



Dakota Wellness Program

OCTOBER 2026

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Join Sanford Health Plan
Wellness team members for
our monthly 15-minute
wellness webinar.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY!](#)



NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

SANFORD
HEALTH PLAN

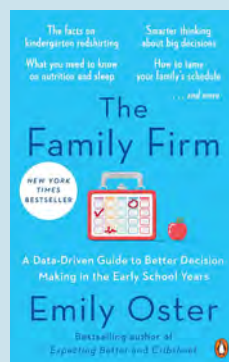
Helping children grow healthy and strong

Children's health is about more than treating illness – it is about giving kids the tools they need to grow, learn and thrive. Regular checkups help healthcare providers track growth, discuss concerns and monitor developmental milestones such as communication, movement, learning and social skills.

Vaccinations remain an important part of protecting children from serious, preventable diseases. Parents should work with their child's healthcare provider to stay current with recommended vaccines and catch up on any missed doses.

Nutrition also plays a key role. Offering a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and other nutritious foods helps support healthy growth and development.

Every child develops at their own pace. Regular wellness visits provide an opportunity to celebrate progress and address concerns early. Supporting healthy eating, physical activity, sleep, emotional wellbeing and preventive care can help children build a strong foundation for lifelong health.



Monthly book club

The Family Firm: A Data-Driven Guide to Better Decision Making in the Early Years

by Emily Oster

The Family Firm: A Data-Driven Guide to Better Decision Making in the Early Years by Emily Oster (2025) encourages parents to use research and data – not pressure or guesswork – to make thoughtful decisions about raising children. Oster compares family life to running a business, suggesting that parents create clear goals, consider the evidence, make decisions and follow up on what works. She explores important topics including sleep, nutrition, school, sports, screen time, independence and family schedules. Her practical “Four F’s” – Frame the question, Fact-find, Final decision, and Follow-up – give families a simple way to approach everyday challenges. The book’s main message is that there is rarely one perfect parenting choice. Instead, parents can use reliable information, consider their family’s values and make informed decisions that support their children’s health, development and well-being.

Discussion questions

- How could the “Four F’s” approach – Frame, Fact-find, Final decision and Follow-up – help parents make better decisions about their children’s health and well-being?
- Oster emphasizes using data and research rather than relying on parenting “rules.” Which topic discussed in the book do you think benefits most from this approach and why?
- What is one idea from *The Family Firm* that could help families create healthier habits or routines and how could you put it into practice?

Ask the expert

How can you make healthy food choices wherever your travels take you?

Traveling does not mean you have to give up your healthy eating habits. A little planning can help you make smart choices while enjoying your trip. Start the day with a healthy breakfast that includes protein, whole grains and fruit. Pack nutritious snacks such as nuts, fruit, yogurt or granola bars to avoid reaching for fast food when hunger strikes. When eating out, look for grilled, baked or steamed options and add vegetables when possible. Watch portion sizes and remember that you do not have to clean your plate. Drink plenty of water and limit sugary drinks and alcohol. Most importantly, allow yourself to enjoy special foods without guilt. One less-healthy meal will not undo your progress. Focus on balance, moderation and making the best choices available.



Prevent type 2 diabetes – join our free diabetes prevention program

Did you know that an estimated 115.2 million American adults have prediabetes? That's more than two in five individuals. As a Sanford Health Plan member, you have access to a FREE, evidence-based diabetes prevention program designed to help you make small lifestyle changes that lead to significant health improvements. The Change Your Weigh diabetes prevention program is offered in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) National Diabetes Prevention Program. This year-long group coaching program focuses on practical strategies to help you lose weight, increase physical activity and reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

You will learn to:

- ✓ Eat healthier
- ✓ Be more active
- ✓ Manage stress
- ✓ Overcome obstacles

The virtual group program includes:

- Weekly meetings for the first four months
- Monthly meetings for the remaining eight months
- Guidance from a trained lifestyle coach
- Support from peers on the same journey

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN for fall classes.



To learn more, visit sanfordhealthplan.com/members/wellness/diabetes-prevention or scan the QR code.

Preventive health

October is National Ergonomics Month

It's a great time to focus on the importance of your musculoskeletal (bones and muscles) health and avoid any injury or impairment.

An impairment of the muscles, joints, bones or connective tissue is considered a musculoskeletal impairment. Impairments usually consist of pain that is often persistent and may result in limitations to dexterity and mobility, which can affect the ability to work. Prevention is key to prevent common workplace injuries. Some of these preventive measures include:

- Stretch and warm up prior to beginning an activity that is prolonged or repetitive.
- Stretch stiff muscles and take a break from any position that is sustained for 20-30 minutes.
- Pay attention to any pain you have. You may need to change positions or stop an activity.
- Use the proper position and body mechanics for the activity you are doing.
- Keep from bending your neck forward for any prolonged amount of time.
- Avoid any static position that becomes prolonged. Movement increases blood flow and circulation.

Muscles become fatigued quickly when held in one continuous position.

Bruschetta cottage cheese chicken bake rolls

Ingredients:

2 large chicken breasts, thinly sliced into 4 cutlets
1 cup cottage cheese
1 cup Roma tomatoes, diced and drained
1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella
1 tbsp balsamic glaze
1 tsp Italian seasoning
Salt & pepper

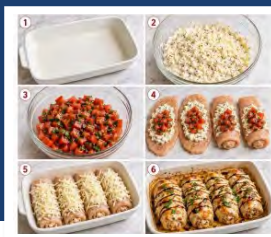
Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Grease 9" X 11" baking dish.
2. Mix cottage cheese, minced garlic, Italian seasoning and half the mozzarella.
3. In separate bowl, combine diced tomatoes, basil, pinch of salt. Drain excess liquid.
4. Pound chicken thin, season lightly. Spread cottage cheese mix, add a spoonful of bruschetta mix, roll up.
5. Place rolls in dish, top with remaining mozzarella. Bake 23-27 min until golden and cooked through.
6. Drizzle balsamic glaze and fresh basil before serving.

Tips:

- Pat tomatoes dry – prevents watery filling.
- Use cherry tomatoes for sweeter flavor.
- Perfect low-carb Italian dinner.

Nutrition Facts: Serves 4 | Calories per serving: 330 | Protein: 38g | Carbohydrates: 8g | Fat: 14g



Monthly Observances

Breast cancer awareness month

Health literacy month

Dental hygiene month

Oct. 10: World Mental Health Day

Oct. 20: World Osteoporosis Day

Oct. 19-23: National Health Education Week

QUICK LINKS

sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers

SET-UP A
MyChart

ONLINE ACCOUNT
sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin

CONTACT US

NDPERSwellness@sanfordhealth.org
(800) 499-3416 (TTY: 711)



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