

MESSA's Quick Guide to

HEALTHY LIVING



4 STEPS TO YOUR HEALTHY BALANCE

manage weight

to help prevent the development of heart disease, stroke, and other health risks

make exercise fun

to make physical activity enjoyable and a part of your daily routine

eat healthy

to achieve the right balance of nutrients to help manage weight and provide energy

reduce stress

to help lower health risks such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes and asthma

It's all about finding your healthy balance

MESSA is here to help

MESSA cares about you and your family. Together with comprehensive health plans and wellness programs, local field representatives and a call center recognized for its excellent service, MESSA continues to advocate for its members by providing helpful information for a healthier lifestyle.

4 benefits

- Reverse or prevent diabetes
- Decrease risk factors for other chronic diseases
- Lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Improve confidence and self-esteem

Proactively focusing on four key areas – managing weight, making exercise fun, eating healthy and reducing stress – will lead to a healthier lifestyle, reduce your health risks and add years to your life.



Manage weight

One simple truth still rings true in the weight loss battle: You must eat and drink fewer calories than your body burns up. In order to lose weight safely and keep it off, permanent lifestyle changes must be made. The healthiest way to lose weight is gradually.

Make a plan and set achievable goals

Your environment can affect your health as well as your weight. Look at your surroundings – your home, community and workplace – for a clear view of your current lifestyle.

Once you know where you are, set achievable goals to make lifestyle changes that can help you get to where you want to be – a happier, healthier you!

MAKE EXERCISE FUN!

Ready, set, go!

You've made the decision to commit to a healthier lifestyle and you've set your goals. The next step is to visit your health care provider to assess your current health, set limitations on what you can do safely, and help to keep your goals on a realistic track.

How to make exercise fun

Make it fun by playing games, participating in sports, walking with friends, or grabbing a partner and taking a salsa dance class! Make exercise fun and part of your day. Choose activities that you love to do, and those you've thought about trying. Stick to it 3-5 days per week and you'll soon be fit and healthier. The best exercise program is one that you really enjoy.

4 benefits

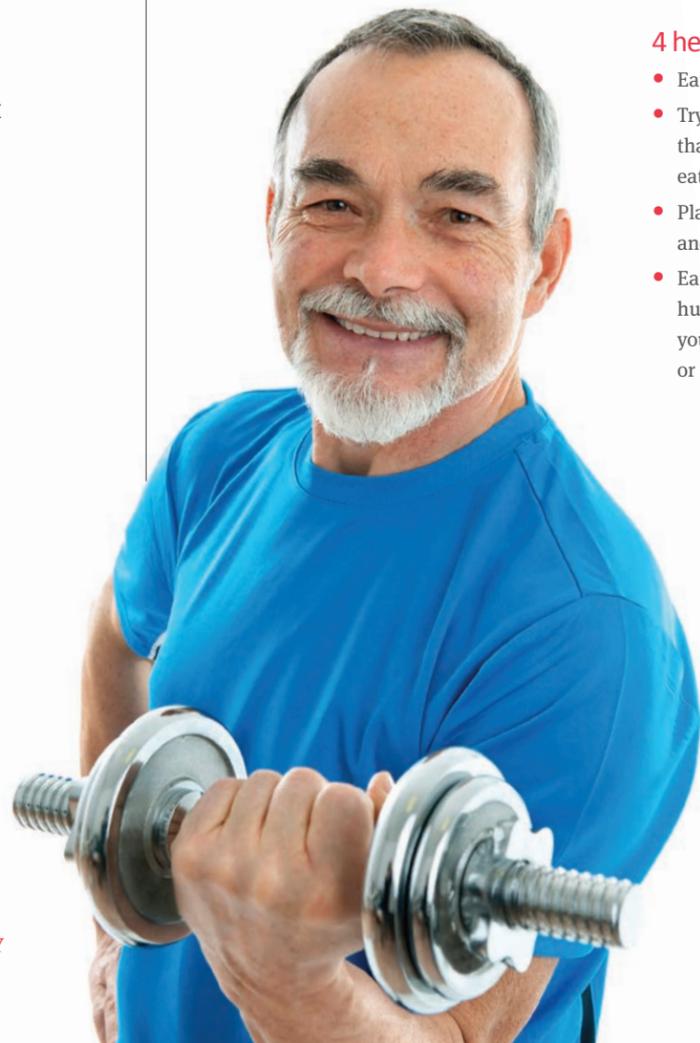
- Helps manage weight
- Combats poor health conditions and diseases
- Improves mood
- Boosts energy

