

The exclusive magazine for Sharp Direct Advantage® Medicare members

SPRING / SUMMER 2022

# INSPIRE

**4 unexpected  
things to do  
to keep your  
brain healthy**

**3 simple tips  
to avoid the  
No. 1 injury in  
older adults**

**5 out of 5 stars  
from Medicare for 2022**

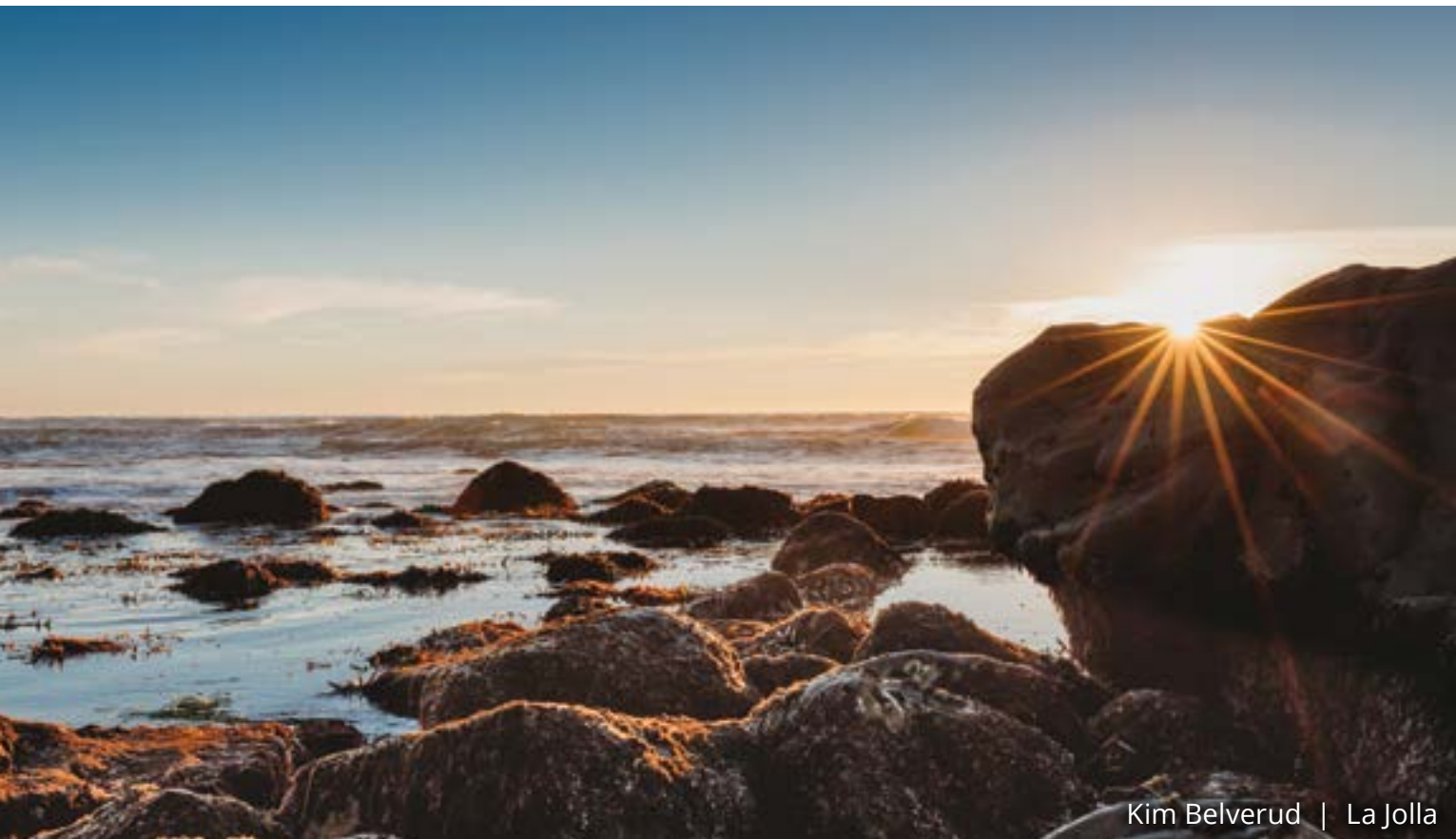
## **MEMBER CENTER:**

**How Connie reached  
her health goals  
(and you can too)**

**Spring  
vegetable  
pasta**



**SHARP**  
HEALTH PLAN



Kim Belverud | La Jolla

## Fresh takes for head-to-toe health

Summer is coming, and I hope you're finding time to get outside as I am. Warmer weather and longer days give us more time to soak in all of what San Diego has to offer.

