Promoting active living at all ages

Alberta Blue Cross is very pleased to be a sponsor of the 2015 Alberta 55 Plus Summer Games being held in Strathmore from July 16 to 19. The Alberta 55 Plus Games is the province's premier multi-sport and cultural event. It promotes physical, intellectual and social wellness regardless of age or ability.

More than 1,200 participants from across the province are expected to attend this year's games, with 17 categories ranging from swimming and golf to cribbage and horse shoes. The games also involve more than 700 volunteers.

For more information, visit the games web site at www.2015strathmoregames.ca.
When 82-year-old John* agreed to accompany his two sisters to Hawaii in January he wasn’t expecting to fall off a sea wall and break his hip on the third day of his vacation. Nor did he expect medical expenses of over $47,000. But with Alberta Blue Cross travel insurance, everything was covered—including an emergency airlift, hip surgery, 10 days in the hospital and even his delayed flight home to Edmonton.

Are you planning a trip?

If so, make sure you contact Alberta Blue Cross to get travel insurance before you go. When planning a trip, most people are focused on all the fun they’ll have—not on possible emergencies that could occur. Still, you can never be too careful when travelling, so making sure you are protected before you go can help you avoid potentially expensive medical emergencies.

You can count on us

Alberta Blue Cross out-of-province emergency medical coverage includes the Travel Assistance Service. This service offers trained medical personnel ready to assist you 24/7 to locate an appropriate provider for treatment. It also provides service in most major languages, coordinates payment to a provider of service, monitors medical treatment and arranges transportation/evacuation in the event of a medical emergency.

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

For the protection you need while travelling, call Alberta Blue Cross today at 1-800-394-1965.

Coverage that’s there when you need it the most

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“People just don’t know how much medical expenses can cost and how necessary coverage is outside of Alberta,” says John. “They charge you separately for everything there—even for the bedpan.”

Migraines are a real pain and the pills that bring you relief can sometimes have undesirable side effects. The good news is that there are some tips and tricks that can help you head off or minimize migraine pain—all without popping a single pill.

Preventing headache pain without the pills

Avoid triggers. If you know there are certain foods, smells and situations that seem to often lead to a migraine, try and avoid them. Keeping a migraine journal can help you identify these triggers.

Try muscle relaxation exercises. These techniques can help to prevent migraines or reduce the pain you feel while one is occurring. Progressive muscle relaxation, meditation and yoga are great examples of ways to help you relax.

Rest and relax. When you feel a headache coming on, try to find a dark, quiet place where you can rest. An ice pack wrapped in a cloth can be used on the back of your neck and you can try applying gentle pressure to painful areas on your head.

* The event and amount described above are real, but in order to protect individual privacy, we have used fictitious names.
Keep your money where it belongs … in your wallet

To ensure efficient service to our plan members, we have arrangements with dental offices across Canada to enable them to submit eligible claims directly to Alberta Blue Cross at the time of service through our electronic claim adjudication service. The dentist is then paid directly for your claim, and you only need to pay for any portion of the claim not covered by your plan.

You can help to limit the cost of your next visit to your dentist by making them aware of the direct billing feature of your plan by presenting your Alberta Blue Cross ID card at the time of service. If the dental office is not already connected to Alberta Blue Cross, it’s easy for them to connect to us. They simply need to contact us to activate an electronic billing connection.

Alberta Blue Cross sponsors diabetes education expos

Every month, approximately 1,000 Albertans are diagnosed with diabetes. The Canadian Diabetes Association estimates that more than a quarter of all Albertans are expected to be living with diabetes or pre-diabetes by 2025—and that diabetes will cost the province’s health system an estimated $1.3 billion in 2015 alone.

Recognizing that diabetes is a key condition that affects many Albertans—including many of our plan members—Alberta Blue Cross is partnering with the Alberta chapter of the Canadian Diabetes Association this year to sponsor the Calgary and Edmonton Diabetes Expo events being held in the fall. The Diabetes Expos are large-scale education events intended to help provide ongoing self-management learning experiences for adults living with diabetes.

The Edmonton event will be held October 22 at the University of Alberta campus in Edmonton, featuring Hal and Joanne Johnson of Body Break; and the Calgary event will be held November 21 at the University of Calgary.

If you or a family member is living with diabetes, please plan to attend one of these free events. Join us on Facebook and Twitter and watch for more details of these expos to be posted closer to the event dates.

From the mailbag

Question: I was looking at my new Alberta Blue Cross ID card and I noticed that it doesn’t list my hospital benefits (Hospital Semi&Priv Direct Bill) why is that?

