

ASPIRE

Summer 2021

**Mary K's Advice:
Never Stop
Learning**

Find Your Fun

Summer Safety

Rx Savings Solution



**AvMed Member
Mary K.**

feature

7 Mary K's
Advice:
Never Stop
Learning



in every issue

- 3 WELCOME
- 4 WISE & WELL
- 10 AVMED RESPONDS

5 Safe
Summer
Outings



8 Tips to Prevent
Falls

9 Rx Savings
Solutions is Now
Available!



ASPIRE

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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 Medicare Member:



Find Your Fun this summer! You deserve it. Head outdoors, take a walk and soak up some sun while reflecting on the rest of the year. What are you doing to embrace better health?

In this issue of **ASPIRE**, we provide healthy tips for

staying safe during summer outings and while resuming your travel plans. Remember to get plenty of fluids as the temperature rises – on a hot South Florida day dehydration can sneak up faster than you might expect.

If you're not ready or able to go outside yet, you can participate in AvMed's Virtual events like our AvMed Member, Mary K. These activities are helping her stay happy and engaged. Check out Mary's top 5 virtual events on page 7.

We also have exciting news to share about a new behavioral health app and cost savings opportunities on prescription medications. We have teamed up with

Optum to introduce you to the Sanvello app. It helps to support our Member's mental health needs all in a safe, private manner. Plus, you now have access to Rx Savings Solutions. It provides you with lower-cost options for you and your family.

We are committed to your well-being and helping you thrive, offering information to support your WELLfluent™ life – from vaccinations to fall prevention to managing your diabetes.

This issue of **ASPIRE**, like every issue is full of information you can use over the summer while focusing on what really matters – living.

Send me an email with your comments. I look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James M. Repp'.

James M. Repp

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Share Your WELLfluent™ Life! How are you joining the WELLfluent? Email us at ASPIRE@AvMed.org with your story and photo or share it on Facebook – tag AvMed and use the hashtag **#JoinTheWELLfluent**. You could be featured in an upcoming issue of the magazine.

Steps to a Great Summer: Find Your Fun!

Try these no-hassle ways to stay healthy and feel your best.

Rise and shine

A recent study found that the earlier in the day people were exposed to bright sunlight, the better they maintained their weight. Scientists aren't yet sure why, but it may have something to do with the effects of morning light on the hormones that regulate appetite. It's also possible that it's because people who get up earlier are more active during the day. Aim for 20 minutes of sunlight between 8 a.m. and noon. Sip your coffee in the sun or take a walk before it gets too hot.

Skip the gym, head outside

"Get outside and physically move your body from point A to point B," says Jeff Archibald, a fitness trainer in Los Angeles. You'll work different muscles than you use walking on a treadmill or cycling. Plus, exercising outside leads to more positive thinking, according to a report in *Environmental Science and Technology*. After a 30-minute walk in the park, most people in the study said they felt less stressed than before.

Swallow some sunblock

No, not literally. "Brightly colored fruits and vegetables have 'SPF qualities' like sunscreen due to the phytochemicals that give them their bright colors," says Lara Dalch, a health coach in New York. "Tomatoes, carrots, berries, and dark leafy greens are a few examples of foods to eat to boost your skin's natural sun protection," adds Dalch. That doesn't mean you can skip putting on the external sunscreen, though. Think of these foods as extra protection.

Set a goal to do good

Plenty of research has shown that giving to others makes people happy, but a study from Stanford University found that setting a specific goal for doing good can work even better. Maybe you decide to donate a day's worth of meals to a food bank, to volunteer a certain number of hours per week, or to walk or run a 5K for a cause you believe in.



Know the signs of dehydration and heat stroke

Your risk for heat-related health problems increases with age. So, it's important to know the warning signs.

Dehydration: When your body loses water faster than you can replace it, you experience mild dehydration. Signs include increased thirst, a dry mouth, and dark yellow urine.

Heat stroke: When your body temperature is higher than normal due to the weather, it's known as hyperthermia. Heat stroke is a severe form of hyperthermia that occurs when your temperature is over 104°F. It is a medical emergency. Get help right away if you notice these signs:

- Strong, fast heartbeat
- Dry skin and lack of sweat
- Confusion or staggering
- Fainting or unconsciousness



For more tips on staying healthy this summer visit www.cdc.gov.

