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Your Monthly Employee Wellness Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2026
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FEATURE · HEART HEALTH

Cholesterol and You

Cholesterol is a substance in your blood that your body needs to build cells; yet, too much can pose a problem. Cholesterol travels through the blood on proteins called lipoproteins. There are two types:

1. **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL),** known as bad cholesterol, makes up most of your body's cholesterol. High levels can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke.
2. **High-density lipoprotein (HDL),** known as good cholesterol, absorbs cholesterol and carries it back to the liver to be flushed from the body.

> ***More than 40% of U.S. adults with high cholesterol — and 1 in 4 with very high levels — don't know they have it.***
> *Source: JAMA Cardiology*

High cholesterol usually has no symptoms, so the American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that adults age 20 or older have their cholesterol checked every four to six years.

LDL can be elevated by age, family history, health conditions such as Type 2 diabetes and obesity, and lifestyle factors. You can't control all of these, but you can take steps to lower your risk:

- **Eat a heart-healthy diet.** Favor monounsaturated fats (olive oil, nuts, avocados) and polyunsaturated fats (salmon). Limit red meat, fried foods, processed meats and baked goods.
- **Exercise regularly.** The AHA recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise each week, plus resistance work at least twice a week.
- **Avoid or quit smoking.** Tobacco raises LDL, lowers HDL and contributes to cholesterol buildup in the arteries.
- **Limit alcohol use.** Up to two drinks per day for men and one per day for women.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Obesity increases your risk. A doctor can help you build a sustainable weight management plan.

The only way to know whether you have high cholesterol is to have your levels checked — see your doctor for a regular screening.

SEASONAL · PREPAREDNESS

Are You Prepared for an Emergency?

Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes can strike with little warning. Preparedness isn't just about supplies — it's knowing what to do and where to go.

> ***September is National Preparedness Month — use this time to plan for scenarios that may require you to evacuate or shelter in place.***

1. **Know your risks.** Understand the disasters most likely to affect your area.
2. **Create a communication plan.** Make sure everyone in your household knows how to reach each other.
3. **Assemble an emergency kit.** Three days of nonperishable food and water, flashlights and batteries, first-aid supplies, medications, and IDs and insurance papers in a waterproof container.
4. **Plan for evacuation orders.** Know your local routes and shelters, and prepare to stay indoors for several days.

Visit Ready.gov to learn more about preparing at home, at work and on the road.

NUTRITION

Meal Prepping Tips

School schedules are back and free time is shrinking. Meal prepping — preparing meals for the week ahead — leads to more nutritious choices and saves time on busy weeknights.

> ***38% of Americans don't have groceries on hand when they need them — one of the biggest obstacles to making dinner.***
> *Source: HelloFresh State of Home Cooking*

- **Stick to a schedule** for when you plan, shop and prepare.
- **Vary your cooking methods.** Use both the oven and the stovetop.
- **Sequence by cook time.** Prepare the longest-cooking meals first.
- **Store meals properly** in portioned containers. Refrigerate what you'll eat within three to four days and freeze the rest.

HEALTHY RECIPE

Apple Oatmeal Muffins

Makes 6 servings · 218 calories each · A warm, lightly sweet way to use the season's first tart apples.

INGREDIENTS

- **½ cup** nonfat milk
- **1/3 cup** unsweetened applesauce
- **½ cup** all-purpose flour
- **½ cup** quick-cooking oats (uncooked)
- **1 cup** sugar
- **½ Tbsp.** baking powder
- **½ tsp.** ground cinnamon
- **1** tart apple (cored and chopped)

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
2. Place 6 cupcake liners in a baking tin.
3. In a mixing bowl, add the milk and applesauce. Stir until blended.
4. Stir in the flour, oats, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon. Mix until moistened — be careful not to overmix.
5. Gently stir in the chopped apples.
6. Spoon the mixture into the cupcake liners, distributing it evenly.
7. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.
8. Cool the muffins in the pan for 5 minutes before serving. Store unused portions in an airtight container.

NUTRITION INFO (per serving)

218 Calories	**1 g** Total Fat
3 g Protein	**132 mg** Sodium
52 g Carbohydrate	**2 g** Dietary Fiber
0 g Sat. Fat	**38 g** Total Sugars

Source: MyPlate

Questions about your benefits? Your Apex service team is one call away.

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