

# City of Tampa Healthy Heartbeat

Health and wellness newsletter for COT Employees and families, and COT Retirees



November 2024

## November is National Diabetes Awareness Week

### Life with diabetes

#### Hearing (and accepting) your diagnosis

Maybe you just felt off. Maybe you were excessively thirsty, really tired but not sleeping well, drained of energy. Maybe your vision was suddenly blurry. Maybe you lost weight without trying. Whatever might have prompted you to seek medical attention, you likely weren't expecting to maybe hear, "You have diabetes." For many people, the world may shift around them as they process the news.

#### What is diabetes?

If you're diagnosed with type 1 or type 2 diabetes, your body either can't make the hormone insulin or doesn't use the hormone like it should. Insulin is important in giving your body energy from the foods you eat. Without insulin, blood sugar may build up in your blood, making you sick.

- **Type 1 diabetes** may occur at any age, but it happens most frequently during childhood and adolescence. Causes are unknown, but researchers think there may be a strong genetic link. There is currently no cure for type 1 diabetes, an autoimmune disease that occurs when the pancreas can't make insulin.
- **Type 2 diabetes** is the more common type of diabetes. The pancreas still produces insulin, but the insulin may not work in the body like it should.

[Click here to read the full article](#)

### Managing blood sugar (glucose)

Glucose, also known as blood sugar, is the main source of energy for our cells. It mainly comes from the foods we eat and may go up or down depending on when and how much we eat. Our pancreas helps manage these levels by making insulin, a hormone. The job of insulin is to take the glucose from our blood and help it move into our cells, creating energy for our bodies.

#### What happens if our insulin may be out of control?

With diabetes, the body may either stop making insulin, slow way down or "forget" how to use insulin. When the insulin is either gone or not working properly (also known as "insulin resistance"), the glucose can't get into the cells where it needs to go. This is what happens with type 2 diabetes.

To read this full article and learn more about managing your blood sugar, read the full article and FAQs click the link or scan the QR code below: [Managing blood sugar \(glucose\) | \(uhc.com\)](#)



## Choosing Healthier Carbs



In recent years, carbohydrates (carbs) have gotten a bad reputation. But carbs can be part of a healthy diet for people with diabetes. The key is to know how to portion and choose the "right" carbs.

#### Types of carbs:

**Simple carbs** increase your blood sugar quickly, causing those "spikes and dips" that can make it harder to manage your diabetes. Common sources of simple carbs include table sugar, honey, fruit juice, and syrup. *These are often major ingredients of highly processed and packaged foods like soda, cookies, cakes, candies, and other foods with added sugars.*

Some types of simple carbs are found in healthy foods like whole fruit and dairy foods. These foods have *beneficial vitamins and minerals, which are key to a balanced diet.*

**Refined grains** are simple carbs that have been processed to remove the fiber. *This often removes key nutrients as well, some of which are added back in by the manufacturer.* Because they tend to be lower in fiber, refined grains can also cause spikes in blood sugar, making it difficult to keep your diabetes under control. Examples include foods like white bread, white rice, white pasta, cereals, pastries, and other desserts. *Refined grains are processed to increase shelf life, which can also make them more affordable.*

**Complex carbs** are the better choice for helping keep your blood sugar in better control. *Complex carbs increase your blood sugar more slowly because they contain fiber and other complex starches that take longer for your body to digest.* Examples of complex carbs include starchy vegetables (white and sweet potatoes, peas, corn), legumes (beans, lentils), and whole grains. *Choose these carbs to get the most nutrition with the least impact on blood sugar.*

*Protein and fiber help your body digest foods more slowly, which helps maintain more steady blood sugar levels.* When you eat a meal or snack with carbs, include a protein source, like meat, a small handful of nuts, or low-fat dairy.

#### Healthy swaps

- Eat whole fruits instead of drinking juice
- Rethink your drink. Sugar-sweetened beverages can add a lot of simple carbs to your diet. To reduce added sugars, start gradually cutting back on sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Switch to whole wheat pasta, tortillas, and bread to add more fiber
- Try oats instead of sugary cereal – mix it up with overnight oats and oat bars
- Try eating different grains, like quinoa, farro, bulgur wheat, barley, and millet

Read the whole article here: [Choosing Healthy Carbs | CDC](#)

Or scan the QR code:



## Your Dedicated United Healthcare Team



Onsite Representative

Savio Crasto

Email: [cotonsiterep@uhc.com](mailto:cotonsiterep@uhc.com)

Phone: 813-274-8279



Nurse Liaison

Debbie Johns, RN

Email: [cotnurse@uhc.com](mailto:cotnurse@uhc.com)

Phone: 813-482-4856



Health Coach

Stephanie Olstad, BSW

Email: [cotcoach@uhc.com](mailto:cotcoach@uhc.com)

Phone: 813-535-0482





## November 2024 UHC Webinars:

### Living With Diabetes: What Can I Eat?

Wed, Nov 27, 2024 | 12 - 1pm



Great news for folks with Type 2 Diabetes or Pre-Diabetes: eating to help keep your blood sugar within a healthy range can be both healthy and enjoyable! By following a few easy guidelines and committing to some small health goals, you can enjoy a variety of delicious, REAL foods AND keep your blood sugar in good control.