Eat healthy

Examine current eating habits and triggers

Taking a good, hard look at what you eat, when you eat, and why you eat is the first step in changing unhealthy eating habits. Start a food diary or make a list of what you eat, the times you eat, and what prompted you to eat. Do you skip breakfast each day? Do you crave sweet snacks to get you through those afternoon energy slumps? Do you eat when you're nervous or not hungry at all? The answers to these questions will help you understand how you normally eat. Eating habits that often lead to weight gain include:

- Eating large portions
- Always eating everything on your plate
- Skipping certain meals



4 helpful tips

- Eat more slowly
- Try to avoid situations that trigger unhealthy eating habits
- Plan healthier meals and snacks
- Eat only when you're truly hungry instead of when you're bored, tired or anxious

GET THE RIGHT FUEL

Making the change to healthier eating

Making drastic or sudden changes to your eating habits is usually not healthy or a good idea. Improving your eating habits in a healthy manner requires careful reflection and planning. Once you've examined your current eating habits and their triggers, you can replace them with healthier ones. Leave the gimmicky diets behind and concentrate on good nutrition to get the right fuel needed for a healthy body. Your doctor is a good source of information. Work with your doctor to develop a plan of action.

MESSA Worksite Wellness Conferences are a great way to get acquainted with that person you always knew you could be — healthy, fit and well!



REDUCE STRESS

Stress affects your health

If you feel tired and have decreased productivity at work, have nagging headaches or trouble sleeping, these symptoms may be signs of too much stress. Stress can affect your body in many ways and can lead to health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Constant stress can cause you to become sick more often as well as make chronic illnesses worse.

Recognizing and reducing stress

Stress can also affect your behavior, your feelings and thoughts, as well as your body. Early recognition of the common symptoms of stress can help you manage them before they turn into more serious health issues. Some steps you can take to reduce stress include:

- Meditation
- Physical activity
- Relaxation techniques

Finding and learning healthy coping strategies are helpful ways to manage stress. Regular physical activity is a great way to manage stress and walking is an easy way to get started.

4 helpful tips



- Get enough rest and sleep
- Give yourself enough time to get things done
- Take time to do things you enjoy
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals

MESSA HEALTH PROMOTION CONSULTANTS

MESSA Health Promotion Consultants are experienced health care professionals who can help employees and employers create a worksite wellness program or revitalize your current program.



Worksite Wellness

The goal of MESSA's Worksite Wellness program is to engage employees throughout the school year. Our customized wellness plans will help you change your worksite culture to promote activities to reduce health risks and improve healthy behaviors.

To learn more, call MESSA at 800.292.4910 and ask for a Health Promotion Consultant.



www.pinterest.com/MESSAOnline



www.facebook.com/MESSAOnline



Where do you stand with diabetes?

Diabetes & obesity

Losing even just a few pounds by eating healthy and being physically active can help you to control your diabetes or lower your risk for developing it. Always consult with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program.

4 helpful tips

- Increase physical activity with doctor approval
- Start slowly
- Take “exercise snacks” and do multiple short bursts of exercise throughout the day
- Make weight resistance part of your routine

To enroll in the MESSA Diabetes Education and Member Support Program, please call 800.336.0022, prompt 3, to speak to a diabetes nurse educator.

