutions (FY 2021).

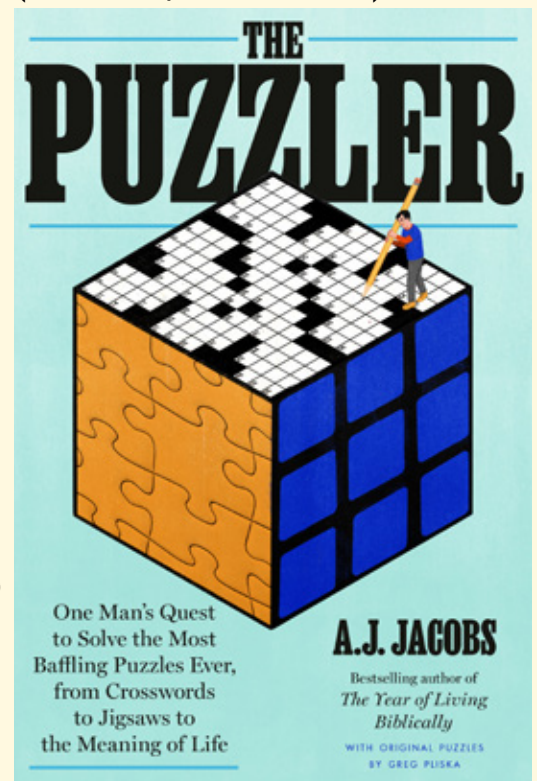
In his new book, **THE PUZZLER: One Man's Quest to Solve the Most Baffling Puzzles Ever**, from Crosswords to Jigsaws to the Meaning of Life (Crown; April 26, 2022), A.J. Jacobs has turned to his greatest passion: puzzles.

Jacobs takes readers on a delightful deep dive into each puzzle form and its devotees. He competes in the World Jigsaw Puzzle Championship. He gets a lesson in chess puzzles from Garry Kasparov. He matches wits with New York Times puzzle editor Will Shortz. He visits the CIA headquarters to see a puzzle even the CIA codebreakers haven't cracked.

But this isn't just a book about puzzles. This is a book of puzzles. For those readers up to the challenge, **THE PUZZLER** includes dozens of history's most entertaining and baffling puzzles. Why just read about the first crossword puzzle from 1913 when you can also solve it? And for those who like modern puzzles, **THE PUZZLER** also has new, never-before-published puzzles created just for the book by Greg Pliska, one of America's top puzzle-makers.

He examines the science of puzzles and why humans love this form of mental gymnastics (which often veers into mental torture). He shows how puzzles actually make us better thinkers and better people. We all need to adopt the puzzle mindset when approaching life.

Puzzles inspire us to engage in flexible thinking, to tackle programs from new angles and perspectives, to remain curious, and to work together on solutions—lessons that are applicable to so many of life's greater challenges.



# AvMed RESPONDS



## » MEET DR. LAWSON

### KEEPING YOUR EYES HEALTHY WITH REGULAR EXAMS

For this issue we interviewed Dr. Kenneth Lawson about the importance of routine diabetic eye exams. Dr. Lawson, iCare Health Solutions Medical Director, is passionate about preventive health that helps patients maintain their eye health and sight.

#### 1. Why is it important for AvMed Medicare Members to get routine diabetic eye exams?

In America today, diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults. In fact, diabetes can easily damage your eye health without you even knowing or becoming aware of a problem. Some people may think because their A1c levels are good, they don't need eye exams. However, since diabetes can damage small blood vessels inside your body and cause loss of blood flow, a routine exam is vital to vision health.

#### 2. How can diabetes damage the eye?

Once blood flow is decreased, your body's organs can lose their ability to work properly. The longer a person has diabetes, the risk for organ damage increases, even if blood sugar levels are kept under control.

Unfortunately, the fine and delicate blood vessels inside your eye make it a more vulnerable organ to diabetes related damage. In addition, diabetic eye disease may cause no noticeable symptoms or blurry vision until it has progressed, sometimes to the point where eye damage cannot be repaired.

#### 3. What is the diabetic eye exam like?

During your annual eye exam, your medical history, eye function, and eye health will be assessed and measured with your eyes dilated to provide the doctor the best view of the inside of your eyes. While this is something many patients are concerned about, advances in dilation have resulted in drops that make the dilation time frame shorter, improving the overall experience.

With the findings and wide field camera images in hand, the doctor will then review to check the actual blood vessels and structures inside your eyes. This



report is then shared with your primary care physician to best coordinate care and keep you healthy. At my office, we will also provide you a take home AMSLER GRID test to allow you to monitor for any early changes in your sight that might indicate the start of swelling, bleeding, or fluid build-up.

#### 4. With regular eye exams, is diabetic eye disease preventable??

The good news is if you have your eyes examined on a yearly basis, diabetic eye disease can easily be detected and, in most cases, very successfully treated to preserve your sight. Through early detection and treatment of beginning eye disease, it is very easy to keep your eyes healthy.

#### 5. Any word of advice to encourage healthier living?

I believe that healthy eyes create healthy lives. As an eye doctor, one of my most important jobs is to make sure diabetes does not have a chance to rob my patients of their eye health or sight. Beyond routine eye exams, I encourage my patients to stay active and monitor their weight.

I also encourage patients to take control of their health and be proactive about routine visits and exams. By working together with your doctor, your eye health and vision can be preserved, and it all starts with your commitment to check your eyes on a regular basis.

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- AvMed website: **www.AvMed.org**
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## Mental health support. On your terms.

If you're feeling extra stress, anxiety, depression, or isolation right now, you're not alone. **Sanvello can help.**

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**Get started**

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9:41  
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Harper  
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you?  
SKIP

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Enrollment in AvMed Medicare depends on contract renewal.