

March 2026



COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

According to the [Colorectal Cancer Alliance](#), Colorectal cancer is the **fourth most** commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S. and the **second leading** cause of cancer death. This cancer may be prevented with a screening and routine procedures/early intervention and is highly treatable when detected early.

Colorectal cancer often has no symptoms in early stages, and most people feel perfectly fine when precancerous polyps or early cancers are present. By the time symptoms appear, the disease is often more advanced and harder to treat. Screening tests (especially colonoscopies) can find polyps before they turn into cancer. Removing these polyps prevents cancer entirely. Think of screening as stopping a fire before it starts.

Screening Options*:

- Colonoscopy (every 10 years if normal)
- Stool DNA tests like Cologuard (every 3 years)
 - If abnormalities are detected a colonoscopy may be required

**You and your provider can choose the best test for your comfort and risk level.*

Who Should Get Screened?

Most adults should begin screening at **age 45** though some people may need to start earlier, especially if they have:

- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's or ulcerative colitis)
- Certain genetic syndromes
- A history of polyps

COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

BLUE ZONES FOR HEALTHY AGING

BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT: COMPLETE YOUR HEALTH SURVEY

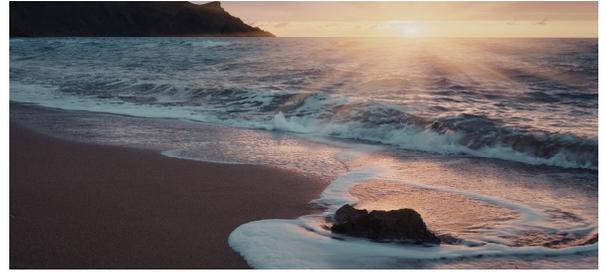
MEDITERRANEAN QUINOA SALAD

RESOURCES TO KNOW

BLUE ZONES FOR HEALTHY AGING

Blue Zones are geographic areas where people are happier, have lower rates of chronic disease, and live longer. These regions include:

- Okinawa, Japan
- Sardinia, Italy
- Nicoya, Costa Rica
- Ikaria, Greece
- Loma Linda, California



In the book *Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest*, author Dan Buettner highlights common lifestyle practices that contribute to extraordinary health and longevity.

To transition to a Blue Zone lifestyle, consider incorporating these behaviors into your daily routine:

- **Move Naturally:** Engage in regular physical activity through walking, gardening, or other natural movements that fit into your daily routines.
- **Find Purpose:** Uncover and nurture your sense of purpose to boost motivation and engagement in life.
- **Reduce Stress:** Incorporate mindful practices such as meditation, prayer, or leisure activities to manage and reduce stress effectively.
- **Eat a Balanced Diet:** Opt for a predominantly plant-based diet that is rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains, and limit processed foods and excessive meat consumption. However, dietary needs can vary, so it is important to choose what works for your individual health and lifestyle.
- **Avoid Overeating:** Honor your internal hunger and fullness cues and eat mindfully to avoid consuming more calories than your body needs.
- **Drink Alcohol in Moderation (if at all):** If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation, which is up to one to two glasses of wine per day. However, if you abstain from alcohol for any reason, continue to do so.
- **Foster Social Connection:** Cultivate strong, supportive relationships and engage in community activities that foster a sense of belonging and emotional support.

The Blue Zone principles are not just trendy lifestyle hacks but rather an intentional lifestyle that has been linked to many health benefits. The combination of movement, purpose, stress management, diet, and social support offers a holistic approach to living well and aging gracefully. By adapting these Blue Zone habits to fit your lifestyle, you will enhance not only your physical wellbeing but also the overall quality of your life.



BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT: COMPLETE YOUR HEALTH SURVEY

A health check survey is a powerful tool for understanding your wellbeing. The survey gives you a moment to pause and reflect on:

- How you're feeling physically
- Your stress levels
- Your sleep, energy, and habits
- Any early warning signs

Most people don't stop to think about these until something goes wrong. The survey may help you catch things early while also giving you feedback on lifestyle habits and suggestions for improving your wellbeing.

HOW TO GET STARTED

If you are already registered with Blue Connect:

- Log in to BlueConnectNC.com.
- Select **Wellness** from left hand navigation.
- Connect to the **Rally Wellness Portal**.
- **Ready to start the Health Survey?** will appear. Click **Continue**.
- Answer the questions.
- Review your results.

If you are NOT registered with Blue Connect:

- Make sure you have your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (Blue Cross NC) member ID card available. You will need this information to complete the registration process.
- Go to BlueConnectNC.com.
- Click on **Register Now**.
- Be sure you enter your **member ID** exactly as it appears on the ID card. If the member ID includes letters, there will be between one and four letters. There will always be between eight and 11 numbers.
- Enter your **date of birth** using two digits for month, two digits for day, and four digits for year.
- When entering your **home ZIP Code**, please remember this must be the same ZIP Code that we have in our records.
- Select **Wellness** from left hand navigation.
- Connect to the **Rally Wellness Portal**.
- **Ready to start the Health Survey?** will appear. Click Continue.
- Answer the questions.
- Review your results.



If you have forgotten your User ID:

- Below the Member Login box, click **Forgot User ID?** and follow the online instructions. You will need your Blue Cross NC ID card.

If you have forgotten your Password:

- Below the Member Login box, click **Forgot Password?** and follow the online instructions.

For More Information

If you need assistance, please call BCBSNC technical support group at **1-888-705-7050**.



**BlueCross BlueShield
of North Carolina**

MEDITERRANEAN QUINOA SALAD

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cook quinoa according to package instructions and let it cool.
- In a large bowl, combine the cooked quinoa, chickpeas, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, red onion, parsley, feta cheese, and Kalamata olives.
- In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper to make the dressing.
- Pour the dressing over the salad and toss gently to combine.
- Serve the Mediterranean Quinoa Salad chilled or at room temperature.

Nutrition Facts:

Calories 320
Total fat 12g
Cholesterol 7mg
Sodium 300mg
Total carbohydrate 45g
Total sugars 5g
Protein 10g



Benefit	Vendor	Website/Email/Contact
Medical	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	https://www.bluecrossnc.com/
Blue Connect	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	Blue Connect
My Pregnancy Program	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	Download the My Pregnancy through Blue Cross NC app to get started
NCHIP Concierge	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	1-800-795-9402
Mental Health/Substance Abuse	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	Find a therapist Headway
Nurse Support Program Condition Care	BlueCross BlueShield of NC	Download the Wellframe app to get started



HAVE SOMETHING YOU
WANT TO SHARE?
LET US KNOW!