MANAGE ASTHMA

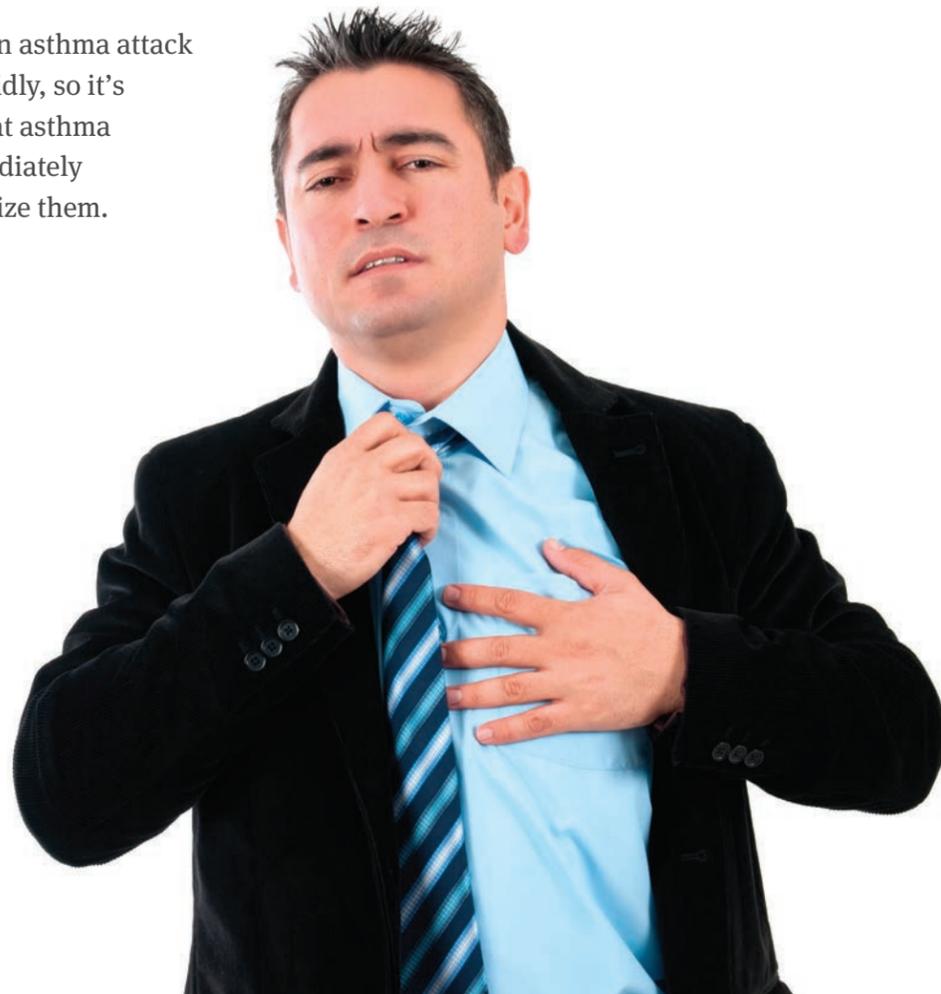
with the MESSA Asthma Education and Member Support Program

Know the 8 Early Symptoms of Asthma

By recognizing these signs you can stop an asthma attack or prevent one from getting worse. Early warning signs include:

- Frequent cough, especially at night
- Losing your breath easily or shortness of breath
- Feeling very tired or weak when exercising
- Wheezing or coughing after exercise
- Feeling very tired, easily upset, grouchy or moody
- Decreases or changes in lung function as measured on a peak flow meter
- Signs of a cold or allergies (sneezing, runny nose, cough, nasal congestion, sore throat, and headache)
- Trouble sleeping

The severity of an asthma attack can escalate rapidly, so it's important to treat asthma symptoms immediately once you recognize them.



Asthma & Stress

With or without asthma, stress is a part of daily life. But for those with asthma, stress can be a common asthma trigger. Learn how to control your asthma by enrolling in the MESSA Asthma Education and Member Support Program. Call 800.336.0022, prompt 3, to speak to our asthma nurse educator.

4 helpful tips

- Identify your stressors
- Reduce stressful thoughts with positive thinking
- Practice healthy eating habits
- Combat stress with physical activity



Cardiovascular Health and Education Program

A healthy lifestyle can save your life.

