

Heartfelt

MAGAZINE

Welcome spring
in with **new**
virtual care

Healthy food to **boost**
your daily wellness

March 2025

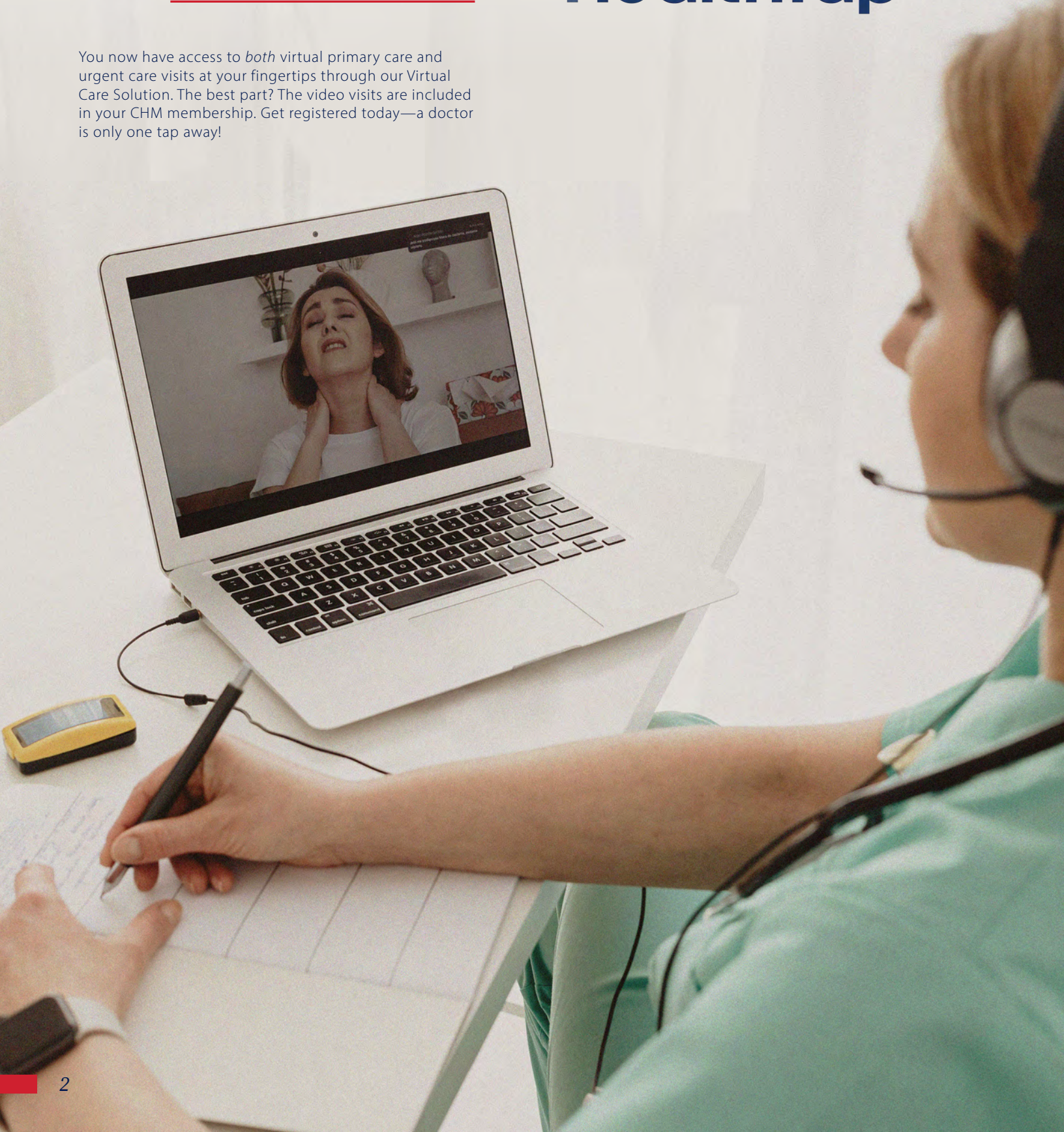
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Welcome spring in with new virtual care

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Healthy food to boost your daily wellness

March is National Nutrition Month, a time to focus on food's role in our overall health. I often hear patients say, "I want to eat healthier, but I don't know where to start." The good news is that improving your nutrition doesn't require a complete diet overhaul. Small, sustainable changes to add healthy food can make a big difference.

HERE ARE PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP YOU ADD MORE NUTRITION TO YOUR DAILY MEALS:

1. Start your day with a nutritious breakfast

Breakfast sets the tone for your day, so make it count. Instead of sugary cereals or pastries, try options rich in protein and fiber. Eggs are one of the planet's best sources of protein. Another great choice is a bowl of oatmeal topped with fresh fruit and a handful of nuts or seeds. If you're short on time, a smoothie made with spinach, frozen berries, and Greek yogurt is both quick and nutrient-packed.

