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State of Michigan Employees



# For Your Benefit

A variety of timely information related to your health care benefits and needs

## myStrength offers easy online access to 24/7 behavioral health support

Most people will experience some level of anxiety, stress or depression in their life. It's important to remember you're not alone — Blue Cross provides resources to support your unique journey.

The myStrength tool offered by New Directions makes it easy to focus on your emotional health at no cost to you. MyStrength combines self-paced activities, health trackers, inspirational quotes and over 2,000 online resources to help you stay committed to improving your mental health and well-being.

### Track your well-being

Need a way to monitor your ups and downs? Use the health tracker to map how you're feeling. Keeping tabs on your emotional health can help you find patterns, making it easier to understand what causes your good and bad days.

### Heal your mind, body and spirit

myStrength works with leading mental health experts to develop hundreds of videos and activities that nurture your physical, mental and spiritual health. Personalized resources on managing depression, improving sleep, managing chronic pain, reducing stress and more are available 24/7.

You can access myStrength on your desktop, mobile phone or tablet so improved well-being is always at your fingertips. Ready to recharge, refresh and improve your mental and emotional health? Sign up for myStrength today:

1. Visit [mystrength.com/r/som](https://mystrength.com/r/som).
2. Click "Sign Up Now" and complete your account set up.

After you sign up and take a quick wellness assessment, you'll see your personalized tools and resources. Questions? Call New Directions customer service at **1-866-503-3158** 24 hours a day, seven days a week. TTY users, call **711**.



# Prioritize your skin's health in the sun

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, more than five million skin cancer cases are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. Most cases are caused by overexposure to ultraviolet, or UV, rays that come from the sun. Thankfully, there are preventive measures you can take to lower your risk of skin cancer while still having fun in the sun.

## Make sun protection a habit

Practicing sun safety is the best way to prevent skin cancer. Adopting these habits can protect your skin, especially when the UV index is 3 or higher:



- **Stay in the shade**, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun is at its peak.
- **Wear protective clothing** and wide brim hats to cover your arms, legs, face and scalp (even on cloudy days). Protect your eyes with sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays.
- **Always use a broad-spectrum sunscreen** of SPF 15 or higher. Reapply often.
- **Avoid sunburns.** Anyone can burn regardless of skin type, and five or more sunburns doubles your risk of developing melanoma.
- **Avoid tanning beds.** Indoor tanning exposes you to intense levels of UV rays and can lead to serious injury.

## Check your skin

Skin cancers are highly curable when caught early. Head-to-toe self-exams can help you learn your skin's look and feel so it's easier to detect abnormal changes. You'll need a bright light, full-length and handheld mirrors, two chairs and a blow dryer.

1. Use the mirror to closely examine your face, especially your ears, lips, nose and mouth.
2. Use your blow dryer on the cool setting to expose and examine your scalp in the mirror.
3. When checking your hands, make sure to look under your fingernails.
4. Take your time as you inspect your arms, torso, upper and lower back and legs. Don't forget the soles of your feet and toenails, too.

If you see something new, changing or unusual – such as growths, thickening moles or multicolored spots – write it down and make a dermatologist appointment right away.

The American Academy of Dermatology makes it easy for you to find free, local screening locations. Visit their website [here](#) then click on your state to find locations near you.



# 3 ways to embrace the beauty of the great outdoors

Although June is Great Outdoors Month – a time to celebrate and support outdoor recreation – any month is a great time to explore activities that bring you closer to nature. Try these fun activities to help you embrace the outdoors:

1



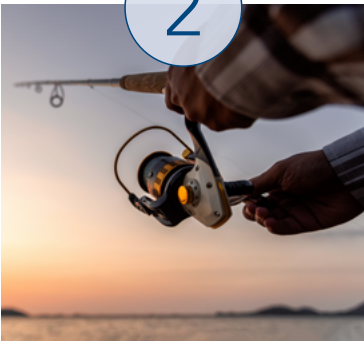
## Take a camping trip

Camping provides unparalleled access to nature. You can soak in the outdoors all day with hiking, swimming and exploring, then spend the night sleeping under trees and stars.

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, for example, has three beautiful campgrounds on the shores of Lake Superior. Campers have access to beaches, cliffs and forests, plus the chance to explore shipwrecks and lighthouses to learn more about the lake's history.

Visit the [National Park Service's Plan Your Visit website](#) and click "Find a Park" in the right navigation bar to explore parks and resources to prepare for your visit.

2



## Go fishing

Fishing is a therapeutic way to connect with nature. The scenic backdrops and calming waters can help you foster peace of mind as you focus on your technique. Fishing can even bring a sense of pride knowing you worked hard to catch a healthy meal.

Lake Michigan is a great place to fish for all skill levels, with different varieties of fish available from late April to August. Visit the Michigan Health & Human Services' [Eating Fish from Michigan's Lakes and Rivers website](#) for more information on how to safely eat fresh caught fish.

3



## Volunteer to protect our parks

Volunteering offers hands-on experience with caring for nature sanctuaries across the country by cleaning up trails, repairing signs and pulling invasive plants.

The Michigan Nature Association has a growing team of stewards who help restore habitats for rare, threatened or endangered species. They also lead field trips and educational events, maintain trails and report on park conditions throughout the year. [Learn more](#) about this volunteer opportunity or contact your local Metro Park to see how you can get involved.

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State of Michigan Employees

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## How to reach us

For benefit information or claim inquiries, call or write the Blue Cross Customer Service Center.

### To call

1-800-843-4876

Our customer service representatives are available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

### To write

Please send all correspondence to:  
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