Thanksgiving dinner

Three food facts every cook should know

We all know Thanksgiving dinner is a reason for gathering together, giving thanks, and eating good food. Here are three helpful preparation tips you may not know:

1. **Thawing your turkey on the kitchen counter may lead to bacteria growth.** Instead, thaw it in your refrigerator for 24 hours for each four to five pounds. If that’s not possible, defrost the turkey in your microwave oven using the manufacturer’s instructions.

   You can also place the turkey in its original packaging under cold running water or in cold water that’s changed every 30 minutes. Expect two to 12 hours to thaw the bird—depending on your turkey’s size—according to the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

2. **It’s safest to cook stuffing separately from your turkey.** Food must reach an internal temperature of 165 degrees to ensure bacteria are destroyed. That may not happen with stuffing tucked inside a turkey. If you do stuff the bird, do so loosely. Roast your turkey immediately after stuffing it, and use a food thermometer to verify when the center of the stuffing has reached 165 degrees.

3. **You can cut calories and fat in your favorite dishes without sacrificing flavor.** The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends using simple substitutions like reduced-fat cheeses in salads, low-sodium chicken broth instead of butter, or nonfat whipped topping for desserts to make a dish healthier.
The most common diabetic eye problem is retinopathy, a disorder that causes vision changes and sometimes blindness. Yearly eye exams, controlling your blood sugar and blood pressure, and eating a healthy diet can help keep your eyes healthy.

The retina is a thin layer of cells at the back of your eyeball that helps you see clearly. When blood sugar or blood pressure gets too high, it can cause delicate blood vessels in the retina to tear or burst. High blood sugar can also cause blood vessels in the eye to swell and change the shape of the lens, which will return to normal after getting blood sugars under control.

Yearly dilated eye tests are important and can help find problems early, when they are most treatable. In many cases, eye problems that are found early can be corrected before any warning signs start to appear. Good diabetic care like the following can keep your eyes healthy:

- Have a yearly blood test to check your A1C, which should be below seven percent.
- Have a yearly eye checkup.
- Have a yearly lipid panel check.
- Control your blood pressure.
- Be tested yearly for kidney disease.

Call your doctor if you notice any vision changes, such as seeing floaters, blurry vision, changes in your field of vision, and problems seeing at night.

If your doctor tells you that you have retinopathy, remember that it can be treated.

Source: www.diabeticconnect.com

RMHP has a Chronic Disease Management program that focuses on diabetes and heart disease. Our nurse can provide you with education and assist you with health care needs. You can reach the RMHP Chronic Disease Management Educator at 970-248-8746 or shelly.lambert@rmhp.org.

RMHP in the community

Do you ever find yourself shopping on www.amazon.com? If so, there’s a great way to help support local communities through the RMHP Foundation. Visit www.smile.amazon.com and search “Rocky Mountain Health Plans Foundation.” Simply select the Foundation and begin shopping.

Your purchases will help support the RMHP Foundation, which sponsors a variety of health-related causes across Colorado, including We Can! Mesa County; Baby & Me, Tobacco Free; and Sustaining Integrated Care (SHAPE), which tests a global budget model for the integration of medical, mental, and behavioral health care.
Get fit with Silver&Fit

Whether your goal is to stay active, lose weight, or just improve your overall health, RMHP Medicare can help. Beginning January 1, 2016, Members who enroll in the RMHP Medicare Thrifty, Standard, and Plus plans can enjoy the new Silver&Fit Exercise and Healthy Aging Program. You will have access to online fitness tools to help you stay healthy, in addition to the option to purchase a health club membership at a participating facility for an annual fee of only $75. Prefer to work out in the comfort of your own home? For an annual cost of just $10, you’ll receive two programs from a variety of home workout kits, including yoga, strength exercise, stress management, and more. For more information about the Silver&Fit Exercise and Healthy Aging Program, visit www.SilverandFit.com.

This information is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits, premiums and/or copayments/coinsurance may change January 1 of each year.