From four tips to boost your brain health (page 5) to a must-read feature on simple steps to prevent falls (page 3), this issue of INSPIRE provides easy ideas for

supporting your health from head to toe. You'll also find ways to monitor your movement and physical activity (page 13) and a refreshing, tasty recipe for spring vegetable pasta (page 11).

As always, thank you for trusting us to be your partner in health care.



In good health,

*Melissa Hayden Cook*

**Melissa Hayden Cook**  
President and CEO  
Sharp Health Plan



**Second COVID vaccine booster:** People over age 50 and certain immunocompromised individuals are advised to get a second COVID-19 vaccine booster at least four months after getting the first booster dose.

► Schedule an appointment on [myturn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov) or call 211 for help scheduling.

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**Tell a friend**

If you're happy with your Sharp Direct Advantage plan, tell a friend. Medicare beneficiaries can enroll in Sharp Health Plan's 5-star Medicare Advantage plan year-round.

We also have plan options for San Diegans not eligible for Medicare. We offer financial help with Covered California™ plans as low as \$0 a month, based on eligibility.

Your friends and family can compare plans on our website or use the link below for free expert advice from an enrollment specialist.

[sharphealthplan.com/friend](https://sharphealthplan.com/friend)

**Check your contact info**

Get the latest news and alerts delivered to your email inbox, including our exclusive digital version of INSPIRE. If you haven't received INSPIRE in your email yet, take a minute to check your contact information with us.

[sharpdirectadvantage.com/contactinfo](https://sharpdirectadvantage.com/contactinfo)



# 3 SIMPLE TIPS

## to avoid the No. 1 injury in older adults

Falls are now the leading cause of injury for adults aged 65 and older. Many falls, however, can be prevented. Talk to your loved ones and your care team about your risk of falling, and try these tips to reduce your fall risk.

### 1. Talk to your doctor

Tell your primary care physician if you've fallen recently, feel unsteady or feel afraid of falling.

### 2. Freshen up on common fall risk factors

Common hazards include cluttered living areas, mobility problems, poor balance and poor vision.

### 3. Take advantage of local fall prevention resources

The San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force offers classes to help build confidence and encourage gentle physical activity. Go to [sandiegocounty.gov](http://sandiegocounty.gov) and search "fall prevention" to view their past workshops.

► **TIP:** Check back in September to see what community events the task force will host during Fall Prevention Awareness Month.

You can also call Sharp Senior Resource Centers at 1-619-740-4214 to learn about upcoming fall prevention classes or to set up a resource consultation.

### Are you at risk for falling?

Use this free online checkup tool developed by the National Falls Prevention Resource Center.

► **English**  
[ncoa.org/article/falls-free-checkup](http://ncoa.org/article/falls-free-checkup)

► **Spanish**  
[ncoa.org/article/falls-free-checkup-espanol](http://ncoa.org/article/falls-free-checkup-espanol)

**Q:** I want to try out a home fitness kit, and I read that I should talk to my doctor first before I start any exercise program. How does that work?



## ASK THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

**Dr. Shames says:**

"It all starts with a Wellness visit," says Cary B. Shames, DO and chief medical officer at Sharp Health Plan.

"As a Sharp Direct Advantage member, you are eligible for a yearly Wellness visit at no cost," explains Dr. Shames. "At your next Wellness visit, make sure you and your primary care physician [PCP] take time to discuss your current level of physical activity and any health goals you have in mind."

Consider asking your PCP the following questions:

- How do my health conditions affect the exercises I can do?
- Should I avoid certain activities?
- Are there any preventive care tests or exams I need?

Dr. Shames adds, "While your Wellness visit is an ideal time to have a conversation about your physical activity with your PCP, you can always seek medical advice outside of appointments by contacting your PCP's office."

For medical advice on evenings and weekends, you may also reach a specially trained registered nurse through our After-Hours Nurse Advice line at 1-800-359-2002.

