

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

## It's flu season – schedule your shot today

Flu season is here. Your flu shot is waiting at your doctor's office, pharmacy, or neighborhood Florida Blue Center. Your annual flu shot is the best way to protect you and those around you from becoming very sick.

- Most Florida Blue members can get preventive vaccines like the flu shot at no extra cost from their in-network provider or pharmacy.
- Our Florida Blue Centers also offer vaccine events. Click [here](#) to find a free event near you (enter "Vaccinations with Walgreens" in your search).
- Hear more from a doctor on [who should get a flu shot](#) and [why the shot is safe](#).

### Why it matters:

The flu, short for influenza, is a respiratory virus that can make you very sick.

- Symptoms include a fever, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, body aches, and feeling extremely tired.
- Getting your flu shot not only protects you, but those around

you who are at risk for more serious health problems like pneumonia, especially young children, older adults, or people with other health issues.

The flu virus changes each year, so the vaccine needs to be tweaked. This is why it is important to get a flu shot every year. When you get your flu shot, your body builds up defenses, called antibodies, that teach your body to recognize the virus and fight it. This lowers your chances of getting the flu, and if you do catch the flu, your symptoms might be milder and shorter-lasting.

### Protect yourself (and others) with these tips:

**Keep it clean:** Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer to reduce germs. Disinfect high-traffic areas at home and at work, like doorknobs and keyboards.

**Keep hands away:** One way people catch germs is by touching a germ area and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. Limit touching your face, especially while in public.



**Keep your distance:** Flu viruses can be spread up to 6 feet when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or even talks. Keep your distance if someone has a respiratory illness.

**Keep covered:** Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. If you don't have one handy, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow instead of your hands.

**Keep your immune system strong:** You're more likely to get sick if you have a weak immune system. Getting enough sleep, managing stress, eating healthy foods, and staying active are a few ways to keep your body strong enough to fight off infection.

Resources: [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov); [WebMD.com](https://www.webmd.com)

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# Feeling blue – or is it something more?

Everybody has felt down at one time or another. But when that feeling doesn't go away, it's important you talk to your doctor to see if you have a clinical form of depression.

Depression is a common mental health condition that affects a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It ranges in seriousness from mild, temporary episodes to severe, persistent depression. And it affects all ages, races, ethnicities, and genders.

The key difference between depression and feeling down is how long it lasts, how intense the feelings are, and how it impacts daily life.

If you think you might be dealing with depression, here are some tips to help you feel better:

- **Make an appointment with [Lucet](#), our behavioral partner, for a virtual or in-person visit.** Florida Blue members can usually be seen by a qualified mental health professional within two weeks of scheduling their appointment through Lucet.
- **Try treatment.** Treatment might include taking medicine, talking to a therapist, or a mix of both.
- **Take care of yourself.** Increasing your quality of sleep, connecting with others, and avoiding alcohol and drugs can help.



- **Remember, you are not alone.** Florida Blue members have a lot of resources available to them. Log into your member account on [FloridaBlue.com](https://FloridaBlue.com) to learn more or contact a community specialist at your local [Florida Blue Center](#). They're here to help.

**Resources:** [nimh.nih.gov](https://nimh.nih.gov); [CDC.gov](https://CDC.gov)

## Baked Apples Stuffed with Cinnamon Date Pecan Oatmeal (Serves 2-4)

### Ingredients:

- 2 large firm baking apples, cored
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp freshly ground nutmeg
- 4 Medjool dates (or raisins), pitted and chopped
- 1 tbsp chia seeds (or try ground flax)
- ¼ cup pecans (or walnuts), chopped
- 1½ cups almond milk
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1½ tbsp pure maple syrup, plus more for garnish

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Wash and core apples. You want to make the hole about an inch in diameter, so there is enough room for stuffing. Place cored apples in a lightly oiled rimmed baking dish.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the rest of the ingredients.

Fill apples with the oatmeal mixture (pack it down slightly) and then spoon the leftover oatmeal plus all liquid into the dish, surrounding the apples.

Bake, uncovered, for approximately 35-50 minutes (this time will vary depending on your apples).



To test for doneness, pierce apple with a knife. If it slides through easy it's done. The almond milk should also be absorbed and the oatmeal firm. Serve with drizzle of pure maple syrup, apple butter or pumpkin butter, whipped coconut cream, non-dairy ice cream, or yogurt.

Recipe courtesy of [OhSheGlows.com](https://OhSheGlows.com)

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ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele 1-800-352-2583 (TTY: 1-800-955-8770).

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