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# MCBS

Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey



WINTER | 2020

**Greetings!** Thank you for your participation in the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS). The success of the survey depends upon the cooperation of every MCBS participant. We thank you for your continued support and hope you find this newsletter both enjoyable and informative!

## What is the MCBS?

The Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS) is a continuous survey of people who receive Medicare benefits. This survey is designed to represent the entire population of individuals currently receiving Medicare benefits, including people living in a community setting or in long-term care facilities. The survey's main goal is to collect information pertaining to costs associated with

health care services provided to people with Medicare. The MCBS collects comprehensive data on beneficiaries' health insurance coverage, health care utilization and costs, access to care, and satisfaction with care. The MCBS is sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and is conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago.



## 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 Sacramento, CA. In addition, we have interviewers across the nation working on the MCBS. NORC is deeply committed to protecting the privacy of all respondents' personal information; all of your information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law, as prescribed by the Federal Privacy Act of 1974.

# Taking Care of Your Mental and Physical Health

**Taking care of your mental and physical health is essential for living a healthy and happy life. It is also easier than you may think! Regularly participating in activities you enjoy as well as regularly exercising are effective ways to maintain and improve your mental and physical health.**

Everyone has activities they enjoy, whether it's reading, playing games, gardening, cooking, volunteering, attending local events or belonging to a social group. Many do not realize, however, that besides being fun and relaxing, these activities are also good for your mental and physical health.

As people grow older, they often spend more time at home alone. This isolation may lead to depression and negative impacts to overall health.<sup>1</sup> Regular participation in activities you enjoy may improve your mood, overall happiness and lifespan as well as reduce your risk of developing depression and dementia.

Recent research found that adults who participate in activities they find meaningful report feeling happier and less depressed. Other studies revealed that adults who participated in social activities, such as playing games, attending local events or traveling, and participated in productive activities, such as cooking, volunteering or gardening, lived longer than adults who did not participate in these types of activities. Additional research showed that participating in hobbies and social activities may lower the risk of developing dementia.<sup>1</sup>

Regular participation in activities you enjoy can be beneficial for your mental and physical well-being. It is also important to try new activities. You can visit: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/participating-activities-you-enjoy> for a list of new activities to try!

Exercising regularly is also important for your physical and mental health, no matter your age. This is because regular exercise and physical activity can help you stay strong and fit, allowing you to continue doing what you enjoy. When older adults are no longer able to do activities on their own, it is often because they're not regularly active.<sup>2</sup>



## **Regular exercise and physical activity have many benefits for both your physical and mental well-being, which include:<sup>1, 2</sup>**

- Increasing energy level
- Improving sleep
- Maintaining and improving your physical strength and fitness
- Improving your balance
- Reducing feelings of depression and improving mood and overall emotional well-being
- Improving your ability to participate in daily activities such as cleaning the house or grocery shopping
- Managing and improving diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and osteoporosis.

## **The great news is everyone can experience these benefits, no matter your age, health and/or physical abilities, through participating in as little as 2 ½ hours of physical activity per week.<sup>2</sup> Simply find activities that keep your body moving as well as meet your fitness level and needs, such as:<sup>2</sup>**

- Brisk Walking
- Bicycling
- Wheelchair Rolling
- Lifting Weights
- Yard Work (e.g. gardening, raking, mowing the lawn)



Always check with your health care provider before engaging in new activities. You can also ask your health care provider for exercises they recommend. If you are unable to partake in 2 ½ hours of physical activity per week due to a health condition, do as much as you can.

# A New Way to Get Information about Your Medicare Benefits

**Did you know you can now find a copy of your Medicare Card online and print it at any time? If you need a replacement card, you no longer have to wait for one to be delivered in the mail!**

**This is part of a new initiative called eMedicare, which seeks to improve the way Medicare beneficiaries get information about their benefits. To view or print a copy of your Medicare Card online, visit [MyMedicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) to log in or create an account.<sup>3</sup>**



The text below is an excerpt from a blog post on the CMS website written by Seema Verma, the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. You can find the full text here: <https://www.cms.gov/blog/empowering-patients-and-unleashing-innovation-emedicare-today-and-future-generations>

eMedicare is a multi-year initiative to modernize the way people with Medicare get information about their benefits, and create new ways to help them make the best decisions for themselves and their families. eMedicare empowers patients with the kinds of tools they are used to using in the private sector and other parts of their lives. Tools in the eMedicare suite include enhanced interactive online decision support to help beneficiaries and their caregivers better understand and evaluate their coverage options and costs between Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage, a new online service that lets people see how different coverage choices will affect their estimated out-of-pocket costs, new price transparency tools that let consumers compare the national average costs of certain procedures between settings, and a new webchat option in the Medicare Plan Finder.