► **TIP:** Get more support with free, one-on-one health coaching. Best Health® offers no-cost health and lifestyle coaching to all members. Coaching programs last six weeks and cover topics like physical activity, healthy weight, smoking cessation, healthy eating and stress management. Visit our website for more information.

[sharpdirectadvantage.com/besthealth](https://sharpdirectadvantage.com/besthealth)



# 4 unexpected things to do to keep your brain healthy

Difficulty with multitasking, recalling words or names and paying attention are all common in older adults. Health conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and stroke can also affect your brain's health.

The good news is, there are several ways to help keep your brain in shape.

## 1. Make time to socialize

Research suggests that engaging with others may support your well-being and brain health. Every phone call, video chat and email message can help.

## 2. Keep on moving

Regular physical activity is shown to improve brain health and reduce your risk of dementia. From watering plants in your garden to casting a fishing rod in the bay, every bit of movement counts.

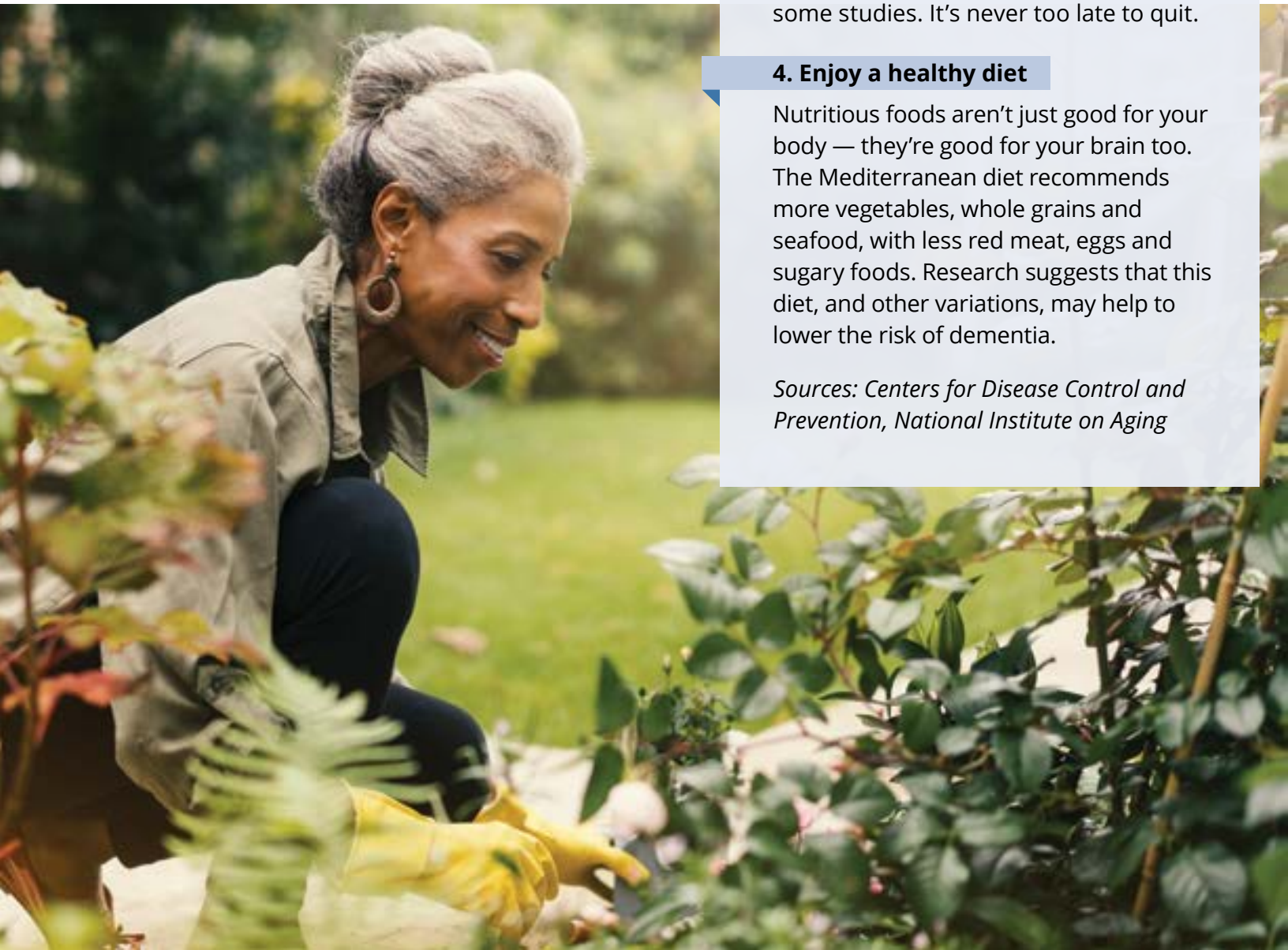
## 3. Quit smoking

Smoking may double the risk of dementia in older adults, according to some studies. It's never too late to quit.

## 4. Enjoy a healthy diet

Nutritious foods aren't just good for your body — they're good for your brain too. The Mediterranean diet recommends more vegetables, whole grains and seafood, with less red meat, eggs and sugary foods. Research suggests that this diet, and other variations, may help to lower the risk of dementia.

*Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute on Aging*





## WAYS TO IMPROVE BRAIN HEALTH

Aging is inevitable, but there are things you can do to help keep your mind sharp at any age.

**Train your brain.** “Our brains can benefit from mental exercise, just like the rest of our body benefits from physical exercise,” says Dr. Dara Schwartz, PsyD, a psychologist with a specialty in aging at Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital.

- ▶ Word searches, mazes or even learning a new skill can target attention, verbal fluency, memory and other cognitive areas.

**Relax.** Stress can affect memory, so reducing it is key to boosting brain health.

- ▶ Meditating and practicing deep breathing every day can help to reduce stress and its memory-sapping effects.

**Do what makes you happy.** “Pleasure is also an important component in stress reduction and brain health,” says Dr. Schwartz.

- ▶ Set aside time each day to do something you enjoy.

**Practice gratitude.** Gratitude can help combat depression, which is linked to short-term memory problems such as forgetfulness and confusion.

- ▶ Write down something good that happened or a funny thing you saw. Thanking someone has double the impact: It’ll help you experience gratitude and socialize at the same time.

*Source: Sharp Health News*

