

Seniors, blue Line



SUMMER 2012

inside:

- Protect your home while on vacation
- Health & Wellness Companion

BLUELINE... YOUR CONNECTION TO ALBERTA BLUE CROSS

Promoting the health of Alberta seniors

As an Alberta-based and community-minded organization, Alberta Blue Cross is passionate about making a genuine difference in communities across our province. *We live in the communities we serve, and we serve in the communities in which we live.*

One of the key elements of our community involvement approach is leading and supporting province-wide health and wellness projects and initiatives, to promote and support the health of Albertans—including seniors. Here's a look at some of our current and upcoming involvements.

Promoting vision health

In spring 2012, Alberta Blue Cross sponsored a campaign with the CNIB Alberta to raise awareness and provide information about age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of vision loss among Albertans. This campaign included public information sessions held in Edmonton and Red Deer, with additional sessions to be held in Calgary and Lethbridge in the fall. For more information about the upcoming sessions or information about CNIB programs, please contact your closest CNIB office or visit them online at www.cnib.ca/en/alberta.

Supporting Albertans with arthritis

Did you know that arthritis is now the most common cause of disability in Canada? With the number of

Albertans living with arthritis growing rapidly and arthritis-related costs to our health care system increasing dramatically, Alberta Blue Cross is partnering with the Arthritis Society Alberta division to sponsor community education forums that will be held in Edmonton and Calgary during Arthritis Month in September 2012. Additional forums will be held in Red Deer and Grande Prairie later in the fall. For more information about living with arthritis or these upcoming forums, visit www.arthritis.ca or contact the Arthritis Society at 1-800-321-1433.

Raising awareness about MS

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune, degenerative, neurological disease that often affects a person's abilities to walk and also often results in other problematic disabilities. MS touches the lives of many Albertans. In fact, Alberta has the highest rate of MS in the world. On September 28 and 29, 2012, the MS Society of Alberta will host its annual MS Connections Conference in Calgary to provide information on a wide variety of MS-related topics. Alberta Blue Cross is pleased to be a sponsor of this event. For more information about the conference, please visit www.mssociety.ca/alberta or contact the MS Society toll-free at 1-800-268-7582.

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Return undeliverable addresses to:

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Addressing the challenges of obesity

Obesity is a chronic disease that affects about one million Albertans, or over 25 per cent of the province's population. It is the most pervasive, progressive and serious of chronic diseases facing our province, and is linked to 22 other chronic diseases. Recognizing that obesity is a key health issue facing Albertans, in spring 2012 Alberta Blue Cross entered a partnership with the Canadian Obesity Network to work together to address

this important health issue. Alberta Blue Cross is the first benefit carrier in Canada to join this network.

For more information about Alberta Blue Cross's community involvements, please visit our web site at www.ab.bluecross.ca.



Are you using the Health & Wellness Companion yet?

As an Alberta Blue Cross Seniors Plus plan member, you have free access to the Alberta Blue Cross Health & Wellness Companion. The Companion is a secure, user-friendly web site that offers a variety of health-related resources including health assessments, an innovative symptom checker and comprehensive health resource library and prescription drug information database. Plus, if you're interested in receiving the latest health information, you can subscribe to receive monthly news updates by e-mail. All you need to access this site is your valid Alberta Blue Cross ID card number.

Health risk assessment

If you're interested in maintaining or improving your health, this easy-to-use tool can be used to assess your health, target health risk factors and track improvements over time. There are also specific assessments on nutrition, smoking, sleep, alcohol consumption, depression, stress and physical activity. The health assessment is divided into four main sections: personal information, lifestyle, medical history and stress and well-being.

Personal health record

You can create and maintain your own personal health record, which can be used to track emergency contacts, medical history and conditions, allergies, immunizations and more. Since the record is managed exclusively by you, you determine how much or how little information you want it to contain. You can access or update your record anytime and even share it in part or in whole online with your physician.

Comprehensive health library and drug information database

If you have questions or concerns or just need some information, this section contains a database of medications, diseases and conditions as well as a wide range of articles, links and information on thousands of topics regarding conditions, tests, treatment options and more.

Monthly health news updates

Interested in getting the latest information? You'll find news on a variety of health topics with a changing monthly focus highlighting particular topics of interest.



To access the Health & Wellness Companion, visit www.ab.bluecross.ca, navigate to the Health & Wellness Companion section, register if this is your first time using the site, then sign in using your Alberta Blue Cross ID number.

Gardening does the body good

Gardening is an enjoyable pastime for many people, as well as an excellent form of exercise to help with mobility, flexibility and endurance. This type of low-impact physical activity can also promote relaxation to help you rest better at night.

