



A “Choose Happy” checklist

Back in March, we launched the “Choose Happy” program to help bring happiness and positivity back into our lives in 2021. We’re happy to share that our members, team, and community have embraced the campaign. So far, 45 of them have completed the “21 opportunities to focus on happiness in 2021” checklist that we shared with you in March.

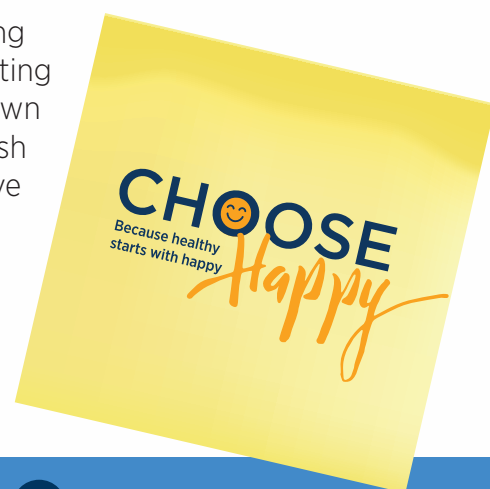
How have you “Chosen Happy” this year?

We’ve asked those who are participating in the challenge to share with us the different ways they’re choosing happy this year. What we’ve learned is it’s easy to find happy, if you choose to.

Participants have reported finding happiness in simple ways — like cleaning out a junk drawer, or taking lunch away from their desk — to more unique endeavors like playing a game of pickle ball, or learning to line dance.

You’ve started walking and moving more, exercising with weights, eating healthy, and even planting your own vegetables. You’ve learned Spanish and taken literature classes. You’ve picked up new penmanship and computer skills. Now that’s truly inspiring.

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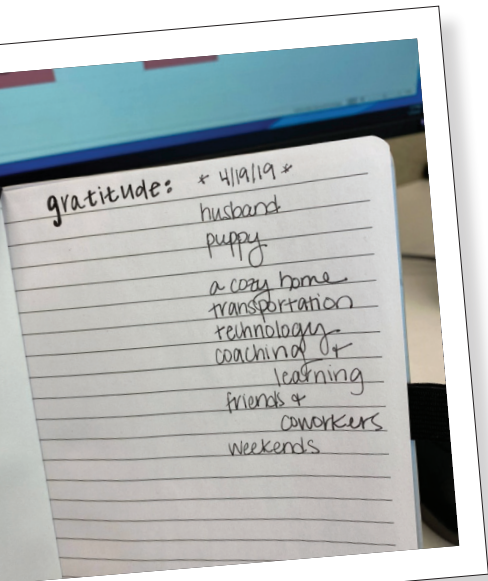
Fitness benefits



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Choose Happy *checkup continued...*

Keep following along

The health benefits of happiness are astounding and include stress relief, improvement of blood pressure and heart problems, boosting the immune system, and much more. Don't forget to check out our blog (www.aspirehealthplan.org).

- Gardening and as a source of exercise and a mood-boosting activity
- The link between travel and happiness — traveling locally, virtually, and planning for your next adventure
- How healthy, and happy, habits can reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes

Check back often, as we'll continue to explore the many ways happiness can lead to better overall health. And visit our social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn), where we share photos of our members, team, and the community, choosing happy.

Add happiness into your life each day

Remember, it's not a heavy "lift" to add happiness into your life each day. Think about the last time you laughed or genuinely enjoyed yourself. Maybe it was a quick chat with an old friend, or playing with your pet or grandkids. Take those moments and replicate them as much as you can.

You can still "Choose Happy"

It's never too late to "Choose Happy." You can complete the 21 opportunities to earn a Choose Happy journal. If you misplaced the mailer, find a full list at www.aspirehealthplan.org/choosehappy. Remember to share ways you are choosing happy this year with your family, friends, and loved ones. Social media users can share using the hashtag #AspireChooseHappy.

Seeing the world in a more positive light will naturally allow you to be surrounded by more positive people and experiences, which in turn, will evoke happiness. Thank you to all who have shared the different ways you decided to "Choose Happy" so far this year. You've definitely put a smile on our faces.

Aspire Rewards is back

Don't miss a chance to earn through Aspire Rewards, a program that allows you to earn rewards for taking care of your health. Redeem your rewards from among hundreds of popular over-the-counter items.

