



## Enhanced Medication Therapy Management Newsletter

Winter 2019/2020

# Ask a pharmacist: What is vitamin D deficiency?

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient your body needs to build strong bones. It also keeps your immune system strong, helps increase energy levels and can enhance your mood. Ideal vitamin D intake varies with different factors, like age, activity level and metabolic health. Vitamin D deficiency occurs when you don't get enough vitamin D or when the body can't absorb and metabolize it. If you are concerned about your vitamin D levels, talk with your doctor.

Symptoms of vitamin D deficiency may be subtle, so many people don't know they are deficient. Effects of vitamin D deficiency may include:

- Fatigue
- Bone pain
- Joint pain
- Muscle pain
- More frequent illness
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Weight gain

Vitamin D deficiencies can be easy to fix, and treatment can improve your health. There are ways to increase vitamin D levels without taking supplements. Getting more sun exposure and eating vitamin D rich foods, like fortified dairy and fatty fish, can help increase vitamin D levels.

There are many supplements that you can find at a local drug store. Talk with your doctor to find

the best supplement for you. Once treatment is started, keep a log of symptoms to track progress and see if the treatment plan needs to be changed. It's important to track symptoms because too much vitamin D can be harmful and cause symptoms of nausea, constipation and weight loss. Excessive vitamin D intake may also raise the amount of calcium in the blood. This is known as hypercalcemia and may cause disorientation and an abnormal heart rhythm.

### **Diet matters! Eat healthy.**

Good nutrition is important in maintaining good health. The risk for developing chronic health conditions can be lowered by giving your body healthy foods. According to the National Resource Center on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Aging, one in four older Americans have poor nutrition. The effectiveness of medications may be affected by poor nutrition. Be conscious about medication warnings and interactions with certain foods. If you have concerns about your diet, contact your doctor or pharmacist to talk about the best regimen for your medication.

Changes in eating patterns may be affected by a person's home life. Daily activities, like cooking, may become difficult with age. If you struggle with cooking, consider hiring a personal care attendant or opting for home delivered meals to make sure you follow the best diet for your health.

# Healthy eating crossword puzzle

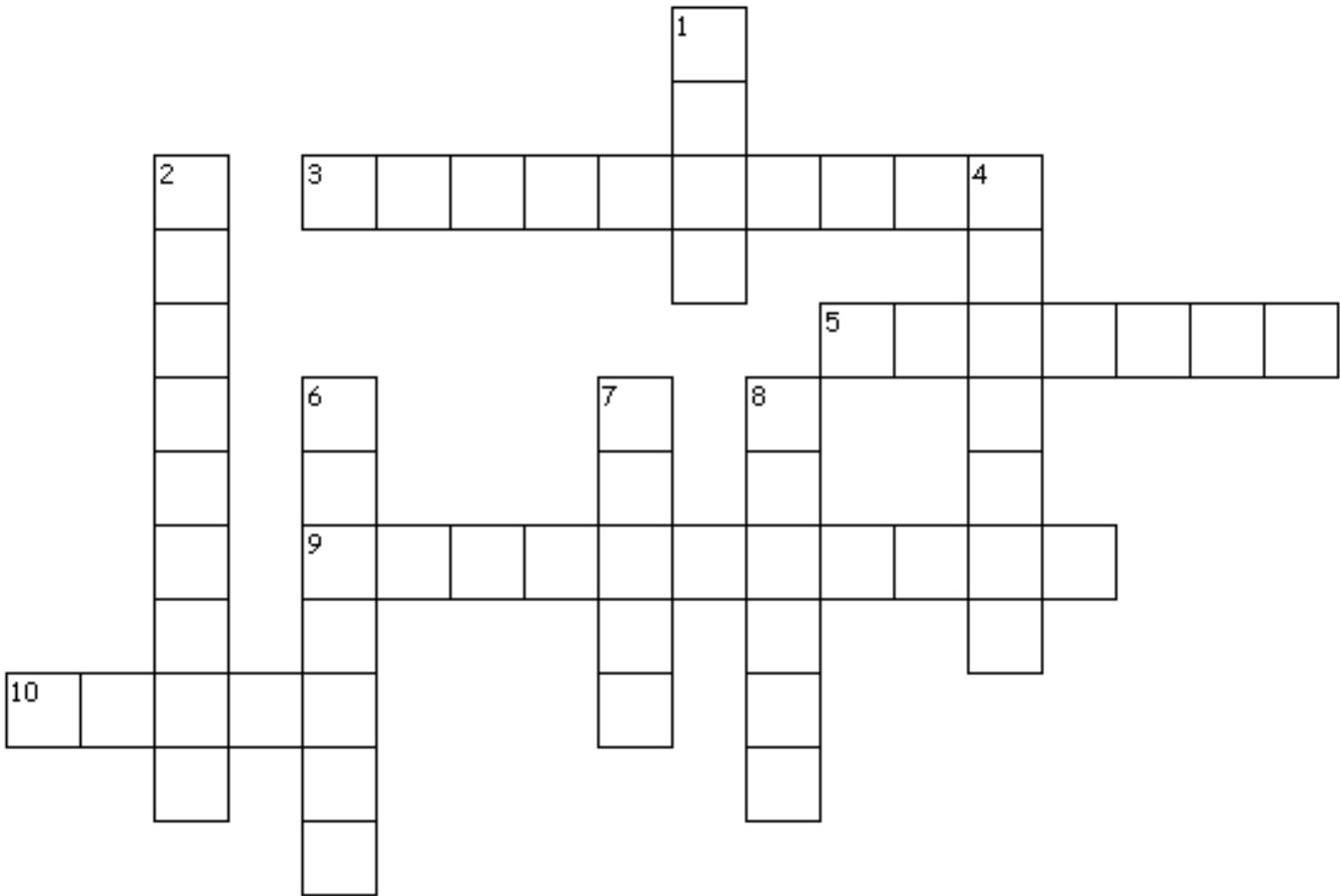
Complete the crossword puzzle below to uncover 10 tips for healthy eating.