The following are a few tips to help you stay safe and avoid injury while working in the garden this summer:

- warm up by doing a few stretches before starting any gardening activities; this will help to reduce muscle soreness;
- bend at the knees and hip to avoid back injury;
- drink plenty of fluids to keep your body well hydrated;
- take care of cuts, bruises, scrapes and insect bites right away to avoid infection;
- sit on a small stool or use a padded kneeling mat for greater comfort;
- try to work in the garden in the early morning or late in the day to avoid the blazing midday heat; and
- wear comfortable clothes (including gardening gloves) and shoes, as well as a hat and sunscreen.



Stay cool this summer

Everyone loves being outdoors enjoying the sunshine and warm weather during the summer months. It is important however, to listen to your body when enjoying the summer weather. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke can happen quickly and can be quite dangerous. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include blurred vision, nausea, cramps and pale, cold, clammy skin.

Tips for staying cool in the heat:

- Try to get your errands done, dog walked and lawn cut early in the morning or at night.
- Drink lots of water—not caffeine or alcohol which will dehydrate you quicker.
- If you don't have air conditioning at home, visit shopping malls, libraries, seniors' centres, movie theatres and other chilled buildings.
- Pace your physical activity while outdoors.
- Keep to shaded areas.
- Wear loose, light-coloured clothing, a wide-brimmed hat and sunscreen.
- Take a quick dip in a pool to cool off, or take a cool shower.
- If you live in a two-storey home, open your upstairs windows slightly to force out rising hot air.
- Keep tabs on older friends, family and neighbours during extreme heat alerts. Make sure they are in a cool place.



Bring added value to your plan with Blue Advantage

As an Alberta Blue Cross Seniors Plus plan member, you can enjoy savings on health-related products and services provided across Canada through the Blue Advantage program. Some of these products and services include vision care products, dental products, hearing aids and more.

The Blue Advantage program is unique because it provides you with savings at the point of sale on the total cost of products and services from participating providers, regardless of whether the item is covered under your health plan or not. To find savings, visit www.blueadvantage.ca (also available as a link through the plan member section of the Alberta Blue Cross web site). Then to receive discounts, simply present your Alberta Blue Cross ID card to the participating provider and mention the Blue Advantage program.





Taking a bite out of Alberta

Eating local foods is not only better for your health, but also for the environment. You'll leave behind a vastly smaller carbon footprint because you're not buying imported food which has been shipped thousands of kilometres to get to your 'local' food store.

Support sustainable food production by buying from local farmers and farmers' markets or by seeking local products at your grocery store. Farmers' markets offer a full range of fresh produce and you can find everything from eggs and meat to fruit and vegetables, plus much more.

For a list of Alberta markets, visit www.albertamarkets.com

Tips to protect your home while away on vacation

Protect both your house and your peace of mind during your summer vacations by following these easy suggestions for protecting your home if you are going to be away for an extended period of time.

- Cancel the newspaper and suspend your mail delivery while you're away, or ask a friend to pick up your newspaper and mail every couple of days.
- Hire someone to mow your lawn.
- Ask a friend, relative or trusted neighbour to check on your home regularly.
- Use timers on your lights to give the impression that someone is home, and install motion-sensor lights outside.
- Consider leaving a vehicle of your own in the driveway instead of inside the garage, or asking a neighbour to use your driveway while you're gone.
- Leave a house key with a friend or neighbour—not hidden outside.
- Turn the water heater down to its vacation setting.
- Ensure all windows, doors and garage are locked and secure before you leave.
- Unplug all electronics including the television, coffee maker and computer to protect them from power surges.
- Don't post your vacation plans, especially the dates, on social networking sites; you don't want the wrong person to have access to that information.



Going away this summer?

Emergency medical travel coverage is something every Albertan should have when they travel outside of the province. Even if your travels are within Canada but outside of Alberta, you could still end up with sizable medical bills not covered by provincial health care. In the past, Alberta Blue Cross has paid over \$15,000 just to transport one patient back to Alberta by air ambulance.

Before you travel this summer, get emergency medical travel coverage from Alberta Blue Cross and enjoy your trip knowing you have affordable protection against the high cost of surprise illness, accident or injury.

For the protection you need this summer, call Alberta Blue Cross today at 1-800-661-6995.



All Seniors Plus customers are eligible for a 10 per cent discount on Alberta Blue Cross out-of-province emergency medical travel coverage.

Let us know if you move

It's important to notify Alberta Blue Cross of any change in your address so that we can keep our files up-to-date and avoid sending potentially sensitive health information to an incorrect person. If you are planning on moving, please let us know. It is your responsibility to ensure we have your current information.

How to change your address online:

- go to www.ab.bluecross.ca/online_services.html,
- select the Individual plan member tab,
- sign in to the secure web site,
- visit the personal, banking and ID card info section, and
- proceed to update your address information.