Call Member Services for details.





Diabetes Prevention Program SUCCESS STORY

MY NAME IS JOSE ALVAREZ. I have been married for 44 years, and my wife and I have a big family with 5 children, 17 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren.

Last year, during my annual doctor's appointment, I was diagnosed with prediabetes. I was surprised and scared; I did not want to get diabetes and complicate my life. My doctor offered to prescribe me medication to lower my blood sugar, but I asked him to wait because I wanted to try on my own by modifying my eating habits.

A few weeks later, I received a call from Aspire Health letting me know about the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), an interactive online program facilitated by a certified health coach and focused on helping people make lifestyle changes to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

Class by class, I improved my lifestyle by modifying my diet without eliminating my favorite foods. I focused on portion control and balancing my plate, adding more physical activity, and learned about strategies to help me stay motivated over

time. So far, I have lost between 21 to 25 pounds. My systolic blood pressure used to be 130 or 135, and now it is between 110 and 113 most of the time. In my most recent doctor's appointment, my doctor told me he would consider reducing my blood pressure medication if I can maintain my weight and healthy habits. He also told me I am no longer prediabetic. My weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, and my overall health have improved greatly. I feel more comfortable, I have more energy, and my family is happy. In fact, my family has also started losing weight and improving their lifestyle after watching me make healthy changes. I am very grateful for this program because it changed my life and the life of my family.





Supporting you through palliative care

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people living with a serious illness. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of the illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

Palliative care is provided by a specially-trained team of doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, pharmacists, and chaplains. They work together to provide a unique layer of extra support. **Palliative care is based on the needs of the patient, not on the patient's prognosis.** It can be appropriate at any age and any stage in a serious illness, including while the patient is having “everything done” to be cured of their condition. Specifically, there is no implication that the amount of curative care will, in any way, be reduced by virtue of being assisted by the palliative care team.

Palliative care teams focus on improving your quality of life. They treat people suffering from the symptoms and stress of serious illnesses such as cancer, congestive heart failure (CHF), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), kidney disease, neurological diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's dementia, or ALS. Recent clinical studies, including several published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* have shown that patients with a serious illness who receive palliative care live longer than those that did not receive this care.

The palliative care team is with you every step of the way. One of the key elements of palliative care is how the team works together with you, your family, and your healthcare providers, taking the time to help match treatment options with

your goals. In addition to treating your symptoms, stress, and supporting you and your family, the palliative care team communicates with all of the doctors so that everyone is on the same page. This gives you more control over your care and will improve your quality of life.

Palliative care professionals also help you complete important documents like an advanced healthcare directive. Documenting what kind of treatment you would want if you were unable to speak for yourself will help your loved ones know what kind of decisions to make, including whether or not to pursue life-sustaining treatment. This documentation also records who you would trust to make these kinds of decisions.

The cost associated with palliative care is covered by Aspire Health Plan, just as with any other specialist medical services. You will not be paying more for this service, you will not have to give up your doctor, and you do not have to stop any treatments. You can have palliative care at the same time as treatment meant to cure you.

People sometimes confuse palliative care with hospice care. Hospice is a special medical benefit available to those with a terminal condition who wish to forego further diagnostic and curative treatment, and instead focus on comfort. Hospice is a 24/7 service where medical personnel visit you as needed at home, and provide the equipment and medications to enable your family or caregiver to keep you comfortable. Sometimes palliative care consultation results in people choosing hospice, but the services and limitations of hospice are significantly different than palliative care.

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Palliative care continued...

If you are interested in palliative care, ask your primary care doctor for a referral or simply call Aspire Health Plan and let our team know you are interested in palliative care. We will coordinate your visit. Both inpatient and outpatient palliative services are available at Community Hospital and Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System.

The palliative care team will work to:

- Relieve your symptoms and distress
- Help you better understand your disease and diagnosis
- Help clarify your treatment goals and options
- Understand and support your ability to cope with your illness
- Assist you with making medical decisions
- Coordinate with your other doctors



Benefits beyond Original Medicare

The goal of Aspire is to provide extra benefits that support your well-being. Members sometimes forget all the services we provide beyond Original Medicare. Don't forget to utilize these benefits. All our plans cover Part A, Part B, and Part D services, but we give you more. Take advantage of the extra benefits and the entire team advocating for your good health.

