

# Wellness Beat

## Advocate Health Center at Governors State University

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October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month. Did you know that breast cancer can affect BOTH women and men?

Breast cancer is identified as the second leading cause of death among women, occurring in about 1 in 8 women within the U.S. (American Cancer Society, 2021).

Although rare, breast cancer can also occur in men with about 2,300 diagnoses a year (CDC, 2020).

Breast cancer has a high survival rate if detected and treated in early stages.

An important step to this is a monthly self-breast examination and scheduled mammograms. Any abnormal findings or changes in your self-exam should be reported to your health care provider. Please discuss preventative steps and risk factors with your provider.

### Advocate Health Center at GSU

Appointments for Flu Vaccination are available! [CLICK HERE](#) to schedule.

## How to Fight Allergies, Flu and COVID-19 This Fall

While fall may come with changing leaves and pumpkin spice lattes, it can also trigger allergies and signal the start of flu season.

### Allergies

Allergies can happen to anyone no matter the season. Fall allergies, however, are specifically triggered by ragweed, Dr. Morales Brost said.

“Ragweed counts for 75% of the cases. It usually starts releasing pollen during the warm nights of August and may stay in the air until October,” says Dr. Morales Brost.

Fall allergies are like summer allergies because the allergen is on the ground. During the summer, the allergens are grass-related pollen, and during the fall, it can be mold from a damp pile of leaves. Allergies can also be caused by dust mites in your home.

How can you get allergy relief? Dr. Morales Brost offers these four tips:

- Before turning on the heat for the first time, clean heating vents and change your filter(s).
- Use High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters.
- Use a dehumidifier.
- Wear a mask.

### Flu season

With the weather changing to cooler temperatures, this also means the start of flu season. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine every season with rare exceptions.

Vaccination is particularly important for people who are at higher risk of serious complications from influenza. The flu can be mild for some people and more serious for others. Symptoms for the flu and COVID-19 can be similar and hard to distinguish. They both can include symptoms like fever, cough or sore throat. If you develop any symptoms that indicates the flu or COVID-19, it’s recommended to:

- See your doctor
- Get tested for COVID-19
- Isolate yourself from others, and wear a mask
- Complete a safe check screening on the Live Well app prior to your visit

### COVID-19 safety

Vaccination is still the best way to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, and there are still activities you can enjoy while continuing to social distance and follow expert recommendations. These activities include:

- Visit a place where the leaves change
- Stop by a local pumpkin patch
- Try a corn maze
- Get cooking with apples and autumn spices
- Make a DIY Halloween costume

Fall should be something to look forward to and enjoy, Dr. Morales Brost said. Your doctor can help you manage your allergies and stay healthy as the seasons change.

## This Can Help You Control Your Cholesterol

Are you one of the nearly 100 million American adults who have high cholesterol?

There's a pretty good chance you or someone you care about has high cholesterol. That puts them at risk for heart disease.

Do you have high cholesterol you'd like to reduce for your health and your longevity? One effective approach is simple: Exercise.

Taking up a regular fitness activity can have a positive effect on your triglycerides and HDL, known as "good" cholesterol. Triglycerides are a type of fat in your blood that your body uses for energy. Exercise can lower their levels. At higher levels, they can contribute to coronary artery disease.

Exercise doesn't do much to improve your LDL, known as bad cholesterol. Your best bet for reducing your LDL is a low-cholesterol diet and losing weight.

Before you start an exercise program, check with your health care provider to make sure.

The good news is that a number of different physical activities can help you control your cholesterol. The main thing is to do your chosen activities regularly.

**Aerobics** — Try running, walking briskly, hiking or cycling (spinning or regular outdoor bike). How about swimming, dancing, kickboxing or an elliptical or a step machine?

Free weights or a weight machine. Circuit training is effective.

How much exercise should you get?

Don't overdo it to start. Try 15 to 20 minutes at a time to start.

Work up to about 30 minutes of activity five or six days a week.

During your activity, you should aim for a moderate to somewhat hard effort. You should still be able to carry on a conversation without being too out of breath. If you can still sing, you should increase your effort.

A reminder: Stay hydrated when you exercise. Even when it's cool during your workout, you still need to drink. Along with the cholesterol-reducing benefits, exercise can help lower your blood pressure. It can help reduce your risk for stroke and heart attack.



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## Tropical Fruit & Nuts Snack

The protein and fiber in this portable snack can help you feel full until your next meal.

### Ingredients

*Makes 1 serving*

- 10 roasted unsalted cashews
- ¼ cup dried apricots
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened coconut

### Preparation

*Active Time 5m/Total Time 5m*

1. Combine cashews, apricots and coconut in a bowl or portable container.



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