The risk of cardiovascular disease can be reduced by healthier lifestyle choices — both diet and exercise — and regular check-ups. Knowing and tracking your key health risk numbers — blood pressure, blood sugar and good and bad cholesterol — can help you dramatically reduce your risk. Use the handy tracker on the following page to track your numbers and work with your doctor to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease.

MESSA covers cardiac rehabilitation when appropriate medical criteria are met. To enroll in the MESSA Cardiovascular Education and Member Support Program, please call 800.336.0022, prompt 3, to speak to a certified cardiovascular nurse educator.

Know Your Numbers

Photocopy this page and share it with family members to track important health numbers such as cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure and weight. You can also use it to track what you eat, when you eat, and why you eat as a baseline for improving your eating habits.

Date _____	Date _____	Date _____	Date _____
Cholesterol _____	Cholesterol _____	Cholesterol _____	Cholesterol _____
HDL _____ LDL _____			
Triglycerides _____	Triglycerides _____	Triglycerides _____	Triglycerides _____
Blood sugar _____	Blood sugar _____	Blood sugar _____	Blood sugar _____
Blood pressure: systolic _____	Blood pressure: systolic _____	Blood pressure: systolic _____	Blood pressure: systolic _____
diastolic _____	diastolic _____	diastolic _____	diastolic _____
Weight _____	Weight _____	Weight _____	Weight _____

Date: _____

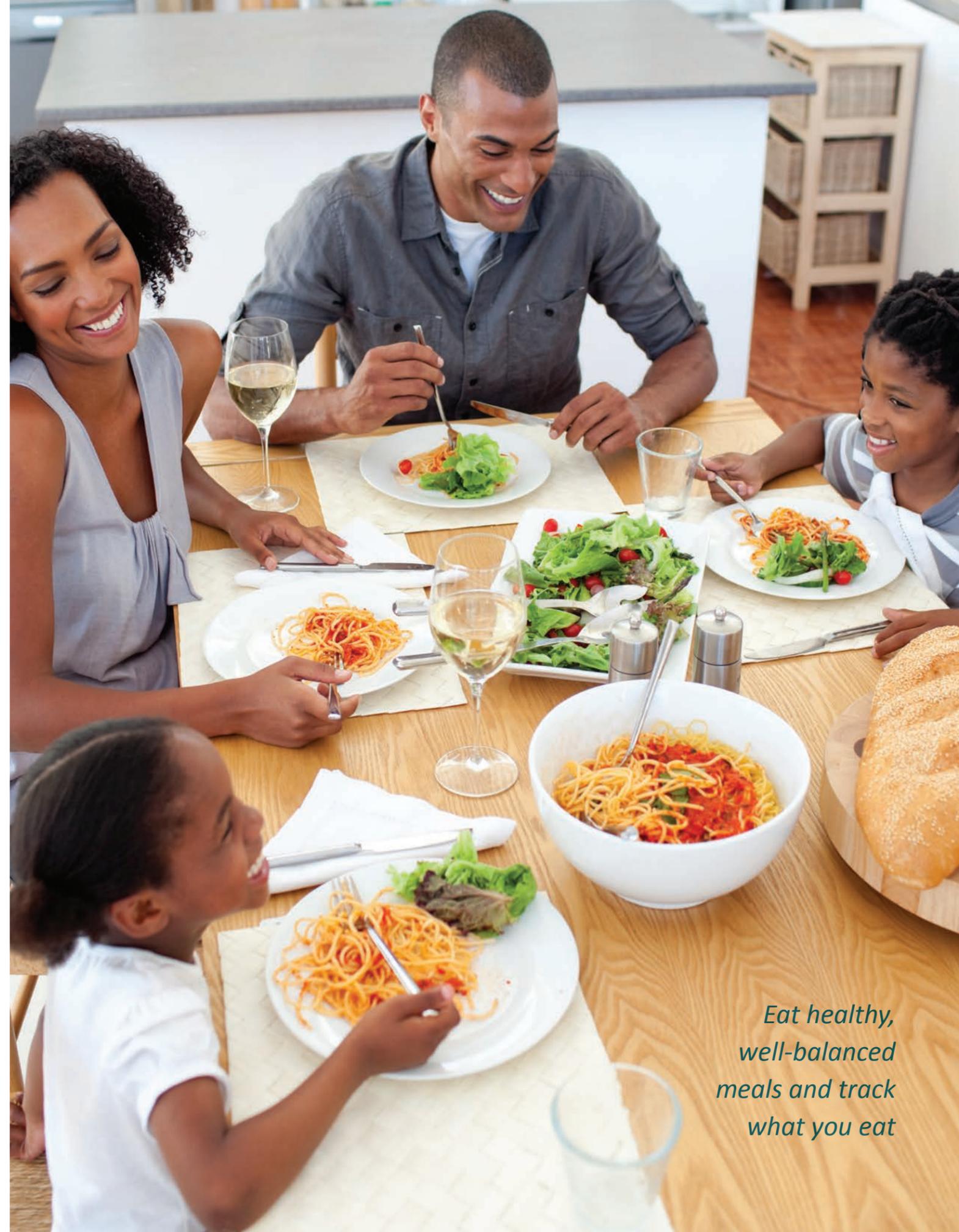
Time	Meal	Type of Food/Beverage	Amount/calories	Notes

