



March Benefits News: It's Time to Take Care of *You*

Stay in the know about your **OEBB** benefits.

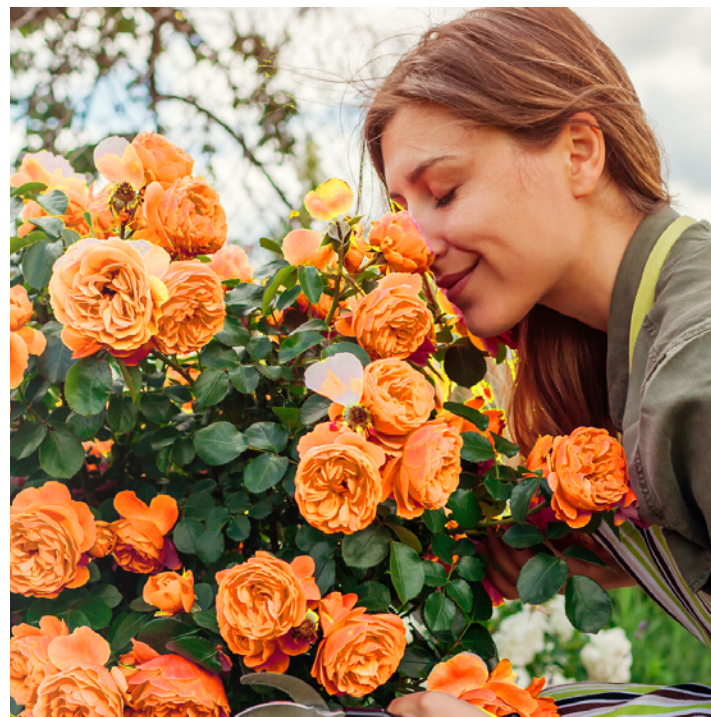
12 ways to take better care of yourself

In today's busy world, it's hard to find "me time." When caring for others, it's common to put your own health last on the priority list. If you're feeling exhausted, uninspired, or unwell, it might be time to focus on self-care. You'll perform at your best, feel better, and be more resilient.

Here are 12 ways to practice self-care:

- 1 Prioritize sleep.** The recommended amount of sleep for adults is seven to nine hours per day. Set and keep a nightly routine by going to bed at the same time. Free your bedroom of distractions, like TVs and cell phones. Use room-darkening curtains to keep from waking too early.
- 2 Say no sometimes.** It's hard to say no. But if you're already stressed out, saying yes can lead to burnout. Learn how to politely say no so you'll have more time for self-care.
- 3 Take a break from it all.** Getting away from your usual routine—even for a few hours or a day—can have a huge impact on lowering your stress and anxiety levels. Window-shop at the next town over, or go camping nearby.

(Continued on next page ↓)



- 4 **Go outside.** Studies show that spending time outdoors does wonders for your physical and mental health, as well as your attitude. It can even help you sleep better at night. Do some gardening, go hiking, or walk around a local lake.
- 5 **Pet the dog.** Pets give us unconditional love and companionship. They also bring surprising health benefits. Dogs especially help reduce stress and anxiety and can even lower your blood pressure.
- 6 **Get organized.** When your home or desk is messy, it can lead to stress. Keep a planner or calendar on the fridge to track all your appointments. Use hooks and labeled bins to keep everyone's work or school stuff in one place and ready for the next day.
- 7 **Plan something to look forward to.** Each day or week, plan something that you enjoy. It doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming. It can be as easy as reading a chapter in a book you like or having lunch with a friend.
- 8 **Decompress with music or a spiritual activity.** Take time to clear your head by listening to soothing music. Or practice meditation, pray, walk in the park, watch a sunset, or read something inspirational.
- 9 **Schedule and guard your "me time."** Look for ways to incorporate self-care into your daily routine. Pencil it in on your calendar. Wake up 15 minutes earlier to gaze out the window while you sip a cup of tea.

Spend the last 10 minutes of your lunch break reading a magazine. Take a warm bath before bed.

- 10 **Maintain a healthy gut.** Eat foods that promote good digestion, like whole grains, beans, cashews, spinach, broccoli, asparagus, bananas, apples, berries, yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, and pickles.
- 11 **Exercise every day.** Daily exercise can boost your mood and reduce stress. It's not always easy to find the time, so try to find other ways to fit in exercise. Go for a walk at lunchtime. Try yoga after work. Park farther away from the store. Studies show even five minutes of intense exercise each day will improve your health and help you feel better.
- 12 **Make sure you're well fed.** Does what you eat give you the energy you need to get through the day? Are you consistently taking time to eat—even if you're busy? Self-care includes regularly eating healthy foods and planning ahead to ensure you have the nutrition your body needs.

