

2018-2019 CALENDAR

This calendar has been produced to help you understand how to use common over-the-counter medicines, supplements, and food ingredients to lessen the burden of pain, or wean off opiate medications.

Increasing choice and understanding your options gives you more power to tackle these challenges.

We hope you enjoy your calendar journey, and benefit from it.

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DISCLAIMER: The contents of this calendar are not intended to replace the advice of your Provider. It is not advisable to take anything new, even supplements or vitamins, or make any changes, without consulting with your Provider.



Questions/Comments? Contact Dragatsi & Co. at (877) 219-6155 or dragatsi.com.
Made possible by a grant from the Community Pharmacy Foundation.





Power of Magnesium

Pain and stress can be worse because of low magnesium levels. This can make it harder to wean down or off opioids.

Good for Nerve, Bone, & Heart Health

Some medications and hot weather put you at risk for low magnesium. This can cause muscle spasms or migraines.

Epsom Salts are a Good Source

Soak your feet or take a full bath using Epsom salts. Lavender adds a soothing effect.

Psoriasis or hair/sweat gland loss from chemotherapy may reduce its effect. Ask your Pharmacist about an oral supplement instead.

Foods with Magnesium

Bananas, green beans, cashews, pumpkin seeds, leafy greens, avocados, salmon and chicken breast.

August 2018

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Supplements can be Beneficial

Some supplements may allow you to:

- Reduce your dose of pain medication
- OR help wean down and off opioids.

Ask your Pharmacist about best usage and have them screened against your medication list.

Vitamin A - skin health

Vitamin B1 (Thiamine) - nerves, brain health

Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin) - migraines

Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine) - nerves

Vitamin B12 - nerves, fibromyalgia

Folic Acid - nerves (avoid synthetic sources)

Vitamin C - health of mucous membranes,
but too much can worsen pain

Vitamin D - inflammatory conditions, asthma/
COPD, prevent breast cancer recurrence

Co-Q10 - migraines

*Have your Pharmacist prepare an updated medication
list for your, and your Provider's, information.*

September 2018

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Breast Cancer

Breast cancer affects about one in seven women, but it can also occur in men, although much more rare. Opioids may not be necessary for breast cancer pain. If used, they should be stopped as quickly as possible.

Melatonin is a powerful anticancer hormone produced by the body during conditions of absolute darkness. Melatonin also helps us sleep. It's harder to produce melatonin if LED lights, especially **blue lights**, are on. SHUT OFF these lights no matter how small they are!!!

Keep up your scheduled screenings and do monthly self exams. Remember, early detection often results in a 95 – 100% cure.

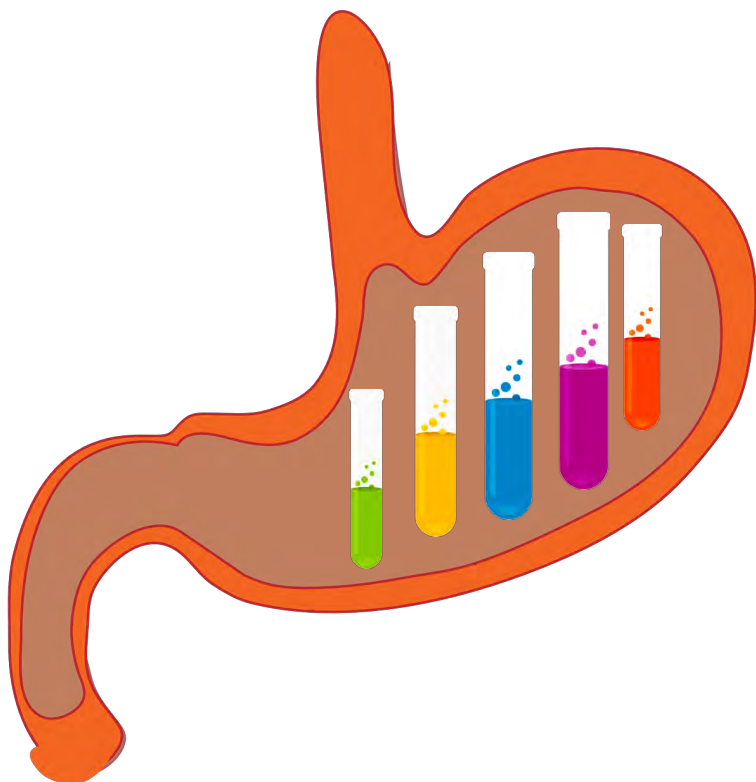
If you are diagnosed with breast cancer:

- Ask your Provider, Pharmacist or Dietician for diet advice,
- Make peace with whoever you can,
- Surround yourself with positive people.