Date: _____

Time	Meal	Type of Food/Beverage	Amount/calories	Notes

Date: _____

Time	Meal	Type of Food/Beverage	Amount/calories	Notes



*Eat healthy,
well-balanced
meals and track
what you eat*

References & Resources

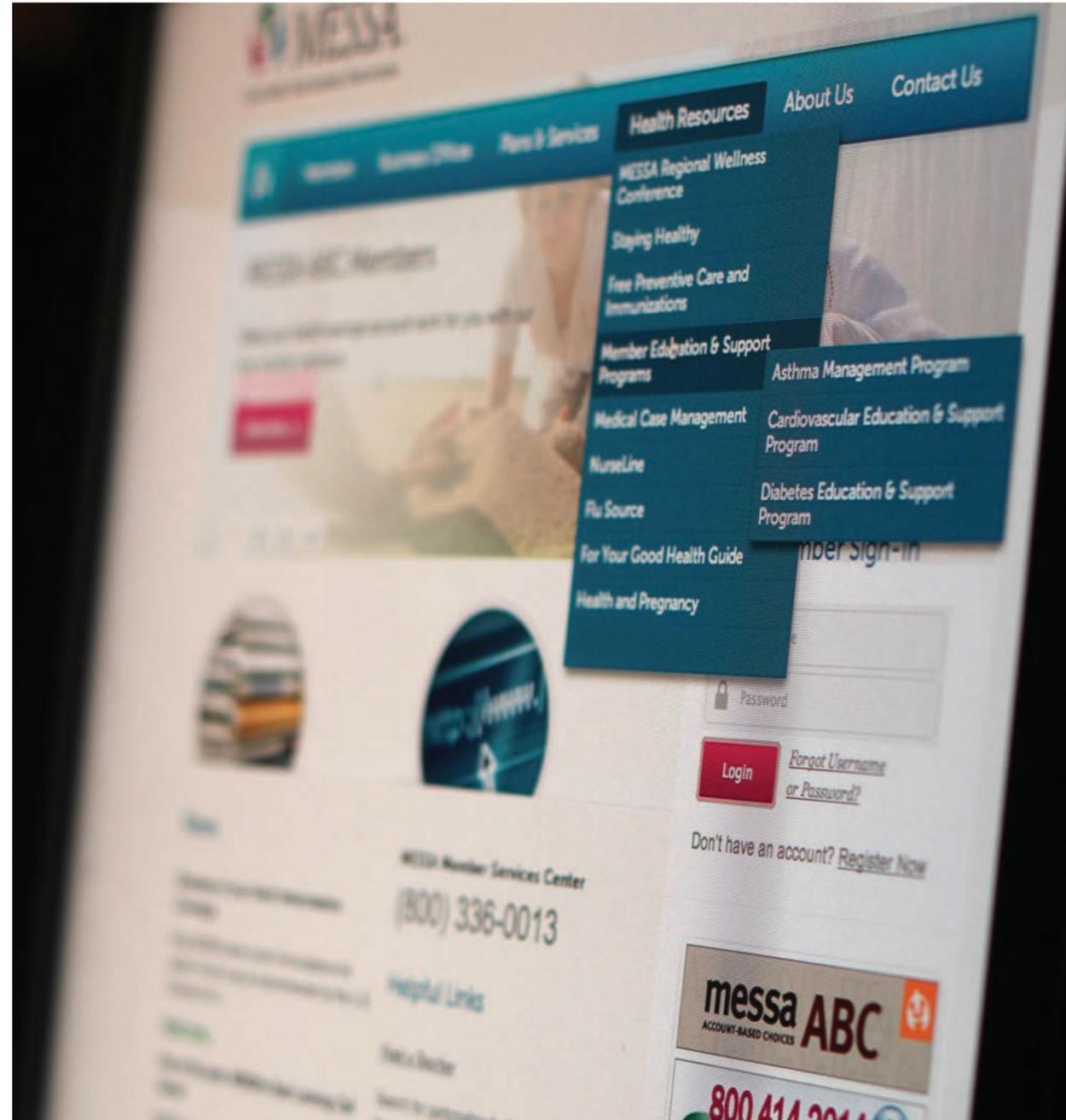
MESSA on the Web

As a MESSA member, you have access to MESSA's Asthma, Diabetes, and Cardiovascular Health Member Education and Support programs.

References used in this guide

The Internet has become an infinite resource for all kinds of information – but not all sites have accurate, factual or current data. As you search for information on the Internet to help with positive lifestyle changes, check for accreditations and be mindful of posting dates. Trusted sites include:

- www.diabetes.org
- www.mayoclinic.com
- www.cdc.gov
- www.webmd.com
- www.heart.org



Visit MESSA online at MESSA.org or give us a call! We are here to help you with the resources you need to help you be the best you can be.

Great Service

Wellness & Health Promotions 800.292.4910

MESSA Health Promotion Consultants help school employees design programs that support good health for everyone.

Member Education & Support Programs 800.336.0022, Prompt 3

Asthma, Diabetes, and Cardiovascular Health Member Education and Support Programs.

Healthy Expectations 800.336.0013

Providing free personalized support for you and your baby. Call to enroll.

NurseLine 800.414.2014

A 24/7 information line for medical questions and concerns.

MESSA Member Service Center 800.336.0013

