

EMBRACE

Winter/Spring 2026



**Children's Dental
Health - Why It Matters**

**A Good Night's Rest Is
Good For Your Heart**

**Colon Cancer
Screening: The Tests
That Could Help Save
Your Life**



Inside WELLNESS VISITS

3 CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH - WHY IT MATTERS

features



8 COLON CANCER SCREENING: THE TESTS THAT COULD HELP SAVE YOUR LIFE



EMBRACE

Ana M. Eberhard

Vice President, Member Experience

AvMed, one of Florida's oldest and largest not-for-profit health plans, provides affordable, quality health benefits throughout the state.

- Always consult your primary care physician (PCP) regarding medical advice. The health information in this publication is not intended to replace your doctor's directives.
- To contact the Marketing & Communications Department, write AvMed, 3470 NW 82nd Avenue, Doral, FL 33122; call **305-671-4935**; or email **EMBRACE@AvMed.org**.

AVMAG-FL20-C001 AvMed, Inc. Coverage provided by or through AvMed, Inc. (health benefit plan). Plans contain limitations and exclusions.

AvMed *EMBRACE* is published by AvMed.



@AvMedHealth



facebook.com/AvMedHealth

Children's Dental Health - Why It Matters



Tooth decay is a major cause of tooth loss in children. Approximately 25% of our nation's children have multiple cavities. Because dental diseases tend to have a negative effect on quality of life in childhood and as we get older, annual dental visits and oral care are especially important throughout childhood and adolescence (ages 2-20).

Oral health is crucial to overall health, and dental cavities are one of the most common and preventable childhood diseases. Keeping up with your child's oral health can significantly reduce the risks of developing oral disease in the future. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), tooth decay can be prevented and even reversed. That's why it is important to:

- **Establish a "dental home" by your child's first birthday or first tooth.** According to the AAPD, a dental home is a practice that provides a patient with a consistent, comfortable place to receive oral healthcare. A dental home is built through an ongoing relationship with your child's pediatric dentist. Find your dental home no later than your child's first birthday or when their first tooth appears.
- **Schedule dental check-ups:** Make sure your child has a comprehensive dental check-up at least once per year.
- **Keep an eye on when they start brushing:** Supervise young children as they brush their teeth.

Be sure to keep up with your child's overall health in 2026 - including their oral health.

Annual Wellness Visit



Making your health a top priority is crucial to your overall health. Why not start with an annual wellness visit to your doctor. These visits are intended to focus on wellness and prevention. While you are there, don't forget to ask about breast, cervical, and colon cancer screenings, blood pressure checks, bone density screenings and immunization recommendations.

Also, if you have diabetes, having appropriate blood sugar (Hemoglobin A1c) testing, kidney monitoring (nephropathy) screening and a diabetic eye exam are critical to staying healthy for many years to come.

Schedule your Annual Wellness Visit and discuss all your preventive care needs with your doctor.

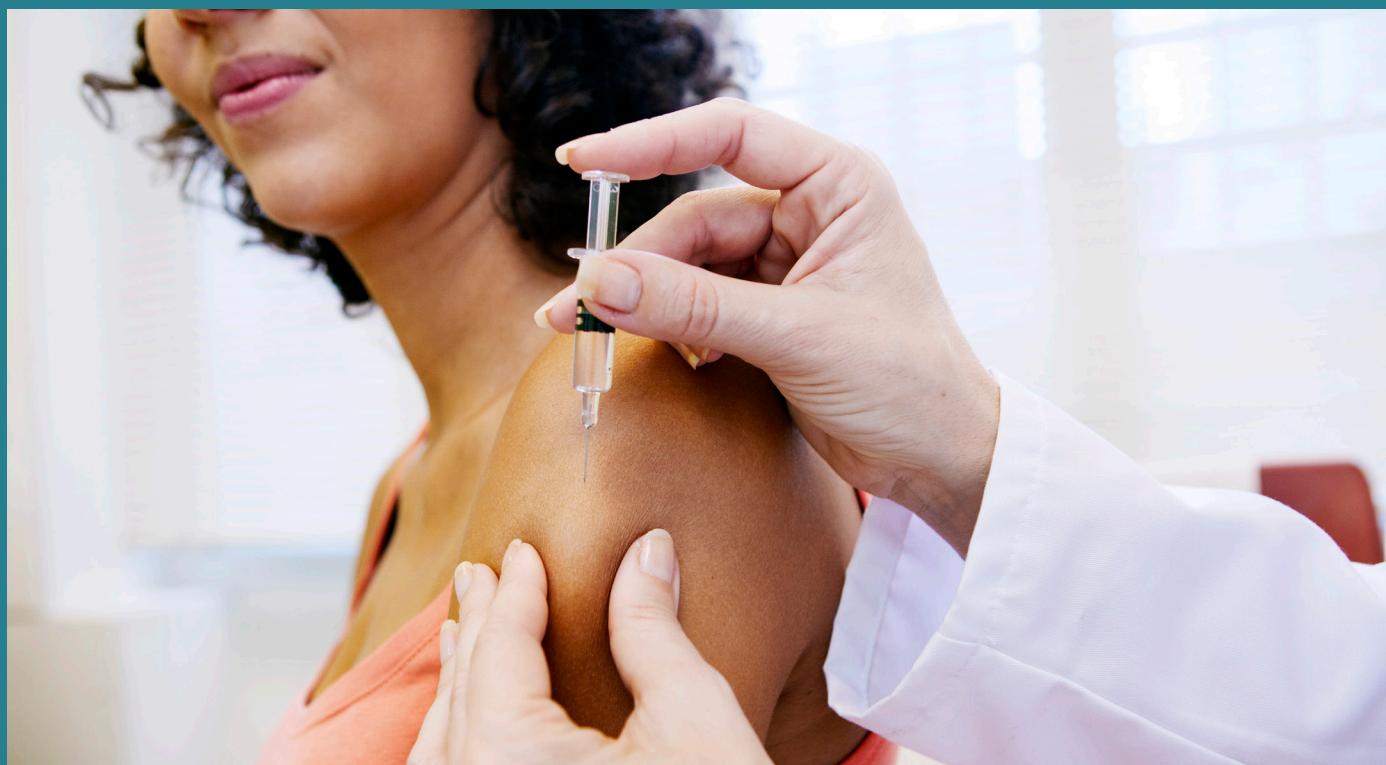
For more health tips, visit **AvMed.org**.