A good mindset and focusing on the health you *still have* is really important to counter the disease.

October 2018

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It's hard to stomach this, BUT ...

your stomach makes acid to kill bacteria and viruses that become harmful to body structures.

Be careful of medicines that can destroy this barrier.

There are very special times when powerful medications are given to destroy stomach acid. This is usually for an active ulcer.

Keep your use of these powerful acid-stopping medicines to a minimum.

Taking them once a week or more has been linked to increased incidence of stomach and liver cancer, kidney disease, pneumonia, and low blood calcium and magnesium.

Ask your Provider or Pharmacist how to switch to a less harmful medication, if possible.

November 2018

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*"The Stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there."
From The Night Before Christmas.*

Do you, or a loved one, smoke like a chimney?
Put this information in your stocking in preparation
for a decent New Year's attempt to stop smoking!

- 1) Chantix ® has the best evidence for drug-related assistance. Talk to your Provider or Pharmacist if cost is a problem.
- 2) **The Human Connection is Important.** Team up with a coach (the Pharmacist has information). Check in with your Provider.
- 3) Insurance covers one or more Provider visits a month. If you are uninsured, check out a Federally Qualified Health Center for sliding scale or free visits.
- 4) Visit www.mainehealth.org and type *Tobacco Helpline* in the search bar to find support.

**IF YOU DO ALL FOUR of the above,
your chances of success are really increased.**

December 2018

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Start 2019 out right!

We're going to help you get a positive domino effect for your health year. Let's get started!

First Priority - Sleep Quality

The average adult requires 6-8 hours of sleep a night to reduce blood pressure.

What happens if you don't get this much sleep?

The next day, blood pressure and blood sugar rise, you'll have poorer memory and reduced physical performance.

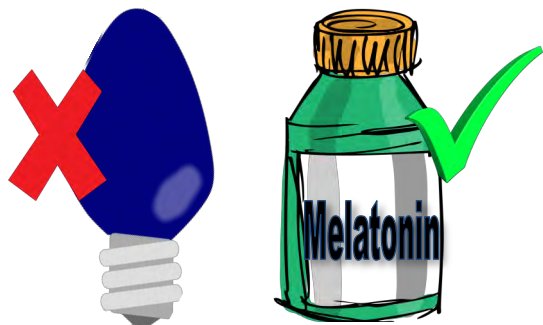
This is bad for weaning off opioids. It is also bad for pain management, mood, diabetes, heart health, and weight control.

If you're taking blood pressure medication ...

ask your Provider about taking at least one of them at night to reduce your BP during sleep. This will improve sleep quality, helping you perform better the next day.

January 2019

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You will LOVE Melatonin

Melatonin is a hormone naturally made in the body. The brain produces a small amount, and the stomach produces most of what we need. It helps our body line up its sleep and waking rhythm to the sun's rising and setting.

Melatonin Protects Against Breast Cancer, too.

Blue light pollution at night cuts down on the body's natural melatonin production. This is linked to women's breast cancer, which is happening more frequently.

Melatonin is a Supplement.

If you're 50 or older, and exposed to blue light pollution at night, a supplement of 3 to 12 mg at bedtime may help you to get off to sleep.

A good night's sleep goes a long way to reducing, or actually stopping, opioid use in your life.

February 2019

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Let's March ON!

To get rid of "melatonin fog" in the morning, turn on a bright blue-toned light, read a tablet, or sweep open the curtains to bright daylight. This resets your body's natural rhythm to help you sleep well later.

Are you taking Synthroid® (levothyroxine)?

Take when you first wake-up with at least six ounces of water. Don't eat anything with concentrated calcium for four hours, like a calcium supplement, antacids or cheese. Drinking milk is OK.