Safe Summer Outings with Chronic Illness

Strategies to help you plan for healthy trips.

Managing a chronic illness can be challenging in the best circumstances. But that doesn't mean you have to stay home. Whether you're heading out for a day at the beach or a week-long stay, with some preparation and precautions, you can have your summer fun and manage your health conditions.

Before you go

Ask your provider about any precautions you need to take when away, like adjusting dosages or timing of medications. You may want to ask for a note stating your condition and listing any medications or devices you need to have with you. This will make it easier to get through any security checkpoints and serve as a packing list, so you don't forget anything. You may also need to ask for a copy of your prescriptions in case you need a refill when you're far from home.

Air travel

Call your airline if you have any questions about airport security screening, traveling with medications, and what to expect at checkpoints. Find good information at www.tsa.gov/travel/special-procedures.

Pack your medical supplies in your carry-on bag. Do not put medication in checked luggage. It could be exposed to extreme cold or heat — and it might not arrive when you do. If you have a condition like diabetes, carry snacks and glucose tablets or gel in case your blood sugar suddenly drops.

Keep in mind that most airlines and destinations still have COVID-19 rules in place, so be sure to review those before you travel and prepare accordingly. Local regulations vary, and many businesses and venues require everyone, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask and practice social distancing. (If you haven't already done so, consider getting a COVID-19 vaccination before you travel.)

Road trip

Don't stash medications in the glove box or trunk. It may get too warm and may lose its effectiveness. If you have medications that need refrigeration, keep



them in a cooler with a gel pack. Know where your necessary medications are at all times.

At the beach

Don't go barefoot when walking on the beach or in the water. Broken shells or glass could cut your feet. You also need a plan for keeping medications out of the sun. Again, some may need to be stored in a cooler to avoid getting too warm. And don't forget to watch your own sun and heat exposure. Some conditions and medications can make you extra sensitive to the sun and heat. Drink plenty of water and bring a beach umbrella for shade.

Things You Should Do Annually to Manage Diabetes

Use this checklist to help make sure you're on top of your care plan.

The number of treatment options for people with diabetes is large — but you need to be your own best advocate. “Diabetes is a devastating disease if not treated,” says Nora Saul, R.D., a certified diabetes educator with Joslin Diabetes Center.

Saul recommends reviewing your diabetes care plan with your healthcare provider and team every year. This review should include a check-in of what's on the list below:

1. Blood glucose review and check of A1C levels

The A1C test measures the blood glucose (blood sugar) in your blood by assessing the amount of what's called glycated hemoglobin. An A1C level below 5.7 percent is considered normal. An A1C between 5.7 and 6.4 percent signals prediabetes. Type 2 diabetes is diagnosed when the A1C is over 6.5 percent. At your annual check-ins, make note in writing of where your levels are, and where you and your provider would like them to be (usually below 7 percent for well controlled diabetics).

2. Weight and body mass index

If your weight or BMI have increased year over year, talk to your provider about lifestyle strategies to manage them.

3. Blood pressure, triglycerides, and cholesterol

At your exams, also make note of these in writing, as well as where you and your provider would like them to be.

4. Eyes

Get a dilated retinal exam by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Diabetes improperly treated can lead to diabetic retinopathy, which can cause vision loss if not treated.



5. Feet

Have your doctor examine your feet at least once a year, including checks for blood circulation, nerve detection and sensitivity.

6. Kidneys

Have your urine and blood checked at least once a year for albumin and creatinine, the levels of which determine how your kidneys are functioning.



For more ways to stay healthy while living with diabetes, visit www.diabetes.org/healthy-living.

Mary K's advice for a full life: Never stop learning.

Mary K. is a regular at our AvMed Virtual Events and considers it one of her best decisions. In her words, "You can never learn enough and never stop learning."

After working for 30 years as an HR Manager, Mary moved to Broward to live near her family. She enjoys spending time with her loved ones, including her two sons and six grandchildren. And when she's not with them, she's making several AvMed Virtual Events part of her routine. These are helping her stay happy, active and engaged with computers.