To register [T2D: What Can I Eat? Registration](#) or scan the QR code below



November 4 -  
January 3



## Healthy Holiday Challenge

Stay healthy and maintain your weight during the holidays with this fun 8-week challenge!



Participants will receive a weekly email with:

- Delicious holiday recipes
- Strategies to stay motivated throughout the holidays
- Helpful ways to beat stress, stay active, and navigate those holiday parties

You'll also get some free gifts throughout the challenge to help you stay on track!

Click here to register or scan the QR code:  
[2024 Maintain, Don't Gain Registration](#)



## OPEN ENROLLMENT 2025!

It's time to enroll in your 2025 Employee Benefits!  
November 1 - November 15, 2024



### Where to Find Benefits Enrollment Information

From [www.tampa.gov](http://www.tampa.gov)

- [2025 Employee Open Enrollment November 1st through November 15th | City of Tampa](#)

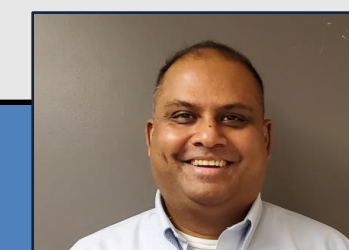


#### Benefits Counselors

- Benefit Specialists from Employee Family Protection (EFP) will be onsite at various locations to assist with your enrollment. For information/to schedule an appointment, call 844-231-1623.

2025 Enrollment will be done via Oracle Cloud

Questions about your United Healthcare benefits?  
Contact Savio Crasto, UHC onsite representative:  
[COTonsiterep@UHC.com](mailto:COTonsiterep@UHC.com) | 813-274-8279







fitPROS



A WELLBEING SESSION FOR



**Wednesday,  
November 13,  
12:00-12:45pm (EST)**

**Cooking Demo:** Healthy Holiday Sides - Loaded Vegan Stuffing and Sweet and Spicy Green Bean Casserole with Ginger Spiced Sweet Potatoes

[Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)



**Free Prize**  
to the 1<sup>st</sup> 50  
who register  
and attend!

## For the "Over-40 Set"

Managing Menopause  
Navigating a Challenging Transition



Menopause isn't a disease or disorder. It's a normal part of a woman's life. But the transition to menopause can be difficult for some women. Learn more and find ways to help ease symptoms in this article from the National Institutes of Health.

[Managing Menopause | NIH News in Health](#)

Stopping Middle-Age Spread:  
Maintain a Healthy Weight as You Age

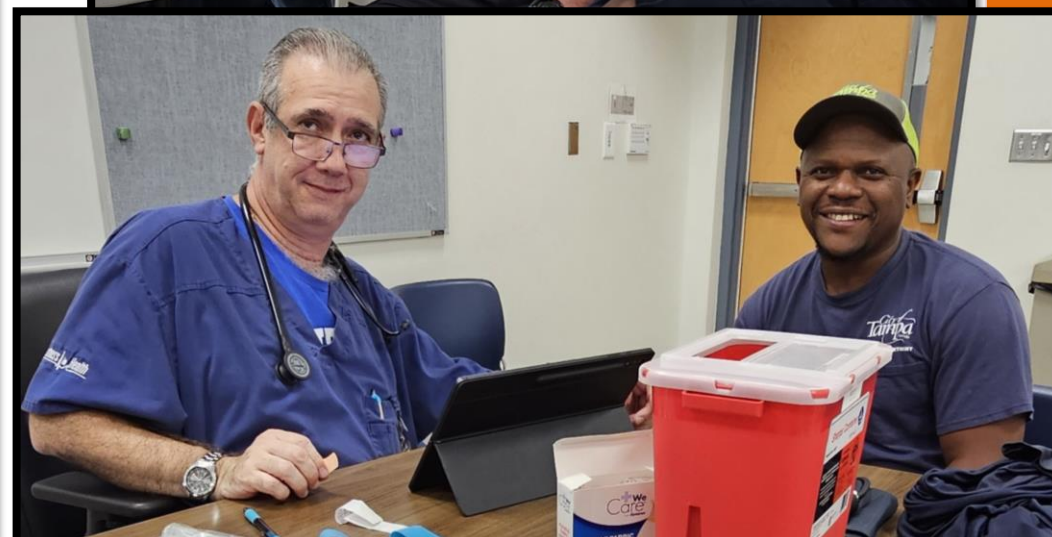


As you get older, your metabolism slows down. You may notice you're starting to gain weight and have less muscle and energy. Learn tips to fight back against these changes in this article by the National Institutes of Health.

[Stopping Middle-Age Spread | NIH News in Health](#)

## Scenes From:

# Water Distribution PHA Event!



Check out this cool  
**HEALTHY SELFIE**

from Juan Lopez,  
Sales & Marketing Manager at the Tampa Convention Center! Juan was taking part in a 5k run at the IMEX America conference, which took them to the iconic *Welcome to Las Vegas* sign.

Send in your "Healthy Selfie" to Nurse Debbie or Coach Stef so we can show you off in the next newsletter!!

**The deadline to earn  
your RALLY INCENTIVES for 2025  
is Saturday November 30<sup>th</sup>!**

**Talk to your UHC onsite team  
or watch the 2024 Incentives Overview  
video on tampa.gov for help getting in  
those last few activities!**