Don't Skip Breakfast!!!

Try unsweetened whole grain cereal with dried fruit, sliced almonds* and cinnamon with (preferably) almond milk.* This is a great breakfast if you want to keep trim, control blood sugar, cholesterol, and deprive lurking cancer cells of their favorite food - **sugar!**

Unsweetened coffee or green tea

These are full of anti-oxidants and a great start to your day!

March 2019

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*not recommended if allergic to nuts. Regular whole milk can be substituted.

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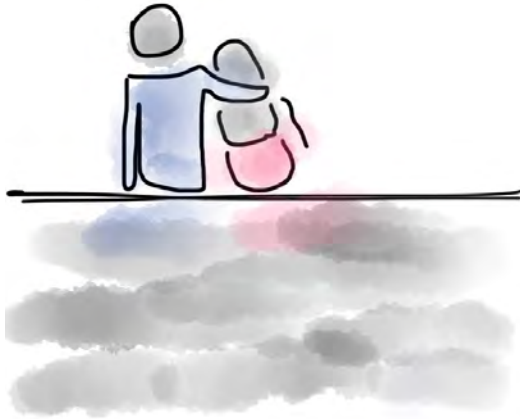
THIS IS A NEW DAY with new growth.

Having a good mindset is important to be able to spend the day being the best you were meant to be.

Take Time to be Quiet.

Our best thoughts and plans occur in quiet and calm surroundings. Being thankful makes us appreciate things that are going well.

Being mindful of **God, or your Higher Power**, is knowing we are cared for and supported.



THIS IS A NEW SEASON:

Passover, Easter, Holy Week.

Where there are plagues, there is deliverance: where there is death, there is resurrection. Spring is here, and its celebration of great feasts of hope.

There is always another day.

If things go wrong, give it time.

There is no need to give up hope.

April 2019

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Blood Pressure Tips

Getting a good night's sleep lowers blood pressure the next day.

Take at least one blood pressure medicine at night.

This gets your blood pressure low enough during the night to get a good night's sleep, and reduces renin production, a hormone that makes your blood pressure resistant to blood pressure medication the next day.

Eat 25 to 30gm Soluble Dietary Fiber per day.

Check labels. Beans and whole grains are great sources of fiber! Although you might need to buy some Beano® or its generic equivalent.

Make your activities enjoyable and regular.

Walk your dog or walk yourself and meet the neighbors on a regular circuit. Dance to your favorite tunes. Do your chores to music. If you don't get everything done, that's OK, there's another day.

May 2019

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2019



If you're taking opioids or benzos ...

June to October are the easiest months to wean down or off because extra light and warmer temps cause less strain on the body. Visit your Provider for a physical exam before you begin weaning.

Chronic Pain can be treated in multiple ways.

Instead of relying on heavy hitters like opioids or "benzos" for pain relief, certain foods, vitamins and minerals can also reduce pain and are not harmful.

Substance Use Disorder

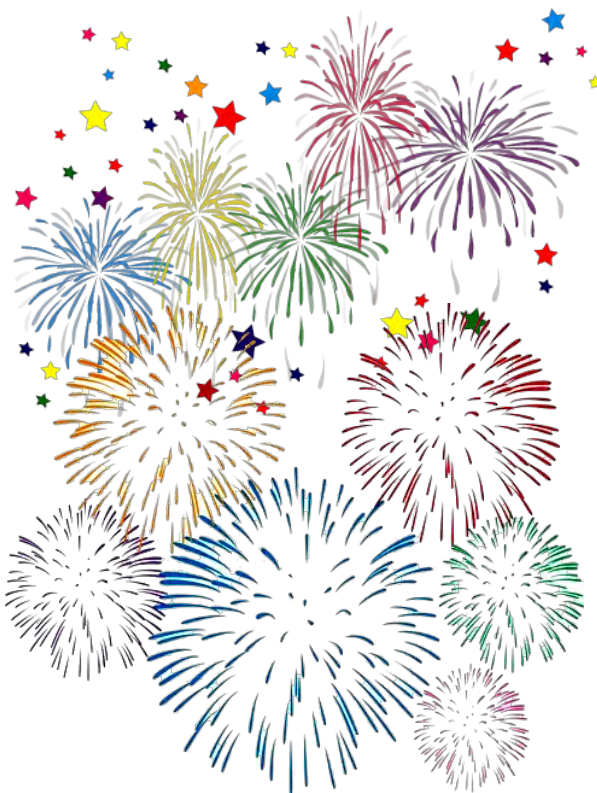
Dignity and independence are essential to well-being. It feels awful to be powerless and under the control of any substance.