New Tools & Resources For AvMed Members

In an effort to provide healthcare that is simple, seamless, personal, and more affordable, AvMed is updating its systems to create efficiencies, enhance resources, and provide the foundation for improved capabilities that will best allow us to continue to deliver on our mission, "We Improve Health Every Day," for our members and the communities we serve. We are excited to announce that our new portal experience and mobile app are now available. You can register on AvMed.org or visit your Apple or Google Play Store.

Thank You For Getting Your Flu Shot!

Getting the flu vaccine is the first and most important thing you can do to protect against the flu. If you've already had your flu shot, we applaud you for embracing better health. If you haven't, it's still not too late! The flu shot is the best protection against the flu for everyone, including pregnant women for whom getting vaccinated while pregnant is the best way to protect themselves and their babies under six months old from the flu. Ask your primary care provider or visit an AvMed participating pharmacy for your flu shot.



Why Getting A Good Night's Rest Is Good For Your Heart

You can boost your heart health by getting quality sleep. Here's why (and how) to sleep better.



You probably know that eating nutritious foods and getting regular exercise is good for a healthy heart. According to the American Heart Association, here's another equally critical heart-healthy habit you should add to your routine: get a solid 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night.

When you don't snooze well at night, your heart health can suffer. That doesn't mean that if you stay up watching TV tonight, you'll have a heart attack tomorrow. But over time, lack of sleep takes a toll on your heart and poor sleep can put you at higher risk for many conditions linked to heart disease.

Here's what poor sleep can lead to:

- **Weight gain.** When we don't sleep, we tend to make poor food choices. In one study, women who were sleep-deprived ate significantly more calories per day than those who had plenty of sleep. Those extra calories can lead to weight gain, and obesity is a well-known risk factor for cardiovascular disease.
- **High blood pressure.** Your blood pressure naturally dips and remains lower all night when you sleep. But if you stay awake longer, your body spends less time in this mode of lower blood pressure. Plus,

lack of sleep increases stress hormones such as cortisol, which can raise your blood pressure.

- **Less physical activity.** The reason is simple: without enough sleep, you're too tired to exercise. And the result of inactivity? You guessed it — a higher risk for heart disease.
- **Depression.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health disorders are linked with risk factors for heart disease. A 2021 study found that people who didn't get enough sleep had nearly three times the risk of mental distress (such as anxiety and depression). That's a concern, because depression is hard on your heart.

Now that you know what poor sleep can lead to, here is some advice for catching some quality ZZZZs.

Tips for being a "super sleeper":

- **Practice good sleep habits.** Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Having a bedtime routine can be helpful, too. Perhaps read a book, have a warm cup of tea, or take a shower before you turn in for the night. A steady routine can trigger your body to know that it's time to go to sleep.
- **Say "NO" to screens.** Using your phone or tablet in bed is a no-no. Blue light from most screens disrupts melatonin production, and that disrupts your sleep.
- **Keep it cool and dark.** The ideal temperature for sleeping is between 60°F and 67°F degrees. So, turn down the thermostat as you prepare to go to bed. If possible, open your bedroom window — that extra burst of oxygen can help you fall asleep faster. Block out light from outside with heavy curtains or a sleep mask.
- **Listen to sleep sounds.** A white noise machine or phone app (but keep that phone screen OFF, or turned face-down), can help drown out background noises, which can help you drift off faster.

