

MCBS

Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey

Winter
2016

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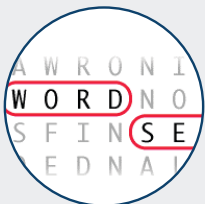
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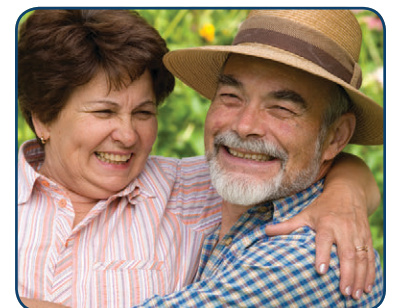


What is the MCBS?

The Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS) is a continuous survey of people who receive Medicare benefits. It includes a group of individuals in the community or in long-term care facilities that are representative of the entire population of those receiving Medicare benefits.

The survey's main goal is to determine all costs associated with health care services provided to people with Medicare. MCBS is the only comprehensive source of information on the health status, health insurance coverage, health care use and expenditures of the Medicare population. It is sponsored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

You are receiving this newsletter because as a MCBS respondent, you are an important supporter of the MCBS. The success of the survey depends upon the cooperation of every MCBS participant! We welcome your feedback on this newsletter and hope you find this issue informative.

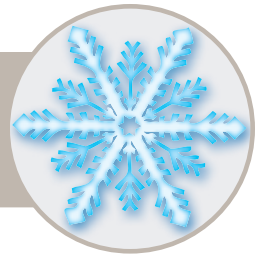


About NORC

NORC is an independent, nonprofit organization whose mission is to conduct high quality social science research in the public interest. NORC has offices in Chicago, IL; Bethesda, MD; Atlanta, GA; Boston, MA; and San Francisco, CA. In addition, we have interviewers across the nation working on the MCBS. Since 2014, we have worked on the MCBS and are very excited to begin the next round of data collection. NORC is deeply committed to protecting the privacy of all respondents' personal information; therefore, all information about participants will be kept private and confidential as required by law. To learn more about NORC or reach the MCBS team, please call NORC toll-free number 877-389-3429 or e-mail NORC at mcbs@norc.org. You can also visit the website: <http://www.mcbs.norc.org>.

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Winter Safety Tips for Seniors



Winter is here! Winter weather can be hazardous to anyone's health but can especially affect older adults. Older adults are more vulnerable to falls, injuries, hypothermia, stroke and other winter safety hazards than the rest of the population.

Here are some Winter Safety Tips

Preventing Heart Attack and Stroke

Strokes occur more frequently in the winter, likely due to the narrowing of arteries in response to the cold. In addition, commonly performed activities during the winter such as shoveling, wiping the snow and ice off the car, and walking through ice and heavy snow can burden the heart, causing a sudden increase in blood pressure and heart rate resulting in a stroke or heart attack. To prevent the risk of a stroke or heart attack you should:

- ❖ Put a plan in place before the first storm arrives so that the walkways and driveways will be cleared. The best option is to recruit family members or hire someone for this work.
- ❖ Keep a supply kit stocked with bottled water, nonperishable food, batteries, a flashlight, first aid kit and a cell phone on hand in case of winter weather emergencies.

Preventing Falls in Winter Weather

Winter weather brings in snow and ice which leads to slippery walking conditions that can increase fall risks. A fall could result in an injury such as a fracture.

Here are tips to avoid falls:

- ❖ Avoid wearing pants that drag and could get caught on the pavement.
- ❖ Place a sturdy winter floor mat by the door to help soak up the water from your shoes when you come home.
- ❖ Wipe your shoes when you enter the home and clear up any puddles right away.
- ❖ When you plan to go outside, you should wear winter boots that firmly grip the ground. Rubber or neoprene soles with tread grooves are safer than leather and plastic soles.
- ❖ Engaging in balance training exercises can lessen your risk of falling. Many community organizations and senior centers have fall prevention programs that you can participate in.

Preventing Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a condition in which the body's temperature drops below normal. This is a major concern during the winter months as you may become less active or take medications that may alter the body's ability to regulate temperature. To avoid hypothermia you should:

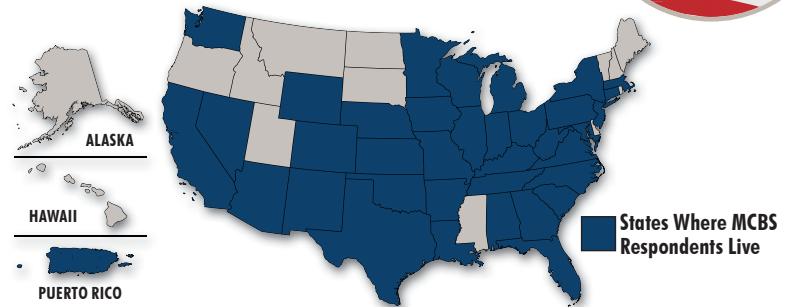
- ❖ Set the home thermostats to at least 68 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ❖ Wear layers indoors and outdoors as well as wear a hat, scarf, and gloves when outdoors.