Finally, if you've opted for intermittent fasting and choose to skip breakfast, maintain your body's fasting state by avoiding carbohydrates in your morning beverage. For me, that means drinking my coffee black.

2. Focus on "real food," whole and unprocessed

When possible, choose foods as close to their natural state as possible. Fresh fruits and vegetables (set a goal of at least 5 one-half cup servings daily), whole grains, lean proteins, and unprocessed fats (e.g. butter rather than margarine, natural fat from avocados, olives, fish, nuts, and seeds) should make up the majority of your meals.

Processed foods often contain added sugars, unhealthy fats, and sodium, undermining your health goals. For quick meals, fresh-frozen foods tend to contain less potentially harmful additives and preservatives.

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(My office requires one week for responses. This service isn't intended for acute problems or to replace the advice of your physician.)



HEALTH
WATCH

3. Pick the shortest labels

Read the nutrition label on packaged food. Ingredients are listed in order of concentration: the first ingredient should be from a natural source. If added sugars, sodium, and unhealthy fats are at the top of the list, choose something else. In general, the shorter the label, the better, as these items will contain fewer unnatural chemicals and additives.

4. Hydrate wisely

Often, we confuse thirst with hunger, leading to unnecessary snacking. Staying hydrated is critical to helping you feel your best. Pure water is the best choice. But, if plain water doesn't excite you, try infusing it with slices of lemon, cucumber, or berries, rather than sugar and other chemical additives. If you only make one change, this might be the simplest and most impactful.

5. Eat mindfully and proactively

When you're hungry, it's easy to reach for convenient but less healthy options. Americans eat more fast food than any other country (Blue Vault). Thankfully, Americans are waking up to this negative pattern and beginning to choose from increasingly available fast food vendors that offer fresh and healthier options.

But even healthy foods can lead to weight gain if eaten in excess. Pay attention to portion sizes. For me, deciding before I start eating how much I'll allow myself is more effective than eating until I feel full.

It can also help to place boundaries around the 'locations' where you eat. For example, it's much easier for me to consume more calories than intended if I'm eating while watching a movie or a football game.



A FINAL THOUGHT

Every healthy-eating step you take adds up over time. By incorporating these simple strategies into your daily routine, you can enjoy better energy, improved health, and a deeper appreciation for the food you eat.

This National Nutrition Month, try one or two of these tips and see how they work for you. Remember, the goal isn't to eat healthier—it's to create a lifestyle that supports your well-being and helps you thrive.

REFERENCES

Blue Vault Partners America's Growing Appetite for Fast Food. 09 JUL 2024. <https://bluevaultpartners.com/americas-growing-appetite-for-fast-food/>. Accessed January 14, 2025.

CDC Fast Food Consumption Among Adults in the United States, 2013–2016. OCT 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db322.htm>. Accessed January 14, 2025.

Ruth: Commitment positioned her for greatness

Examining the remarkable biblical exploits of Ruth is a way during March, Women's History Month, to see and honor how women have changed history—through deeds great or small.

The story of Ruth in the Bible tells of unwavering commitment and loyalty, trust in God, and shows how an unlikely person can become part of something significant; in Ruth's case, it means being one of the few women in the lineage of Jesus.

Commitment

In our world, people often change their mind at the first sign of inconvenience, or say they'll do something only to not show up or cancel at the last minute. Commitment means being devoted to something, and of people keeping their word. Ruth, in Ruth 1, shows great loyalty and commitment to her mother-in-law, Naomi, famously saying: "where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you" [Ruth 1:16-17 ESV].

Ruth is a beautiful example of strong commitment to someone else, and following through, despite every challenge.

Trust in God

Ruth's made her commitment to Naomi, and also committed to serve Naomi's God. Her devotion and trust in God show clearly in her willingness to leave her home and come to a new country, even after Naomi ordered her to go back. Ruth likely understood that returning to her homeland meant again serving the Moabite gods. Instead, she left behind her previous life and whatever comforts or protection it offered. She put her full trust and confidence in the true God, and in His provision.



Diligence

When Ruth and Naomi returned to Bethlehem, Ruth went to work. She trusted God to provide her work, asking Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor" [Ruth 2:2 ESV]. Her diligence to provide food for Naomi demonstrates her care for others.

Her humility is reflected in her response to Boaz while gleaning in his field: "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" [Ruth 2:10 ESV] She didn't demand his notice or favor but reacted in humility.

Ruth's story is one of redemption, and how someone unlikely can become great in God's kingdom.

Covenant

Ruth, though not Jewish by birth, became part of God's covenant people. Hers is a redemption story, of how someone unlikely can become great in God's kingdom. As she served her mother-in-law and put her trust in God, she became part of God's plan to save humanity through Jesus. Years later, we can celebrate and honor her legacy, inspired by her loyalty, humility, and faith.





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