Self-care is important to maintaining good physical and mental health. The more you can work "me time" into your schedule, the more you'll enjoy your life and thrive.

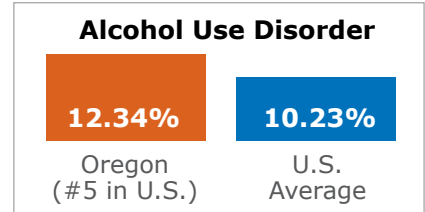
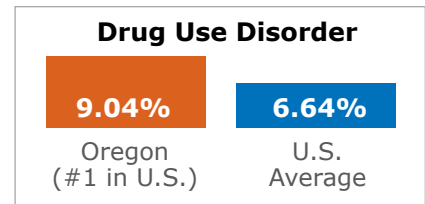
Source: Psychology Today, 2018



Recognizing the signs and symptoms of addiction

Drug and alcohol use is on the rise. Oregon ranks first in the nation in drug use disorder. Roughly 9% of Oregon's population have drug use disorder. And more than 12% have alcohol use disorder. Worse yet, Oregon ranks last in the nation when it comes to seeking treatment for substance abuse. These figures include teens and adults.

Are you, a family member, or a coworker at risk? Here are some signs and symptoms to watch for if you think someone might need to seek help:



NSDUH December 2021 Report (2019-2020, n=135,000, ages 12 and older) U.S. Rankings

Behavior, health, and personal issues:

- Abrupt changes in mood
- Frequent absences and tardiness
- Increased financial problems
- Recurring illnesses and health problems
- Reduced work performance

Physical symptoms:

- Alcohol on breath
- Bloodshot or "pinned" eyes
- Changes in appearance/disheveled
- Poor physical hygiene
- Slurred speech



Source: Kaiser Permanente, 2023

Help is available

If you or one of your covered dependents is struggling with substance abuse, OEBC's medical plans offer benefits to help. Visit your plan's website for more details.

- [Kaiser's website](#)
- [Moda's website](#)



Taking care of yourself while your loved one is in recovery

Substance use disorder is often called a family disease. If your family member has a substance use disorder, or addiction, you may have suffered physically and emotionally from loneliness, guilt, resentment, stress, lack of sleep, or other health problems. Addiction affects each family member differently. Some may lose their spiritual connection through despair or anger. Others may see their social life deteriorate as embarrassment and shame take root in their family.

Often family members feel personally responsible for holding everything together to keep the family from falling apart. This sense of personal responsibility for the person with addiction as well as for the rest of the family can lead family members to feel victimized, angry, and full of blame.

It's often true that people with a substance use disorder have caused any number of problems and brought harm to others. But family members will not gain anything from remaining stuck in the blame game. Instead, healing and balance will come for you and other family members when you turn your energies toward thinking about what you want for yourself. Health will be restored as you learn to detach with love—to love the person who has an addiction but reject addictive behavior.

Are you or is someone you know struggling with alcohol or drugs?

Visit the [Workplace Wellbeing Portal](#) through the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation today. Get the answers and resources you need for yourself or your loved one.

- Determine whether you or your loved one has a problem and how to seek help.
- Take a two-minute confidential assessment with personalized recommendations.
- Learn about addiction, recovery, and mental health through articles, videos, and podcasts.
- Find tips and resources to support your mental and emotional health.

Your interactions are completely anonymous. No personal information is captured.



What can you do to take care of yourself?

- **Attend meetings.** Learning more about the culture of recovery by attending Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Al-Anon meetings or visiting with a counselor who has experience in addiction will benefit both you and your loved one. Another possibility is to attend a family program where you can learn how to deal with the recovery of your loved one while still taking care of yourself.
- **Encourage new activities and skills.** Encourage positive activities such as attending AA or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings, seeking sponsorship, learning new hobbies, or making new friends.
- **Check your emotions.** Expect that your relationship with the person with the substance use disorder will continue to be emotional. Make sure you give and take love with compassion and discipline. Don't lose your temper.
- **Seek the truth.** Don't allow your loved one to exploit you or lie to you. The truth is often painful, but seek it anyway. Don't cover up or hide the consequences of their alcohol or other drug use. This may reduce the impact of the immediate crisis, but it only perpetuates the illness.
- **Don't try to control.** Don't lecture, moralize, scold, praise, blame, threaten, or argue with your loved one to try to control their behavior. This won't work and can only make the situation worse. Anxiety and fear may compel you to try to force your loved one to take the actions you want. However, recovery can only happen when the person with the substance use disorder chooses abstinence. Give yourself permission to take care of yourself.