"AvMed comes forth in every way, shape or form for me," says Mary. And the Virtual Events are a way that AvMed goes above and beyond. When asked which event is her favorite, she didn't want to name just one. Instead, she shares a list of her top five events, and encourages other AvMed Medicare Members to join as well. "You won't regret it!" — Mary K.

Mary's Top 5 Virtual Events:

- 1. Ageless Face Yoga** — It's amazing! I thought it was for the face, but you exercise your whole body without getting out of the chair.
- 2. Purposeful Movements with TJ** — It has made me aware of the need to breathe deeply. I'm a shallow breather and he has us lift our arms, and smile, and drop them down and exhale. It feels really good.
- 3. Savvy Senior Tech** — I learned to use Facebook and different things we can do with the computer. I knew the basics, and now the second class will teach me more.



Mary K. participating in AvMed Virtual Events

4. Art with Lisa — We did a neat thing with Lisa and now I'm going to do the same art exercise with my eight-year-old granddaughter.

5. Empowering Drums — The instructor sings and we beat drums with a beach or exercise ball, and two wooden spoons or drumsticks. It's a fun get-together.

Mary's also a volunteer at two elementary schools and at the Salvation Army. But when the coronavirus pandemic started, her activities stopped. AvMed's Virtual Events kept her socially active, "You feel like you have a social gathering with friends every week, you don't leave the house and don't have to wear a mask," she shares.

When it comes to the instructors delivering the events, Mary describes the teachers as "extremely wonderful – they are knowledgeable, patient, and all do different things. They all provide a different item that we need, and that's what I love."



To join Mary and other AvMed Medicare Members during one of our AvMed Virtual events, visit: www.AvMed.org/About-Us/Calendar.

5 Tips to Prevent Falls

Protect yourself at home and on-the-go with these strategies.

Falls are all too common among older adults. In fact, 1 in 3 older adults fall every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That's a big concern because bouncing back isn't always so simple. Falls are the top cause of injuries in older adults, including head injuries, fractures, and even spinal cord injuries, warns Cynthia J. Brown, M.D., director of the division of gerontology, geriatrics, and palliative care at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Fortunately, some simple steps can safeguard your home and protect you on the go.

1. Know the top home hazards

While a fall can happen anywhere, certain places invite more danger. One of the top rooms for concern: the bathroom. Why? There's no soft place to land. Dr. Brown recommends installing grab bars in the shower and beside the toilet. It's also smart to use a non-slip 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.

2. Take a walking tour

Walk through your home at different times of day and ask these questions:

- Are the pathways clear?
- Is there room for you and your ambulatory device, such as a cane or walker, if you have one?
- Are there loose rugs you can trip over?
- Is the lighting bright enough to allow you to see clearly?

3. Give yourself a steady foundation

Studies show that footwear can make a difference in avoiding falls, says Dr. Brown. "Shoes with good support, low heels, and a back—no slip-ons—are best," she says.



4. Improve strength, balance, and flexibility

"Staying strong is critical, since people who are weak are four times as likely to fall as people who are stronger," says Dr. Brown. If needed, your healthcare provider can refer you to a physical therapist who can teach you an exercise routine to do in your home, adds Dr. Brown.

5. Talk with your doctor

If you're concerned about falls or risk factors that affect your mobility, make sure to bring up the topic with your healthcare provider. They can watch you walk and check to see how steady you are. They can also review your medications to see if any might contribute to falls. Other factors that increase a person's fall risk include: poor vision, dizziness, circulation issues in your feet, and memory problems.



For simple guidelines to prevent falls, stay safe and active, visit www.SilverSneakers.com or call **1-888-423-4632** (TTY 711), Monday - Friday, 8 am to 8 pm. Always talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Watch Out for Fraud Scams Targeting Older Americans



Fraudsters targeting older adults are becoming more creative. “Scammers stay on top of whatever is new, such as the popularity of Zoom, COVID-19 vaccines and online shopping and then move fast to create ploys that best fit the moment,” says Amy Nofziger, director of fraud victim support at AARP.



To read more about scams happening widely right now, visit www.aarp.org

Rx Savings Solutions is Now Available

Find lower prices for your prescriptions

AvMed understands the importance of keeping prescription medication costs down. We also know that prescription prices vary depending on where they are filled. That’s why we’ve collaborated with Rx Savings Solutions, a pharmacy transparency service that shows you the lowest-price option(s) for any prescriptions you and your family take now and in the future.