You can tune in to pattering rain, a babbling brook, or whatever helps you feel relaxed and sleepy.

- **Try meditation.** Start out with a simple breathing technique: sit quietly and relax for a few minutes. Pay attention to your breath as you slowly inhale and exhale. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the sound of your breathing. A meditation app can help, too.



Colon Cancer Screening:

The tests that could help save your life

If it's time for your routine colon cancer screening, you probably have questions. Here's a look at what you can expect.

Whether this is your first colorectal cancer screening or you have had several, you may have questions and should understand the importance of routine screenings. A colon cancer screening could be the most important thing you ever do. So, if you're 45 or older and haven't had a recent screening, read on to learn about your options.

Who should be screened for colon cancer?

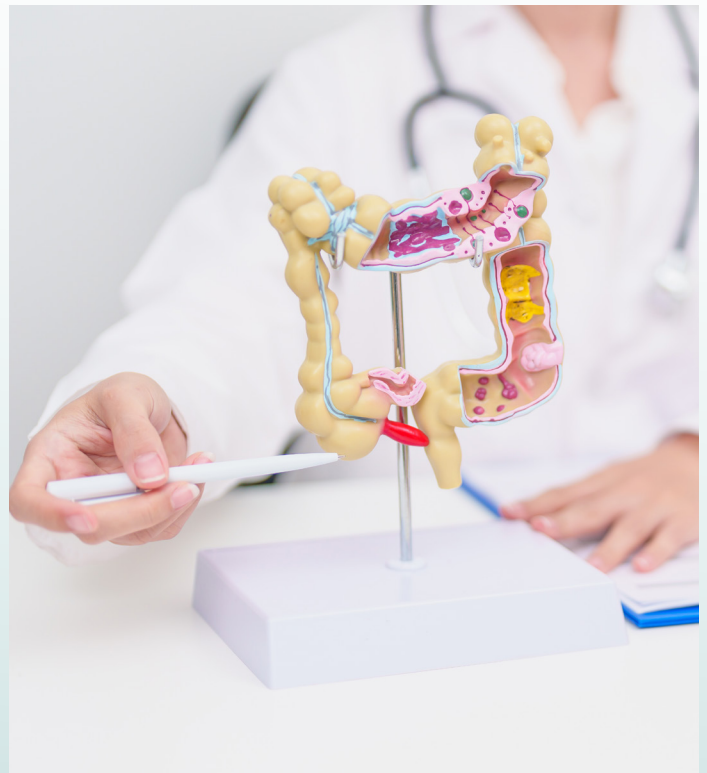
The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that all adults get screened for colon cancer starting at age 45. How often you're screened will depend on the screening test you get and your results. Your doctor may recommend screening earlier and more often if you're at a higher risk of colon cancer.

High-risk factors include:

- Family or personal history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps
- Crohn's disease
- Familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP)
- High-risk adenomas
- Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) for at least eight years
- Lynch syndrome
- Ovarian cancer
- Type 2 diabetes
- Ulcerative colitis

What are my screening options?

There are many options for screening available like flexible sigmoidoscopy, colonography, and FIT DNA (Cologuard®). A colonoscopy used to be your only option to screen for colorectal cancer. These days, there are also home kits called FIT tests. Here's a rundown of your options.



Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy remains the gold standard for colon cancer screening and can even prevent you from ever developing colon cancer. Your doctor examines your colon using a long flexible tube with a small video camera on the end of it. It's more involved than the other test options. Your physician will determine how often you need a repeat colonoscopy based on findings, usually every 3 to 5 years. Plus, your provider can remove potentially cancerous growths (called polyps) during a colonoscopy, preventing cancer before it even starts.

What's a FIT test?

FIT stands for fecal immunochemical test, and you can do this test from home. You'll receive a kit with instructions for collecting a stool sample, then you'll send it to a lab for testing.

Which colon cancer screening test should I get?

Your doctor will help you decide which test is best for you and when you should start screening. If you're at average risk of colon cancer, you may be able to take a FIT test. But if you're at high risk, your doctor will likely recommend a colonoscopy.

Whichever test you need, the most important thing is to get it done. According to the

American Cancer Society, the diagnosis rate for colon cancer has dropped over the past several decades. This is great news, and it's largely thanks to increased rates of screening. So do your part — it just might save your life!