If you don't have access to the Internet, or you need to change your address to an international residence, you can quickly and easily change your address by calling Alberta Blue Cross Customer Service toll free at 1-800-661-6995.



Looking for tax savings?

Alberta Blue Cross premiums for health and dental coverage can be added to your other medical expenses when calculating tax credits. All medical expenses, including health and dental plan premiums, may be claimed for any 12-month period ending in the taxation year, against either spouse's income.

To claim your premiums, include them in your total medical expenses on your tax return. Call your accountant or Canada Revenue Agency for more details about how Alberta Blue Cross health and dental premiums can save you tax dollars.

Medication changes may affect travel coverage

If you purchased travel coverage for an imminent trip, please be aware that any new medications or changes to your existing medication could render your travel plan void. If your doctor has altered your medication in any way between the date you applied for travel coverage and your departure date, contact Alberta Blue Cross immediately to ensure your travel coverage is still valid for your upcoming trip.



Keep your mind active!

Challenge your mind with words

This word search game is a great way to challenge your mind—and support your mental health. The objective is to find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell out a secret message; the topic is “the public library.”

A	C	S	E	I	V	O	M	S	E	N	I	Z	A	G	A	M	L	I	R	B
R	S	H	A	V	Y	G	O	L	O	H	C	Y	S	P	R	W	E	N	E	R
Y	A	R	E	I	R	S	N	L	I	B	R	A	R	Y	C	A	R	D	C	E
G	P	B	E	C	O	E	S	E	L	B	A	T	T	Y	A	N	I	Y	R	I
O	P	L	R	P	K	S	S	O	U	A	W	O	R	R	O	B	N	H	E	P
L	L	S	L	A	A	O	C	E	C	X	N	A	U	I	R	M	T	P	A	O
A	I	T	R	I	N	P	U	I	R	I	N	G	T	Y	E	U	E	O	T	C
T	E	R	B	I	T	C	S	T	T	O	A	A	U	N	U	S	R	S	I	O
A	D	A	T	Y	A	E	H	W	I	A	M	L	C	A	T	I	N	O	O	T
C	S	D	P	H	R	H	R	T	E	R	M	Y	S	E	G	C	E	L	N	O
O	C	U	A	P	N	E	C	A	O	N	C	E	C	C	O	E	T	I	T	H
E	I	E	P	A	H	I	V	F	T	L	O	H	H	M	I	E	S	H	E	P
S	E	D	E	R	D	I	N	O	O	U	N	F	P	T	U	E	T	P	I	B
L	N	A	R	G	F	I	S	P	C	O	R	U	H	D	A	E	N	N	U	O
E	C	T	B	O	E	I	E	T	L	D	T	E	R	C	E	M	S	C	Q	O
V	E	E	A	E	S	D	N	O	O	E	R	E	L	I	G	I	O	N	E	K
O	I	T	C	G	I	I	G	E	R	R	V	A	F	I	C	T	I	O	N	S
N	E	S	K	A	O	Y	F	S	S	O	Y	L	H	C	R	A	E	S	E	R
S	E	V	L	E	H	S	L	A	C	I	D	O	I	R	E	P	R	E	A	D
I	F	L	I	B	R	A	R	I	A	N	E	B	I	O	G	R	A	P	H	Y

Source: puzzles.ca/wordsearch

- APPLIED SCIENCE
- ARTS
- BIOGRAPHY
- BOOKS
- BORROW
- BRANCH
- CATALOG
- CHAIRS
- CHECKOUT
- COMPUTERS
- DICTIONARY
- DUE DATE
- ENCYCLOPEDIA
- FICTION
- FINES
- GEOGRAPHY
- HARDCOVER
- HISTORY
- INFORMATION
- INTERNET
- LANGUAGES
- LIBRARIAN
- LIBRARY CARD
- LITERATURE
- MAGAZINES
- MATHEMATICS
- MOVIES
- MUSIC
- NEWSPAPERS
- NOVELS
- OVERDUE
- PAPERBACK
- PERIODICALS
- PHILOSOPHY
- PHOTOCOPIER
- PSYCHOLOGY
- QUIET
- READ
- RECREATION
- RELIGION
- RENEW
- RESEARCH
- RESERVE
- SHELVES
- SOCIAL SCIENCES
- TABLES
- TECHNOLOGY

Hidden message: A LIBRARY IS NOT A LUXURY BUT ONE OF THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE



If you have a question about your Alberta Blue Cross coverage, we're as close as your telephone.

- Edmonton** 780-498-8000
- Calgary** 403-234-9666
- Red Deer** 403-343-7009
- Lethbridge** 403-328-1785
- Medicine Hat** 403-529-5553
- Grande Prairie** 780-532-3505

Toll free from anywhere in Alberta
1-800-661-6995

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Check out our web site at:
www.ab.bluecross.ca

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