## Across

3. Vary your \_\_\_\_\_
5. Choose \_\_\_\_\_ fats
9. Follow \_\_\_\_\_ servings
10. Opt for \_\_\_\_\_ grains

## Down

1. \_\_\_\_\_ your meals
2. Read \_\_\_\_\_ labels
4. Eat \_\_\_\_\_ meals
6. Eat a \_\_\_\_\_ of foods
7. \_\_\_\_\_ salt intake
8. Drink \_\_\_\_\_ of water



## Answer key

**Across**  
3. Vegetables 5. Healthy; 9. Recommended; 10. Whole

**Down**  
1. Plan; 2. Nutrition; 4. Smaller; 6. Variety; 7. Limit; 8. Plenty

# Six snow shoveling safety tips

With winter weather approaching, clearing snow from your driveway or sidewalk may become a necessity. Shoveling snow is a form of exercise and needs to be taken on with caution. Cold weather causes the arteries to constrict, which raises blood pressure and pulse rate. And if you have cardiovascular disease or other health concerns that could make shoveling difficult, you should talk to your doctor before you take on the task.

If you need help shoveling snow, talk with your neighbors, family members and friends who may be able to help. You can also contact the National Institute on Aging at **1-800-222-2225** (TTY: **1-800-222-4225**), Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time, and find out if there are snow shoveling resources near you.

Minimize the risk of injury from shoveling snow by following these steps:

1. **Prepare.** The American Heart Association recommends not eating a big meal before shoveling, as it may put further stress on the heart. Before going outside, warm up with 10 minutes of light exercise and stretches to loosen muscles and joints.
2. **Dress warmly.** Several layers of loose clothing can help keep you warmer than one bulky layer. Wear a water-resistant coat and pair of boots. Don't forget to have mittens or gloves and a hat or knit mask to cover your face.
3. **Take it slow.** Pace yourself while you work. When you can, push snow along the ground to get it out of the way, rather than lifting it. Use a small shovel instead a large one. If you use a large shovel, try to only fill it partially with snow before lifting. Try to shovel early and frequently

to avoid having to shovel large amounts of snow. Take frequent breaks to rest and warm up inside.

4. **Use good form.** When lifting snow, use the power in your legs instead of your back. Squat with your knees wide and your back straight. Avoid bending at the waist. Instead of tossing the snow out of the way, push the snow to where you want it.
5. **Fall-proof yourself.** Wear shoes or boots with slip-resistant soles or use ice cleats. Spread sand or salt after shoveling to avoid slipping.
6. **Be aware of your body.** Stop shoveling and call **911** if you experience any of the following symptoms:
  - Discomfort or heaviness in the chest, arms or neck
  - Unusual or prolonged shortness of breath
  - A dizzy or faint feeling
  - Excessive sweating
  - Nausea
  - Vomiting



# What is the EMTM program?

Enhanced Medication Therapy Management, or EMTM, is part of your MedicareBlue<sup>SM</sup> Rx plan and is available to you at no cost. The program may help you lower medication costs and ensure your medication plan is the best fit for your needs. Pharmacists provide EMTM services and will call to review your medications and identify potential medication-related problems, like interactions or side effects. They will address your questions and concerns about your medications or health.

You do not have to participate in the program, but it is included in your MedicareBlue Rx coverage. If we call you to offer EMTM, you can accept or decline the service. If you use EMTM services, you can end your participation at any time. If you choose not to participate at first, you can re-enroll at any time.

## MedicareBlue Rx customer service

If you have questions about your coverage, please call customer service.



**1-888-832-0075** (TTY: **711**), 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., daily, Central and Mountain times



**Visit YourMedicareSolutions.com**

## Three resources to learn more about Enhanced Medication Therapy Management

- MedicareBlue Rx EMTM call center: **1-800-348-7129** (TTY: **711**), 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central time, Monday through Friday
- MedicareBlue Rx EMTM online resources: **EnhancedMTM.com**
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services resources: **Innovation.CMS.gov/Initiatives/EnhancedMTM**

MedicareBlue<sup>SM</sup> Rx (PDP) is a Medicare-approved Part D sponsor. Enrollment in MedicareBlue Rx depends on contract renewal. Coverage is available to residents of the service area and separately issued by one of the following plans: Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa,\* Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota,\* Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana,\* Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska,\* Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota,\* Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota,\* and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming.\*

\*Independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. This information is not a complete description of benefits.