** All test kits need to come from a participating provider, such as Quest, or will require a prior authorization to avoid additional cost share.*



Pan Seared Lemon Butter Salmon and Quinoa



Yield: 2 Servings

Ingredients:

2 (4-6 oz) skin-on salmon fillets (about 1-inch thick)

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

pinch black pepper

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 garlic cloves, minced

½ fresh lemon, juiced

2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley

lemon slices for garnish (optional)

Quinoa:

1 cup quinoa, rinsed (not soaked)

2 cups chicken or veggie broth or water

½ teaspoon salt (if using water)

Instructions:

Salmon:

Remove salmon fillets from refrigerator and allow to rest at room temperature 10 minutes. Pat salmon filets down with paper-towel to dry excess moisture. Season with salt and black pepper.

Heat olive oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Once the oil is shimmering, place the salmon fillets (presentation side down- skin side up) in the pan. Cook for 4-5 minutes on the first side until golden brown on the bottom, then turn and cook on the opposite side until salmon has cooked through, about 2 - 3 minutes longer. Once the salmon is ready to be taken out of the pan, slide the fish spatula between the skin and the flesh. Slowly slide the fish spatula along the length of the fillet pressing down on the skin and keeping the pressure consistent. Gently lift the fish up from the skin until the skin is completely detached. Remove the skin from the pan and discard.

Wipe the pan used to cook the fish with paper-towel. Melt butter over medium-low heat. Add garlic and lemon juice and whisk until combined. Place salmon back in the pan, spoon sauce all over the fillets. Garnish with fresh parsley.

Quinoa:

Add quinoa, broth or water, and salt (if not making it with broth) to a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 15 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed and the quinoa is cooked. You'll know it is done when the grain pops open (add 1-2 tablespoons more water if the quinoa is not cooked by the time all the liquid is absorbed.) Transfer to a flat dish and spread out to cool. Set aside or refrigerate until ready to use

Serve quinoa with salmon, and lemon butter sauce. Enjoy!.

Get The Best Price For Your Prescriptions

Keeping track of prescription drug costs can be confusing. That's why AvMed brings you Rx Savings® Solutions, a service that can help you get the best price for medicine you need.

HOW YOU CAN SAVE

Rx Savings Solutions finds all the medication options—and their prices—for your conditions. You and your doctor decide what's best for your health and budget. Here are just a few ways you might be able to save money:

- Generic forms of name-brand drug
- Lower prices at different pharmacies or mail-order
- Equally effective that cost less

To get started, access Rx Savings Solutions by logging on to AvMed's Member Portal at AvMed.org and selecting the Rx Savings Solutions link on the left menu, under Doctors and Medication. We hope you'll use this resource to help reduce your out-of-pocket expenses!



Help Us Do Even Better!

It is our top priority to continuously improve your member experience and benefits to help you stay healthy. In the next few weeks, you may receive an independent survey in the mail from the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems or CAHPS program. By filling out this survey, we can learn more about your AvMed experience to improve our services and better meet your needs. This tool plays an important role in your healthcare and ensures we continue delivering quality services and the best healthcare experience possible.

We value your opinion. If you receive a letter or call about a survey, we kindly ask that you take a few minutes to participate.

AvMed complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, or age, in its programs and activities, including in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding AvMed's nondiscrimination policies: AvMed 1557 Coordinator/Compliance, P.O. Box 66189, Virginia Beach, VA 23466 by phone 757-552-7485 (TTY 711), or by email to SHPNDN@sentara.com.

Important Contact Information

AvMed's Member Engagement Center*:
Please call the number listed on your AvMed
Member ID Card (TTY 711), Monday–Friday,
8 am–8 pm; Saturday, 9 am–1 pm.

*Hours may vary according to your policy.

- AvMed Nurse On Call: **1-888-866-5432**
(TTY 711) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Fraud and Abuse Hotline: **1-877-286-3889**
- AvMed website: **AvMed.org**
- AvMed Facebook  www.Facebook.com/AvMedHealth



WE SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE

If you have specific language needs, please call
AvMed's Member Engagement Center at the
number listed on your AvMed Member ID Card.

AvMed ... Hablamos su idioma!

*Si usted tiene necesidades específicas
relacionadas con el idioma, comuníquese
con el Centro de Atención para Afiliados de
AvMed en el número que aparece en su
tarjeta de afiliado de AvMed.*

AvMed ... a votre service!

Toute la journée. Toute la journée ...
Tous les jours ... Nous parlons votre
langage. Si vous ne pouvez pas lire
les articles dans ce magazine, veuillez
composer le numéro imprimé sur votre carte
de Membre pour un représentant qui peut
répondre à vos questions.

AvMed's Care Management:

1-800-972-8633

TTY Assistance: **711**

7 days a week, 8 am–8 pm



AvMed has a new member portal
and app! Don't forget to register
your account at **AvMed.org** and
opt-in to receive important plan
reminders and tips to help you get
the most from your coverage