# How to get better results from medicines

## Three words: medication therapy management.

Our medication therapy management (MTM) program with OutcomesMTM offers medication review services to eligible members at no extra cost. If you qualify for the program, you'll receive a letter in the mail that says a pharmacy team member will be contacting you.

Read how one Sharp Direct Advantage member changed the way he takes care of his heart, thanks to this valuable MTM program. Names have been changed to protect privacy.



## • • • SIMON AND HEART HEALTH



Simon has heart disease, so he is careful to watch his blood pressure and cholesterol levels.



Mandy, a pharmacist with OutcomesMTM, recently called Simon for his annual medication review.



Mandy asked if he wanted to add a medication to lower his blood pressure and possibly help reduce Simon's risk of heart attack or stroke.



Simon agreed, and Mandy educated him about when and how to take it.



After the call, Mandy worked with Simon's doctor to add the new medication to his prescriptions.



## Thinking of skipping a dose? Read this first

Keeping track of medications can be hard, especially when you take more than one.

These questions can help you decide what to bring up during your next conversation with your doctor.

Ask yourself:

- Am I worried about side effects?
- Am I unsure if my medicine is working?
- Am I having trouble paying for my medicines?

Not taking your medication as directed can lead to trouble. Always reach out to your primary care physician or pharmacist with any concerns about your medications.








# 5 food swaps to boost your health

What we eat can have a serious effect on everything from heart health to high blood pressure. Simple food swaps in your daily diet can help give your body the healthy boost it deserves.

## Check out these five foods to skip after 65

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-  **Packaged snacks can be full of fats and sweeteners that can contribute to heart disease.**
  - ✓ Choose homemade treats instead. Search for recipes for oven-baked chips, hearty granola and sugar-free cookies as better-for-you options.
-  **Foods with high sodium can contribute to high blood pressure.**
  - ✓ Choose foods with less sodium instead. Read Nutrition Facts labels and opt for items with low or no sodium added.
-  **Whipped toppings are often made from hydrogenated oils and corn syrup.**
  - ✓ Choose yogurt and nondairy options instead. A spoonful of yogurt or coconut cream can add richness to desserts, without added oils or sweeteners.
-  **Sodas and bottled beverages are loaded with sugar and can have many negative health effects.**
  - ✓ Choose infused water and seltzer instead. Add sliced fruit to a pitcher of water, or sip on unsweetened seltzer for a refreshing drink.
-  **Salted, cured, fermented and smoked meats have been linked to cancer in several studies.**
  - ✓ Choose lean proteins instead. Reach for chicken, turkey, tofu, beans and lentils, and experiment with different herbs and spices.