MCBS in the USA



This map shows in blue all of the states where MCBS respondents live. MCBS Field Interviewers conduct interviews with respondents all across the country. The MCBS collects information from respondents living in the community or in a long-term care facility. As you can see, respondents and Field Interviewers are all over the United States!



Healthy Eating in the Cold Months



The colder months can bring nutritional hurdles for many people. It can be harder to find fresh local produce, and driving conditions to grocery stores may be dangerous in icy or slippery conditions. Here are some healthy food tips:

- ❖ Purchase frozen produce because it can be stored for a long periods of time.
- ❖ Increase your intake of foods containing Vitamin C in the winter. Food that have high Vitamin C include oranges, broccoli, strawberries, cantaloupe, and other citrus fruits. Vitamin C can boost the immune system and protect against winter cold and flu season.
- ❖ Dehydration is a major concern in the winter months because of the drier winter air so it is vital to drink plenty of water.
- ❖ Keep a stock of nonperishable food items during the winter so you are ready in the event of a winter storm. These items include ready-to-heat frozen meals, protein bars, canned beans and soups, and bottled protein shakes.

Here is a delicious and healthy recipe for a Hearty Winter Vegetable Soup:

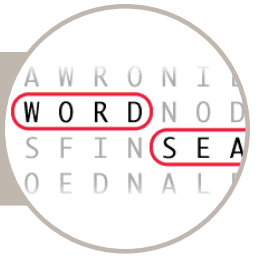
INGREDIENTS

- ❖ 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ❖ 4 leeks, white and pale-green parts only (cut into 1-inch pieces)
- ❖ 3 celery stalks (cut on the bias into 1/2-inch-thick pieces)
- ❖ 3 medium carrots (cut into cubes)
- ❖ 2 garlic cloves (crushed)
- ❖ 2 pinches of red pepper flakes
- ❖ Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- ❖ 5 1/4 cups homemade or store-bought low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock
- ❖ 1 1/2 cups water
- ❖ 1 small (1 to 1 1/2 pounds) butternut squash (you can also substitute a package of frozen butternut squash cubes)
- ❖ 2 Yukon Gold potatoes about 12 oz. (cut into cubes)
- ❖ 1 head escarole (cut into 1-inch-thick ribbons)
- ❖ 1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas (drained and rinsed)
- ❖ 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ❖ 2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh mint
- ❖ 2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh dill

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Heat oil in a large Dutch oven or pot over medium-high heat. Cook leeks, celery, carrots, garlic, red pepper flakes, and 1 teaspoon salt, stirring occasionally, until leeks are translucent (about 5 minutes).
- 2 Add stock and water, and bring to a boil.
- 3 Add squash and potatoes. Return to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer, partially covered, until vegetables are tender (about 15 minutes).
- 4 Stir in escarole and chickpeas, and return to a boil.
- 5 Stir in lemon juice and herbs. Season with salt and pepper, and enjoy!

Word Search Puzzle



Words to find:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| COLD | NUTRIENTS |
| GLOVES | PREVENTION |
| HEALTH | SCARF |
| HYDRATION | SHOVEL |
| ICE | SNOW |
| INJURIES | SURVEY |
| MCBS | VITAMIN |
| MEDICARE | WINTER |
| NORC | RESPONDENTS |

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Meet The Field Interviewer: Barbara Walter



I live in Fredericksburg, Texas which is mostly a rural area, but have had the opportunity to travel all over the country interviewing MCBS respondents, including Arkansas, California, Oklahoma, Texas, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. I have interviewed respondents living in the community and facility portions of the MCBS study, and have also had the opportunity to be involved in the training of new interviewers to the MCBS. One reason I have chosen to work on the MCBS for 10 years is that I have seen first-hand the positive changes MCBS has helped to create in the Medicare program.

Information from the MCBS has helped policy analysts better understand the cost associated with health care services provided to people with Medicare. Further, MCBS was instrumental in establishing Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Coverage), since data from the study was used to set benefit needs and levels of funding for the program. MCBS data continues to be used to monitor the program. None of this would be possible without the contributions of respondents and the work interviewers like me do. I truly enjoy the work I do in the field and love getting to know the respondents.

References:

Castaldina, D. L. (2014). Winter Safety Tips for Seniors. Care Coordination. Retrieved from <http://www.lifelinesys.com/content/blog/healthcare-professionals/care-coordination/winter-safety-tips-for-seniors>

Winter Vegetable Soups. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.marthastewart.com/330140/hearty-winter-vegetable-soup>