The power of letting go

The benefits of learning to detach as you focus on your own needs are many. Your stress level will decrease because you aren't trying to change the unchangeable—your loved one and the disease they have. When you choose to let go, you will gain a sense of freedom. You will find healing going on in all areas of your life—physical, emotional, spiritual, and social. You will experience the power of letting go when you stop trying to control another and instead spend that energy on balancing your own life.

Help and support are available

Regular 12-step group attendance is another key resource for family members. Al-Anon, Alateen, and Adult Children of Alcoholics groups are available to help family members begin their own recovery process. These groups will help you come to terms with reality, live in the moment, and take charge of your life. If your loved one has a substance use disorder or addiction, rather than reacting to their addicted behavior, you will learn to focus on yourself and make meaningful choices.

- **Al-Anon and Alateen**—Al-Anon and Alateen members are people who have been affected by someone else's drinking. These groups offer an online searchable directory of meetings in the U.S. and Canada. Visit al-anon.org or call 757-563-1600.
- **Adult Children of Alcoholics**—Adult Children of Alcoholics is a nonprofit organization that maintains services for those seeking to stop the emotional disease of family alcoholism. This organization offers a searchable list of meetings worldwide. Visit adultchildren.org or call 310-534-1815.



Diabetes: The basics about this growing disease

This is the first segment in an ongoing series about diabetes. OEGB plans to provide education about this important health condition for several months.

The different types of diabetes

In the past 20 years, the number of adults diagnosed with diabetes has more than doubled. Currently, 37.36 million Americans have diabetes. But one in five people don't know they have it. So, what is diabetes and why should you care?

Diabetes is a long-lasting disease that affects how your body turns food into energy. Your body breaks down most of the food you eat into sugar and releases it into your bloodstream. When your blood sugar rises, it signals your pancreas to release insulin. Insulin allows your body's cells to use the sugar and turn it into energy. If you have diabetes, your body doesn't make or use as much insulin as it should. Left unchecked, diabetes can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, vision loss, and kidney disease.

There are three main types of diabetes:

Type 1	Type 2	Gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought to be an autoimmune reaction in which your body attacks itself by mistake. This stops your body from making insulin. • Requires daily insulin injections to survive. • Approximately 5–10% of people with diabetes have type 1. • Usually diagnosed in children, teens, and young adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your body doesn't use insulin well and can't keep your blood sugar at normal levels. • About 90–95% of people with diabetes have type 2. • It develops over many years and is usually diagnosed in adults, although more young people are developing it now too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops in some pregnant women. • Can put the developing baby at risk for weight and health problems.
<p>Prevention or cure available? Currently, nobody knows how to prevent type 1.</p>	<p>Prevention or cure available? Type 2 can be prevented or delayed with healthy lifestyle changes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing weight • Eating healthy food • Exercising 	<p>Prevention or cure available? Usually goes away after the baby is born.</p>

It's important to keep an eye on your blood sugar levels. During your annual exam, ask your doctor to take a blood sample to check your blood sugar levels. If you are at risk, you can make small lifestyle changes—like losing a small amount of weight and moving more—to help prevent or delay getting type 2 diabetes.

If you have been diagnosed with diabetes or are prediabetic, OEGB offers programs to help make it easier to manage—and perhaps reverse—your disease. Check out the [Wellbeing plans at a glance](#) section for details.

[Learn more](#) about risk factors on the CDC website, and watch for more articles on diabetes in our future newsletters.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022



Lower your risk of type 2 diabetes by eating these foods

The food you eat has a huge impact on your risk of getting type 2 diabetes. When you choose to eat healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables, you can keep your risk low.

Studies have found that you can drop your risk for type 2 diabetes by 10% if you eat three or more servings of fruits and veggies each day. The chance of getting diabetes is lowest if you eat at least five servings a day. The more servings you eat, the better!