One out of five people die detoxing or "going cold turkey" on their own.

See a Provider. Professional help makes recovery much safer.

June 2019

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Freedom

We celebrate independence from colonial rule on the 4th of July.

Responsibilities

Like becoming an adult, individuals and countries need to be groomed to bear growing responsibilities with time.

Making Good Choices

All of us at whatever level of decision-making, need good, quality information to make good choices.

Choose your food, health care Provider, medication, employment, dwelling, friends, and use of your time, well.

Take your time to think of what is important to you, and what you'd like the next generation to take away from your example. Every day, you model behavior to those who look up to you ... modeling is the most important form of learning and education.

July 2019

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Turmeric! A spice that gives spice to life!

Turmeric is related to ginger. Its active ingredient is called curcumin.

It is an antioxidant, which protects from the harmful effects of inflammation.

Antioxidants are important for preventing harmful effects of environmental chemicals and radiation, some of which cause cancer.

It has anti-inflammatory effects.

The use of aspirin and ibuprofen have side effects that can be reduced by taking turmeric or curcumin.

Watch out!

Black pepper increases absorption. Stomach upset or bruising can occur if you get too much turmeric. You'll be in a good mood despite this, because it is also thought to have mood supporting properties!

August 2019

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“Do not be afraid, you are of more value than many sparrows ...”

Matthew 10:29-30

Falls often set one up to receive opioid medication, which can be difficult to stop.

Visit www.nia.nih.gov and type *Preventing Falls* in the search bar.

To screen medicines for fall risk ...

take a list of all your medicines and over-the-counter medicines, including herbs and supplements, to your favorite Pharmacist who can assess whether there may be a falls risk associated with any of them, or discern potential interaction risk.

Have the Pharmacist give you an updated medication list to present to your Provider at the next visit.

September 2019

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Deep Dark Secrets of the GUT

Good gut health can prevent unnecessary pain and cravings. This can lower your need for medication.

Feed the Right Bacteria.

Sugar feeds the **WRONG** bacteria. Antibiotics upset the balance of good and bad bacteria.

To correct this, avoid concentrated sugars, eat prebiotic and probiotic foods, like live culture yogurt, or take a supplement 2-3 times daily.

Fight Constipation.

You will feel pain or cravings more when constipated. Oddly enough, opioids cause constipation, which increases pain, in turn requiring more of the opioid.

The Pharmacist can Help.

Making good choices for gut health from your food, or choosing a supplement or laxative, is the Pharmacist's specialty. Don't forget to get an updated medication list!

October 2019

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Iron Levels, Pain and Cravings

Cravings, chronic pain, disease, inflammation, anemia, restless leg syndrome, and hidden bleeding are associated with lower than normal iron levels.

Not only is it a good idea to understand where iron deficiency is coming from, but supplementing properly can reduce cravings and can pave the way to use less pain medication.

VEGETABLE IRON is less constipating, and helps you feel your pain less.

You can also get away with taking less iron if it is taken together with Vitamin C, Vitamin B12 and folic acid.

Ask your Pharmacist for the best product for you and don't forget to update your med list.

November 2019

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Hoping you and yours enjoy the best of health and happiness for many years ahead!

We hope you have enjoyed your calendar journey to better days of health.

This kind of joy should be year-round!

Joy and meaning make life so much better. The right choice of lifestyle, food, medicine, family and friends go a long way to reach this.

Care is not far away.

There are helpful people on your care team, including your Pharmacist, who can find you a good balance of treatment and cost effective options.

May you have a good night!

Enjoy a good end to the day! Turn your devices off or put them away so your melatonin can work. And what a big day in the morning, be it the Feast of Lights, Christmas, New Year's Eve ...

... may they be the best!

December 2019



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