



# **Staying Healthy and Positive in 2021**

**5 ways to reset, refocus and recommit to health and wellness in the new year**

## **A LOOK INSIDE:**

Make self-care a priority

Re-commit to healthy eating and exercise

Ride the telehealth wave

Reduce your financial stress

Keep up the good (hygiene) work

In 2020, staying healthy took on a whole new meaning. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people's health and wellbeing to a degree unlike anything in recent history. Not only have we had to change our habits and behaviors—sometimes at great personal and financial cost—to protect ourselves and others from the coronavirus; we've also faced a host of changes and challenges when it comes to getting routine health care, staying fit and managing our mental and emotional wellbeing.

With vaccines starting to be distributed, the world is breathing a sigh of relief. By the end of 2021, many aspects of life may have returned to “normal.” So while we may not be on the homestretch quite yet, we're getting there! As we look to 2021, it's the perfect time for a “big reset” to re-focus on things we can all do to stay strong, healthy and positive.

## **1 Make self-care a priority**

2020 has taken a toll on all of us, emotionally speaking. Feeling anxious, worried, bored, lonely, stressed-out, sad—it's all par for the pandemic course. Not only do these feelings affect our emotional wellbeing, but they can affect our physical health as well. Stress and anxiety can lead to poor sleep, GI distress, changes in appetite, headaches and muscle tension.

Resolve to make self-care a priority in 2021: Take the time to do things that are good for your body, mind, and mood. It could be as simple as making a conscious effort to go screen-free for an hour each day while you take a

walk, play with your kids, or read a book instead. Maybe add a five-minute morning meditation to your routine, make a weekly phone date with a good friend, or write down something you're grateful for each day. Not only will you feel better, but you'll have the emotional reserves to be a better parent, partner, caregiver or friend.

The wellness tools and resources Tufts Health Plan offers its members are another great way to take better care of yourself.

### **Our free wellbeing series**

Designed specifically to help members take care of themselves during the pandemic, this series includes webinars on yoga, meditation, mindfulness, nutrition/healthy eating, home office ergonomics and more.

### **Virtual yoga, meditation and mindfulness classes**

Mindfulness has been proven to help relieve stress and anxiety, improve mood, and boost overall feelings of wellbeing. Tufts Health Plan offers commercial members<sup>1</sup> access to **a range of virtual resources for mind and body wellness** at a discounted rate, including live online yoga and mediation classes.



<sup>1</sup>Excluding Tufts Health Direct members



## 2 Re-commit to healthy eating and exercise

If you've gained the dreaded "COVID-19," you're not alone. Weight gain has been a side effect of the pandemic for many people, whether it's because they're taking solace in baked goods and wine, their gym is closed, or they're too busy juggling work and homeschooling to exercise. Even the stress of the pandemic may be partly to blame: When your brain perceives a danger or threat, your adrenal glands up their production of cortisol, the primary stress hormone, which increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream.

The new year is always a good time to re-commit to exercise and healthy eating habits. But that doesn't have to mean training for a marathon or swearing off carbs. Even small changes can make a big difference: Taking a 20-minute walk every day, curbing portion sizes, choosing to manage stress in healthier ways than eating and drinking. (See mindfulness, above!) Tufts Health Plan can help, too:

### Nutrition and weight management tools

We offer a number of ways for members to save on programs and **tools for healthy eating and weight management**, including discounts on the DASH diet, Jenny Craig, the Dinner Daily and more.

### Fitness perks and discounts

Exercise is a cornerstone of health, and Tufts Health Plan helps members **save while they get fit**—even when it's from the comfort and safety of their own home. We offer discounts on home fitness equipment, online workout subscriptions, fitness magazine subscriptions and more.