Why do fruits and veggies have this effect? They are loaded with vitamins and minerals. They have a lot of fiber. They don't have many calories, which helps you manage your weight. And they can help you control your blood sugar, blood fats, and blood pressure.

Eat many different types. They are all good for you. But some are better than others. Leafy greens like spinach are better for your health than starchy potatoes. Berries are better than peaches that come in a can. If you have high blood sugar, ask your doctor about how to make good fruit choices. Some fruit products (like fruit juice or packaged snacks) have a lot of sugar.



Think of ways you can eat more fruits and veggies daily. Try some of these tips.

- **Eat more fresh salads.** Try a mixture of leafy greens like lettuce, cabbage, and kale. Add some peppers, onions, and carrots.
- **Mix veggies together in a soup, stir-fry, or omelet.** Mix fruits in a smoothie or fruit salad.
- **Add fresh fruit to your breakfast.** Toss some berries into your cereal or oatmeal.
- **Sweet tooth?** Eat a piece of fruit instead of candy.
- **Start a garden.** Growing your own healthy food can be fun and can save you money.
- **Try new cooking methods. Roast, stir-fry, bake, grill, and steam your veggies.** Maybe you'll decide that you like carrots much better grilled than raw. Or you may find that roasting squash really brings out the flavor.
- **Keep track of your daily servings.** One serving is roughly what you can fit in your palm. Work your way up to five or more servings per day.

Both fruits and veggies help keep blood sugar levels under control. But of the two, fruits appear to protect you the most.

OEBB at your service

What's the Board doing in March?

The Board is deep into the renewal process for next year's benefits. Each year, the Board reviews benefits and costs for the next plan year as part of the "renewal process." The process has several steps, which are outlined below.

05. Gearing Up

September to January

As soon as one renewal cycle is completed, the Board gears up for the next one. There's lots to do to bring innovative, affordable, and clinically supported programs to OEBB members.

01. Assessment

January–March

Board members and Mercer consultants review OEBB's benefits package and meet with vendor partners to fine-tune the plans to better meet members' needs, maintain compliance with new laws, remain competitive in the market, and keep benefits affordable for all members.

The Board is here. ★



02. Selection

April

OEBB's Board makes final decisions on programs, benefits, and rates in advance of Open Enrollment.

04. Member Enrollment

August

Open Enrollment is the time when members will see what's new and changing for the next plan year. It's also the time they can enroll, change, or cancel their coverage for the 2023–2024 plan year.

03. Implementation

May–June

OEBB's Board works with Mercer consultants and vendor partners to implement Board-approved changes and provide the information members need to learn about in order to make the most of next year's plans.

Although this is a long process, it's also an exciting one for the Board. Why? Because it provides an opportunity to reassess members' needs, learn about new offerings, and find even better coverage options for next year.

OEBB Board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month and are open to the public.

To learn more about upcoming meetings or view recordings of past meetings, visit the [Public Meetings](#) page of the OEBB website.

Wellbeing plans at a glance

Taking care of your health and wellbeing is more important than ever. As an OEBB member, you can get or stay on the healthy path by taking advantage of these valuable benefits—at **no cost to you**.

[Learn](#) more about all the health and wellness programs that are available through OEBB.

Kaiser Permanente members	Moda Health members
Ongoing health conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal health coaches	Ongoing health conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal health coaches• Pre-D (diabetes prevention)
Healthy habits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HealthyYou powered by WebMD ONE• Freedom from Tobacco classes (tobacco cessation)• WeightWatchers	Healthy habits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HealthyYou powered by WebMD ONE• Quit for Life (tobacco cessation) 866-QUIT-4-LIFE (866-784-8454) (there's also a chat feature)• WeightWatchers
Emotional wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uprise Health 866-750-1327 or text "Hi" to Tess the chatbot at 650-825-9634 Access code: OEBB• Kaiser Permanente behavioral health consultants 800-813-2000	Emotional wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uprise Health 866-750-1327 or text "Hi" to Tess the chatbot at 650-825-9634 Access code: OEBB• Meru Health behavioral health consultants
Musculoskeletal (muscles and bones) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chiropractic services and massage discounts through ChooseHealthy (register to receive the discount)	Musculoskeletal (muscles and bones) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chiropractic services

Benefits questions?

Email: oebb.benefits@odhsoha.oregon.gov

Phone: 888-4My-OEBB (888-469-6322)