- Health coaching and care managers with telephone support
- Transportation
- Gym membership or home fitness kits
- Chiropractic
- Acupuncture
- Community Connection classes
- Rewards for preventive services
- Health at Home visits
- Enhanced Benefits packages for dental, vision, hearing, meals, and additional transportation
- Local office for face-to-face assistance

Thank you again for trusting us as your healthcare partner.

Get healthy with Aspire

COVID-19 altered our lives as we grappled with changes in our daily routines, isolation from friends and family, and the stress of staying safe from COVID-19. Our minds have spent the past year in a state of worry, buzzing with uncertainty. Now, as we are slowly getting back to normal, it is time to consider both your physical and emotional state. Moving your body boosts your mood. Take time to exercise, especially now. A simple walk, run, or dance session can change your day. Alternatively, take advantage of your fitness program benefit that offers in-person fitness opportunities. You may have forgotten about some of the enhanced benefits we offer our members.

Each of our plans offer you access to a network of fitness centers, including the Montage Wellness Center in Salinas and Marina and in-home fitness kits and daily online classes. Go to www.silverandfit.com or call (877) 427-4788 for more details about your fitness benefit.



Purpose and vision



CAN YOU SUM UP YOUR LIFE PURPOSE IN ONE PHRASE?

Research suggests that you could be living up to seven good years longer, if you have a sense of purpose. Okinawans call it *ikigai*, and Costa Rica's Nocoynans call it *plan de vida*. It's the answer to the question "Why do I wake up in the morning?"

GIFTS + PASSIONS + VALUES = PURPOSE.

Where do you begin?

Start by doing an inventory of your gifts, passions, and values. **Gifts** are your talents — not just what you are good at, but what you LOVE to do. **Passions** are the things you feel deeply curious about. **Values** includes the health of the

environment you are in, not just physically, but in the relationships in which you engage. Use your gifts on things about which you feel passion or a deep curiosity.

The starting point is spending your time doing things you care about, and from there, finding a larger sense of purpose in the world.

This month, Aspire members gathered (socially distanced) to create vision boards — visual representations of what we want to be, do, or have in our lives. Things that give, or support, our sense of purpose.

Upcoming events



Come say hi



As we slowly venture out, the Aspire team is excited to support upcoming events as part of our community outreach. We hope you stop by our booth if you attend the events. We miss seeing our members face-to-face.

YOU CAN FIND US HERE:

ARTICHOKE FESTIVAL

Saturday and Sunday, July 24–25
Monterey County Fair and Event Center

SENIOR FAIR DAYS

Thursday, September 2
Monterey County Fair and Event Center

ALZHEIMER WALK

Saturday, October 9
Custom House Plaza, Monterey

Community Connections

Virtual classes are open to the public.
Share with a friend.

5 WAYS TO CHOOSE HAPPY



THURSDAY, JULY 22, 10 a.m.

Simple actions for bringing more happy into your life.

RETIREMENT, NOW WHAT?



FRIDAY, JULY 23, 10 a.m.

Life reimagined — how to find your purpose and joy.

BRAIN RULES



TUESDAY, JULY 27, 10 a.m.

How to nourish your brain and sharpen your mind.

RSVP to receive participation details for these FREE virtual events.

www.aspirehealthplan.org/connections2021
or (855) 570-1600 (TTY 711)

www.aspirehealthplan.org/members-newsletters
Share your thoughts: feedback@aspirehealthplan.org



Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/aspirehealthplan

For accommodations of persons with special needs at meetings call (855) 570-1600 (TTY users call 711). Other providers are available in our network. We are open 8 a.m.–8 p.m PT Monday through Friday from April 1 through September 30 and 8 a.m.–8 p.m. seven days a week from October 1 through March 31 (except certain holidays). H8764_MBR_Newsletter17_621_C



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in collaboration with

 Community Hospital
of the Monterey Peninsula
Montage Health

 Salinas Valley
Memorial
Healthcare System

Grow
with us

We love referrals. The greatest compliment you can give Aspire is a referral to your friends and family. Thank you for your membership in Aspire Health Plan. Help us grow by sharing Aspire with the people you care about.