As part of eMedicare, CMS created the “What’s covered” app, which lets people with Original Medicare, caregivers, and others quickly see on a mobile device whether Medicare covers a specific medical item or service. People can now get accurate, consistent Original Medicare coverage information more easily—at the doctor’s office, in the hospital, or anywhere else.

The eMedicare initiative expands and improves on current consumer service options. It doesn’t replace them. If beneficiaries like the convenience of apps, we now have one. If they prefer to search online, [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) has tons of content. If they prefer to leaf through a book, the Medicare & You handbook continues to be a great resource. And if they want to talk to a person, our 1-800-MEDICARE call center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Recipe: Apple Oatmeal Muffins<sup>4</sup>

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup milk, non-fat
- 1/3 cup applesauce
- 1/2 cup flour, all-purpose
- 1/2 cup quick-cooking oats (uncooked)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 apple (tart, cored & chopped)

### Directions

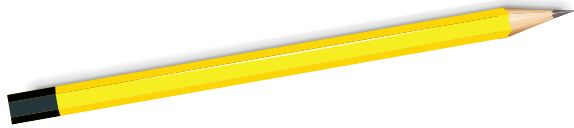
1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Place 6 cupcake holders in baking tin.
3. In a mixing bowl, add milk and applesauce. Stir until blended.
4. Stir in flour, oats, sugar, baking powder, and cinnamon. Mix until moistened (do not over mix).
5. Gently stir in the chopped apples.
6. Spoon into cupcake holders.
7. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.
8. Cool in pan 5 minutes before serving. Store unused portions in an airtight container.



For additional flavor, try adding raisins or walnuts! You can easily store the muffins in the freezer to enjoy another time.

## Words to find:

NORC                      CMS  
 OATMEAL                MCBS  
 SURVEY                 HEALTH  
 APPLE                    EXERCISE  
 ACTIVITY                MENTAL  
 PHYSICAL                MEDICARE



X	E	S	C	D	E	H	N	C	L	C	N	A	P
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## Meet the Field Interviewer: Norma Ortiz



**Hi there! My name is Norma Ortiz.** I am a Manhattan-born, Coney Island, Brooklyn-raised, native New Yorker, of Puerto-Rican descent.

I was raised in the Big Apple by my Spanish-speaking Grandmother, who had little schooling, but plenty of education. She bestowed her wisdom on me and taught me gratitude, kindness and honesty. My dad, whom I saw only a few times a year, taught me to dream. He would always say: “Honey, you can be anything you want to be in the future. You can even grow up to be President of the United States one day.”

My family is my pride and joy; they inspire and motivate me every day to be a better person. My love for my son and my two granddaughters are infinite; they are my future. My cousin is the embodiment of compassion and hospitality. I also have three dogs, all of which are happy as can be. My oldest dog is blind and deaf and my second oldest dog uses a wheel chair; he is a celebrity everywhere we go.



I started my career on MCBS in 2005 working in Puerto Rico, a U.S. Territory, as a Bilingual Field Interviewer. In June of 2018 I moved from Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico to Giddings, Texas. Today, I mainly work in central Texas, but often travel to other cities to help when needed.

My fellow Field Interviewers and I work with pride, respect and dedication for and because of you. It is only through your participation that we can continue to make the necessary changes and improvements to the Medicare Program. Thank you for all you have done, thank you for all you do, and thank you for all you will continue to do.

### References:

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- <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/participating-activities-you-enjoy>
- <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/how-exercise-can-help-you/?hilite=%27emotional%27%2C%27well-being%27>
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