**When in doubt, aim for a more balanced plate by eating a variety of foods, including fruits and veggies, lean proteins, whole grains and low-fat dairy. . . . .**



# Spring

## VEGETABLE PASTA

**Make the most of the freshest produce you can find in spring. This delicious pasta features seasonal vegetables, savory Parmesan and zesty lemon — perfect for lunch or dinner.**

### Ingredients

12 ounces campanelle or other short pasta, like penne or rotini  
1 ¼ cups fresh or frozen peas  
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided  
1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces  
1 medium zucchini, chopped  
1 clove garlic, thinly sliced  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
¾ teaspoon black pepper  
1 tablespoon lemon zest  
1 tablespoon fresh juice (from 1 lemon)  
½ cup Parmesan cheese, shaved  
¼ cup chopped toasted pistachios  
Basil leaves, torn fresh, for serving

### Directions

Cook pasta according to package directions, adding peas during the last 2 minutes. Drain pasta and peas, reserving 1 cup cooking water.

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add asparagus and zucchini. Stir occasionally until just tender, about 5 minutes.

Add garlic. Stir constantly for 1 minute.

Add salt, pepper, pasta, peas, reserved cooking water, and remaining ¼ cup oil.

Bring to a simmer. Stir until sauce thickens and coats pasta, about 2 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice.

Toss with cheese, pistachios and lemon zest. Top with basil.

# How Connie reached her health goals *(and you can too)*

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When Connie joined Sharp Direct Advantage, she wanted to make the most of two features of her new membership: free access to Silver&Fit® fitness clubs and one-on-one health coaching through Best Health®.

A recently retired elementary school teacher, Connie knew the value of finding a coach who would partner with her on creating a plan that was tailored uniquely to her personal goals and lifestyle.

"I wanted to have a coach who could help guide me in establishing some health and exercise goals," says Connie.

Connie expressed her interest through the health coaching signup form on the Sharp Direct Advantage website and enrolled in the physical activity coaching program. During the program, she spent 30 minutes on the phone each week with a health coach.

"My coach was fabulous," says Connie. "She was very knowledgeable and led me through each step to set and work to accomplish my goals."

As part of her health goals, Connie joined a fitness club. While it can feel overwhelming to enter a new gym environment, Connie focused on her sense of self-motivation and collaborated with a trainer to learn how to use equipment and how to practice proper weightlifting forms. She also began attending fitness classes, created goals for improving core strength, flexibility and balance, and took advantage of the home fitness kits.

"I enjoyed meeting with my coach on the phone to discuss my progress," says Connie. "My coach has a wonderful personality, is very encouraging and held me accountable for the goals we discussed each week."

For those who are taking their first steps toward a health goal, Connie advises, "A coach helps educate you and gives ideas and suggestions that are extremely valuable. A coach provides the accountability necessary to keep you moving forward, particularly when you are first starting out."

## Get free, direct access to a health coach

Best Health offers six-week coaching programs over the phone. Topics include healthy eating, healthy weight, physical activity, stress management and tobacco cessation.

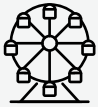
[sharpdirectadvantage.com/  
healthcoach](https://sharpdirectadvantage.com/healthcoach)



# Events

## San Diego events

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**San Diego County Fair**  
June 8-July 4



**Taste of Little Italy**  
June 21-22



**ArtWalk at Liberty Station**  
August 6-7



**Bike the Bay**  
August 28

## Seniors and caregiver events

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### AgeWell

Enjoy activities, services and senior centers throughout San Diego hosted by the city's AgeWell Services. Events range from dances and craft sales to walking groups and art exhibits. Visit the AgeWell Services website for details.

[sandiego.gov/agewellservices](http://sandiego.gov/agewellservices)

### 2-1-1

2-1-1 San Diego offers a calendar of events with a wide variety of activities, from gardening to healthier living tips for those with diabetes.