Assistance for members with questions regarding medical claims and enrollment.

Field Representatives 800.292.4910

MESSA Field Representatives are helpful local resources for members.



No ifs, ands, or butts... the Benefits of Quitting Smoking are Great!



As soon as you quit smoking, your body begins a series of healing or recovery changes that continue for years.



20
MINUTES
after quitting your
heart rate drops
to a normal level

2 weeks
to **3 months**

after quitting your risk
of having a heart attack
begins to drop and
your lung functions
begin to improve



Your cough
and shortness
of breath
decrease
1 to 9
months
after
quitting



12 HOURS
after quitting the
carbon monoxide
level in your blood
drops to normal

ONE YEAR

after quitting your added risk
of coronary heart disease is
half that of a smoker



10
YEARS
AFTER QUITTING

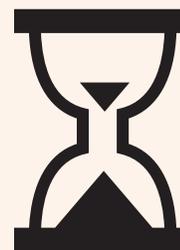
your risk of dying from lung
cancer or getting bladder cancer
is about half that of a smoker's;
and your risk of getting cervical
cancer or cancer of the larynx,
kidney, or pancreas decreases

15 YEARS
after quitting
your risk of
coronary heart
disease is the
same as that of
a nonsmoker



5 to 15
YEARS

after quitting your risk of having
a stroke is reduced to that of a
nonsmoker's and your risk of getting
cancer of the mouth, throat or
esophagus is half that of a smoker's



Members can request a MESSA Quit Smoking packet by calling
MESSA Member Education at 800.336.0022, prompt 3.

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