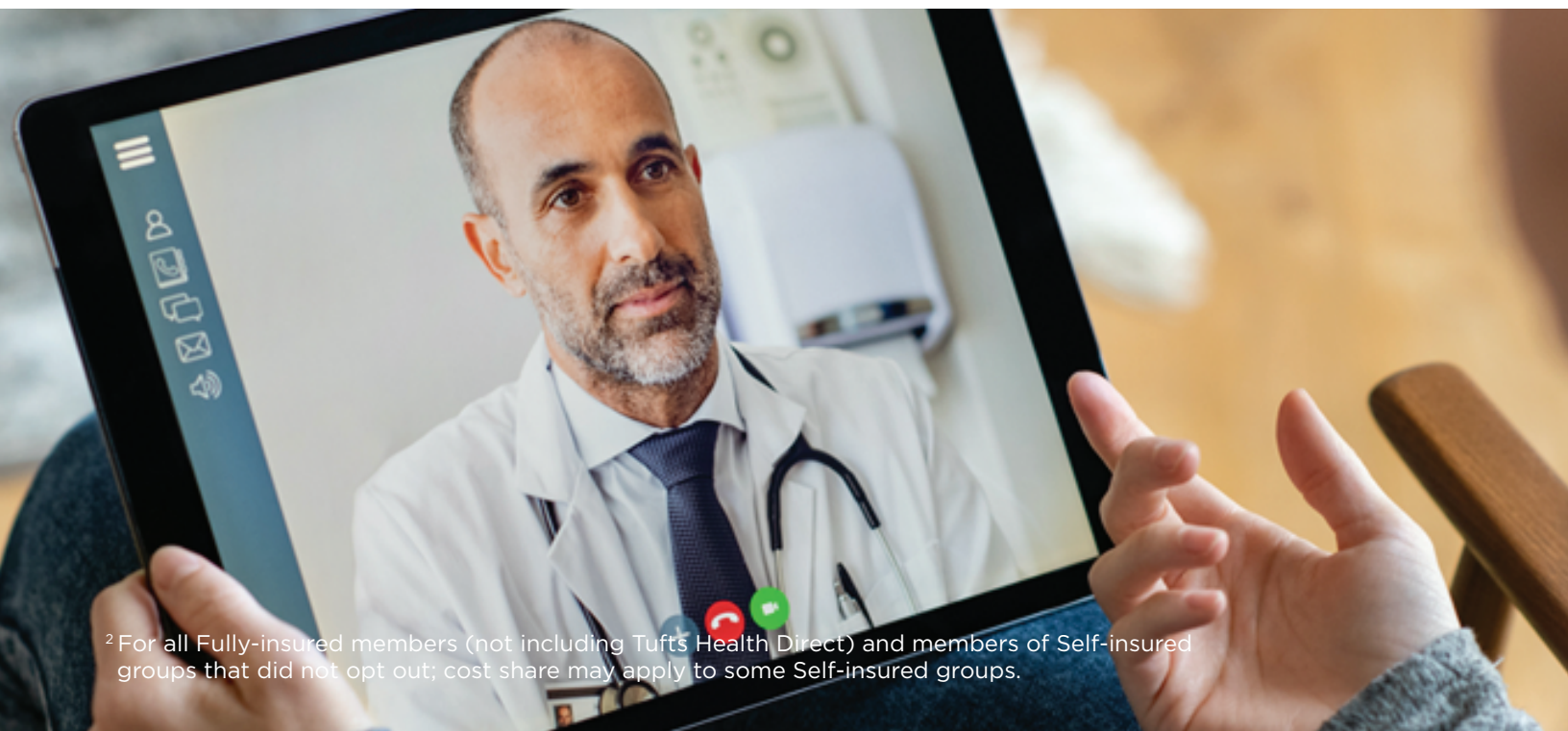


### 3 Ride the telehealth wave

The pandemic has had plenty of silver linings, and one of them is expansion of telehealth. Though it was possible before, virtual health care appointments went mainstream in 2020. While certain kinds of health care still have to be done in person, telehealth has made getting many types of routine and preventive care more convenient, accessible and cost effective, pandemic or not. Tufts Health Plan members can use our telehealth partner, Teladoc<sup>2</sup> for:

#### **Routine care**

Public health officials urge us to stay home as much as possible and avoid over-burdening the health care system. Thanks to telehealth, patients can do the right thing without sacrificing their health. Many non-life-threatening health issues, like cold and flu symptoms, digestive problems and urinary tract infections, can be evaluated and diagnosed remotely.



<sup>2</sup> For all Fully-insured members (not including Tufts Health Direct) and members of Self-insured groups that did not opt out; cost share may apply to some Self-insured groups.

## **Dermatology**

It's now much easier to see a provider for those common "should I be concerned about this?" questions. Dermatologists and primary care providers can look at pictures or live video of patients' moles, marks, rashes and other skin issues and either evaluate and diagnose in the moment or recommend an in-office visit.

## **Behavioral health**

For many, the pandemic has caused or exacerbated behavioral health issues like anxiety, depression and substance use disorders. Thanks to telehealth, getting professional help for these and other mental health concerns is dramatically more accessible and convenient—not to mention more private.

# **4 Reduce your financial stress**

**Money worries have been one of the biggest concerns of 2020, with many families suffering the effects of layoffs, furloughs, shuttered businesses or the need for a family member to stop working to care for children home from school. Strained finances can affect more than just your bank account: Financial stress has been linked to heart disease, diabetes, migraines, sleep problems, depression and other health issues, along with lower productivity at work.**

Health care and prescription costs are a source of worry for many families, and at Tufts Health Plan we're doing our part to help our members take greater control of their medical expenses.



### **Treatment Cost Estimator tool**

This simple-to-use tool lets members compare costs of services, facilities and doctors and get out-of-pocket cost estimates for procedures. Members can see costs and services for the entire timeline of care for a given treatment, for a big picture view.

### **MyPrescription Shopper**

This tool analyzes each member's prescriptions to identify potential savings opportunities of \$5 or more. Members get a notification if there's a way they can save money, like selecting alternative medications, asking their provider about a modified dosage, using mail order and/or refilling their prescriptions through a less expensive retailer.

### **Provider Search tool**

Our robust provider search let members know which providers and facilities they can earn rewards for choosing. When members choose high value providers, which we designate based on cost and quality of care, they can earn rewards in the form of gift cards.



## 5

## Keep up the good (hygiene) work

We know what works to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Though we may be getting tired of it, wearing a mask (over your mouth and nose) when around others, washing your hands frequently, and staying at least six feet apart from people outside your household are what it takes to stop the spread. For people who working outside the home, frequently disinfecting surfaces used by multiple people, such as door handles, elevator buttons, handrails, and kitchen appliances, is important.

If we all do our part, we can keep each other safe—and eventually, as vaccines are distributed, we'll get to a point where we won't have to be quite as vigilant. Until then, let's all commit to keeping up the fight.



**At Tufts Health Plan, we're committed to helping our members and everyone in the communities we serve stay healthy throughout the pandemic and beyond. It's what we do.**

**To learn more, call your broker or account representative, or visit:**

**[tuftshealthplan.com/employercontact](https://tuftshealthplan.com/employercontact).**



## ABOUT TUFTS HEALTH PLAN

At Tufts Health Plan, we strive to set the standard for outstanding quality health care, service and value. Founded in 1979, Tufts Health Plan is nationally recognized for its commitment to providing innovative, high-quality health care coverage. The plan offers members and employers an array of health management programs, which support evidence-based approaches to health and wellness.

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