Answer: Great question. Hospital benefits are no longer displayed on your ID card. Instead, they are included under the “Extended Health Benefits” benefit.
Committed to your community:
making a healthy difference one community at a time

Through the Alberta Blue Cross Healthy Communities Grant Program, four $50,000 grants will be awarded to groups and organizations across Alberta this year to support projects that promote active living and wellness at a community level.

One of these communities could be yours!

Learn more at www.ab.bluecross.ca/aboutus/healthy-communities-grant.php

$1 million given out over five years as part of our Healthy Communities Grant program

Enjoy the convenience of provider lookup with Google map coordinates

The direct-bill provider directory on the Alberta Blue Cross web site makes it easy for you to find a provider in your area who direct bills, thereby avoiding the need to fill out claim forms and pay the full cost of your eligible claims out of pocket.

Today, over 90 per cent of claims are submitted directly to Alberta Blue Cross at the time of service from a number of eligible health providers.

By consulting this searchable directory for a provider who offers the convenience of direct billing, you only need to pay your portion of the cost for eligible claims.

NEW The provider directory now includes Google map coordinates to make locating providers even easier. Each provider listing includes a “directions” link and a “street view” link, which connect you to the provider’s physical location on Google maps. Plus, you can access this convenient service on the go with Alberta Blue Cross’s mobile site.

Do you know what to do with your expired medications?

We hope you weren’t going to say throw them out. Throwing expired medication into the garbage creates an environmental hazard. Medications that end up in the garbage can end up in our soil, our water, then enter plants and animals, eventually entering our own food chain.

In Alberta, the RxA ENVIRx program, which is administered by the Alberta Pharmacists’ Association, offers a system of safe disposal of expired or unused medications.

Disposing of these items is easy and free. All you have to do it simply return the medication (including over-the-counter medications and prescriptions) to any participating pharmacy across Alberta and they will ensure the medications are disposed of in a way that does not pose a risk to our environment or the health of others. There is no fee to participate in this program.

To find a participating pharmacy or learn more, visit www.healthsteward.ca/returns/alberta.
Maintaining strong passwords is essential, whether it is for access to the Alberta Blue Cross member services website, your online banking, email or social media accounts. As a rule of thumb, do not use any information that others would most likely know; for example, your address or birthday. As well, use different passwords for each of your accounts to provide individual protection for each one.

Another way to further protect your online security is changing your passwords on a regular basis to help keep your information secure. It is more difficult for others to access your accounts if the passwords are constantly being changed.

Running antivirus software will provide you (and your online data) with comprehensive protection from cyberspace threats like viruses, spyware, adware and spam.

A prize for your thoughts
We know there are plenty of things fighting for a bit of your time, so when you do have a minute to read Seniors’ BlueLine we want to make sure it’s full of content that you find useful and interesting. That’s our goal, but we need your help to make it happen so please take a few minutes to answer our survey questions.

Oh, and we weren’t kidding about having a prize. In fact, we’re going to give away some great prizes. So submit your answers to us before August 31 and you’ll get a chance to win some great prizes, all while making Seniors’ BlueLine even better.

To complete the survey, visit www.ab.bluecross.ca/seniors-blueline to fill it out online or cut and submit the paper copy found below this article.

Seniors’ BlueLine survey
Please mail the completed survey to BlueLine survey c/o Alberta Blue Cross Corporate Communications 10009 108 Street NW Edmonton, AB T5J 3C5

You can also submit your responses via email to blueline@ab.bluecross.ca.

Are you interested in being entered to win some great prizes? Yes ☐ No ☐

Name: ___________________________ Phone number: ___________________________

Email address: ___________________________

Mailing address: ___________________________

How often would you like to receive Seniors’ BlueLine?
   a) Once a month.
   b) Once every three months.
   c) Once every six months.
   d) Once a year.

How would you like to receive Seniors’ BlueLine?
   a) In the mail.
   b) Via email.
   c) Receive a notification via email or on social media letting you know that Seniors’ BlueLine is available online.

The length of Seniors’ BlueLine should be
   a) shorter than the current edition.
   b) longer than the current edition.
   c) stay about the same as the current edition.

Using this edition as a reference, what kind of content would you like to see if future Seniors’ BlueLine?
   a) I would like to see more health/wellness related articles.
   b) I would like to see more benefits-related articles.
   c) I would like to continue to see a variety of articles.

What is your overall rating of Seniors’ BlueLine?
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Poor Average Good

If there are any other topics you would like Seniors’ BlueLine to cover, please include them below.

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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: weather.

**Hidden Message:** PRECIPITATION