[211sandiego.org/senior-events](http://211sandiego.org/senior-events)

# Questions?

We've got you covered. Visit our website at [sharpdirectadvantage.com/faq](http://sharpdirectadvantage.com/faq) to find answers to the most asked questions from members like you.

## Can I change my primary care physician?

Yes. If you ever find that you want to change your primary care physician, or PCP, know that you can. First, go to our website listed on the back of your member ID card to find a list of doctors in the Sharp Direct Advantage network. When you find a doctor you like, you can request them as your new PCP by phone or online.

- ▶ **By phone:** 1-855-562-8853 (TTY/TDD: 711)
- ▶ **Online:** Log in to your Sharp Connect account and fill out the change PCP form

In most cases, the change will be effective on the first day of the following month.

## How do I use Silver&Fit?

To use your Silver&Fit benefit, first create an account by phone or online.

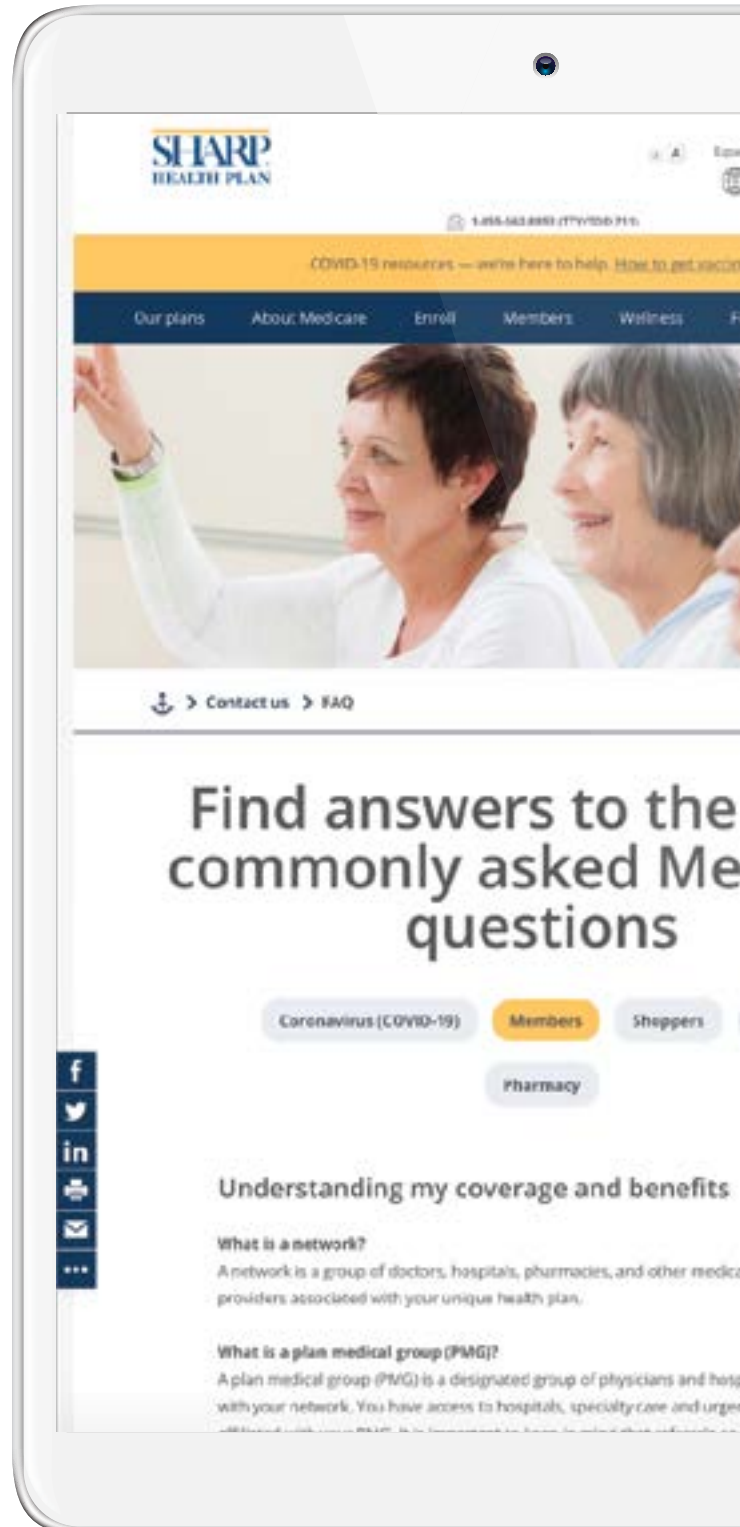
- ▶ **By phone:** 1-877-427-4788 (TTY/TDD: 711)
- ▶ **Online:** [silverandfit.com](http://silverandfit.com)