A U.S. study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that only 288 people out of 2,694 adults with elevated blood sugar, a marker of prediabetes, were aware of the problem. Researchers also found that adults who were aware of their condition were 30 percent more likely to exercise and engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, and almost 80 percent more likely to try losing weight and to have at least a seven percent reduction in their body weight in the past year.

Source: Reuters, “Few People Heading Toward Diabetes Know It” (6/29/15)
The Annual Election Period is here

It’s once again that time of year for the Medicare Annual Election Period (AEP). Between October 15 and December 7, Medicare beneficiaries may change Medicare plans, change prescription drug coverage plans, enroll in a Medicare plan for the first time, or return to Original Medicare. Any changes made during AEP will take effect on January 1, 2016. To learn more about your options, call our knowledgeable Medicare Sales Team at 888-251-1330 (TTY: 711).

This information is available for free in other languages. Please call our Customer Service number at 888-282-1420 (TTY dial 711). Hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week, Oct. 1 to Feb. 14, and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, Feb. 15 to Sept. 30.

Esta información está disponible gratuitamente en otros idiomas. Por favor llame a la línea de Atención a Clientes, al 888-282-1420 (TTY marque 711). Horario de 8 a.m. a 8 p.m., 7 días a la semana, del 1 de octubre al 14 de febrero; y de 8 a.m. a 8 p.m., de lunes a viernes, del 15 de febrero al 30 de septiembre.

Your right to appeal

If you are dissatisfied with a decision made by RMHP, you have the right to ask us to reconsider our decision. The reconsideration process is called an appeal. Your request for an appeal can be submitted in writing via letter or email, or by calling our Customer Service department.

There are two types of appeals, internal and external, that may lead to multiple levels of review.

Decisions of appeals are made in the following time frames per type of appeal and level of review.

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This description of the appeals process is intended to serve as a brief summary only and does not replace the terms and conditions of the “Evidence of Coverage.”

The external review process is explained in more detail in the “Evidence of Coverage” section of your Member handbook.
According to the Bell Policy Center, Colorado has one of the fastest growing age groups in the country with the baby boomers population, and the Alzheimer’s Association expects the number of Coloradans age 65 and older suffering from Alzheimer’s disease in 2025 to be 92,000. To address the implications of the demographic change, HB15-1033 was passed to create a strategic planning group within the Department of Local Affairs. This group is required to present a strategic plan to the governor by Nov. 1, 2016, addressing issues such as long-term care and transportation infrastructure. The bill was endorsed by organizations such as the Alzheimer’s Association of Colorado and the Colorado Commission on Aging.

Sources: The Bell Policy (www.bellpolicy.org); Alzheimer’s Association (www.alz.org); Colorado General Assembly (www.leg.state.co.us)

More information about the bill may be found online at www.leg.state.co.us.
Announcing an RMHP pharmacy change

On occasion, RMHP must make changes to ensure our Members are receiving the best savings possible. RMHP will soon be taking advantage of MedImpact’s High Performance pharmacy network for a more efficient, cost-savings approach to our Members’ prescription claims.

This change to our pharmacy network will begin on Jan. 1, 2016, and means Members will:

• Have access to over 750 pharmacies in the RMHP pharmacy network.
• Receive new savings on many of your prescriptions.
• Get 90-day prescriptions for a discounted copay at any network retail and mail-order pharmacy (does not apply to coinsurance claims).
• No longer use Walgreens as a network pharmacy.

Current prescriptions may easily be transferred from Walgreens to any of our network pharmacies, so it will not be necessary to obtain a new prescription. Beginning Jan. 1, 2016, prescriptions filled at Walgreens will not be covered by RMHP.

The pharmacy network or provider network may change at any time. You will receive notice when necessary.

For questions or help finding a pharmacy, please contact RMHP’s Customer Service team at 800-346-4643 or 970-243-7050 (TTY: 711) or customer_service@rmhp.org, or use our online pharmacy locator.