Unlike other price-shopping tools, Rx Savings Solutions also suggests lower-cost medications that work just as effectively as those you’re currently taking.

Best of all, Rx Savings Solutions will notify you via email or text whenever you have an opportunity to save. Activate your account today!



Questions? Contact Rx Savings Solutions Pharmacy Support Team. Rx Savings Solutions Pharmacy Support Team is staffed with Certified Pharmacy Technicians available to assist with prescription questions. They can be reached Monday-Friday from 7 am-8 pm CT at 1-800-268-4476 or support@rxsavingsolutions.com

MEET DR. BRAVER

The pandemic may not be entirely over, but now we can see the light at the other end of the tunnel. We talked to Dr. Beth Braver, a board-certified specialist in internal medicine, with over 25 years of experience treating patients with a variety of acute and chronic disorders, to shed more light on wellness, from vaccinations to how to avoid falls. To send a question to Dr. Braver, visit <https://www.bethandhowardbravermd.com/>.

THE ROLE OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE IN OUR LIVES

During our conversation, Dr. Braver highlights the importance of vaccination, as it enables us to have more immunity from COVID-19. She believes that our Medicare Members need to start living their lives again - go to the mall, go shopping, and exercise outside. She adds that it's important for older adults to socialize again and be around family and friends.

When asked what she would say to anyone feeling hesitant about getting vaccinated, she points out that "the amount of rare occurrences of tragic side effects are so small compared to getting COVID-19, that you're safer getting the vaccine. Socialization is part of our culture, it's very important."

RETURN TO YOUR NORMAL LIFE STRONGER AND WITHOUT FALLS

One of four adults over age 65 experiences a fall every second. To help minimize your risk of falling, Dr. Braver recommends exercising and doing stretching classes to help maintain your flexibility. She also suggests you evaluate your surroundings, like carpet or area rugs to make sure they're secure to avoid tripping.

Dr. Braver recommends doing everything you can to avoid falling. AvMed's SWORD health program is a great option as a new digital physical therapy program designed to help you get active at home and lower your chances of having a fall. SWORD combines physical therapists with easy-to-use technology so you can safely get moving again without even leaving home.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

As doctors prescribe medications to help improve their patients' quality of life, Dr. Braver stresses that "if

a doctor prescribes medication for you, there's a reason, whether you have high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease... So when you stop taking them, whatever illness you're taking them for, will be uncontrolled and that can contribute to feeling poorly and other acute problems can happen, such as hospitalizations."

If you get your prescriptions mailed to you, make sure to not leave them out in the hot sun as they can become less effective when exposed to extreme heat. Check your mailbox daily.

IT'S SAFE TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR AGAIN, ONLINE OR IN PERSON

Once people are vaccinated, it's safer to go back to the doctor. A lot of these facilities are up to date on how to screen for COVID-19 to ensure safety. If you postpone your check-ups and get your exams too late, a condition may have progressed to a point where it cannot be treated any more.

Dr. Braver shares that at the beginning of the pandemic, her clinic used telemedicine quite a bit because patients were afraid. But now it's best to see your doctor in person if you can. However, if you have a cold, need a refill or saw your doctor recently, a short telemedicine appointment can work well for you without having to expose yourself unnecessarily.



"To stay healthy, make sure you get enough sleep at night, eat as healthy as you can, exercise and stay active. And if you do these most days, the chances of you having a healthier life are much greater."

Dr. Beth Braver



Quest Diagnostics - Your Lab Partner Remember, most health screenings and routine lab work can be done with AvMed's participating lab partner, Quest Diagnostics. Members have access to a secure tool that makes it easy for you to get lab test results, schedule appointments, track your health history and more, all in one place. Visit: [MyQuest.questdiagnostics.com](https://www.MyQuest.questdiagnostics.com).

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Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-800-882-8633 (TTY: 711).

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注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-800-882-8633 (TTY: 711)。

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ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните 1-800-882-8633 (телетайп: 711).

ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اذكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم 1-800-882-8633 (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: 711).

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SKIP

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