Once you have an account, you can enroll in a fitness program of your choice. If you choose to enroll in Silver&Fit's Home Fitness Program, you'll receive your first home fitness kit within 10 days.

## How do I sign up for health coaching?

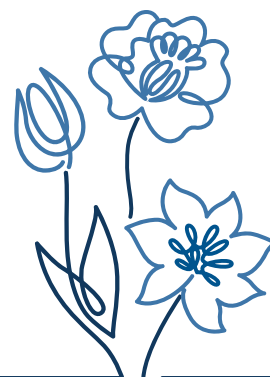
Log in or create a Best Health account at [sharpdirectadvantage.com/besthealth](http://sharpdirectadvantage.com/besthealth) to enroll in no-cost health coaching. You can also get more information by contacting our Best Health team.

- ▶ **By phone:** 1-877-849-2363
- ▶ **Email:** [besthealth@sharp.com](mailto:besthealth@sharp.com)



# CROSSWORD

## GARDENING



1	2	3	4	5			6	7	8	9		10	11	12
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56				57			58		59			60	61	62
63				64					65					
66				67					68					

## Across

- 1 Person on horse  
 6 Freudian selves  
 10 Abdominal muscles (abbr)  
 13 Evades  
 15 Going on and on  
 16 What electricity does  
 17 Blossom  
 18 Opera solo  
 19 Also known as (abbr)  
 20 Car rental agency  
 22 Balto's transportation  
 24 Tupper \_\_\_\_  
 26 Adolescent  
 28 Not there  
 29 When you drop something heavy  
 30 In astrology, there are 12  
 31 Types include lemon, wheat, Kentucky blue  
 32 Charged particle  
 33 Rolled chocolate candy brand  
 34 Short for influenza  
 35 Not a dogtail  
 37 "What's your \_\_\_\_?!"  
 41 Liquid fat  
 42 Cultivate  
 43 Environmental agency (abbr)  
 44 Strict  
 47 Unexpected obstacle  
 48 Ripe  
 49 Makes a mistake  
 50 Close  
 51 Contemplate  
 52 Country in Southern Africa  
 54 Always  
 56 Genetic code  
 57 Praise enthusiastically  
 59 Wears away  
 63 Fall month  
 64 Water pitcher  
 65 Albanian capital  
 66 Megahertz  
 67 Women's lifestyle magazine  
 68 No longer wild

## Down

- 1 Game official  
 2 Sick  
 3 Two  
 4 British king's name  
 5 Christopher who played Superman  
 6 Epoch  
 7 Area of land used for cultivating plants and flowers  
 8 Common white, round vegetable  
 9 Buck  
 10 Toxic spring flowering plant  
 11 Bread makers  
 12 Card suits  
 14 \_\_\_\_ Lanka  
 21 Calm  
 23 Bush  
 24 Hold it there  
 25 Father's sister  
 27 Self  
 29 Twitch  
 30 Earth  
 31 Emit light  
 33 Precipitation  
 34 Pond dweller  
 36 Upper body  
 37 Chatter  
 38 Not arms  
 39 Dueling sword  
 40 Angry  
 42 African antelope  
 44 Infrequent  
 45 Furrow  
 46 Artificial  
 47 Long-handled scoop used for digging  
 48 Dawn  
 50 Shoulder covering  
 51 Rate  
 53 Perennial woody plant with roots, a trunk and branches  
 55 Animal doctor  
 58 Before, poetically  
 60 Levee  
 61 East northeast  
 62 Unhappy

Answer key

D	E	M	A	T		E	L	L	E		Z	H	M
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## Important Sharp Health Plan Information

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# We believe better Medicare matters

San Diego's only 5-star  
Medicare Advantage plan with  
access to Sharp HealthCare.



Every year, Medicare evaluates plans based on a 5-star rating system.