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# MCBS

## Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey



WINTER | 2023

**Greetings!** Thank you for your participation in the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey. The success of the survey depends on your cooperation. We appreciate your continued support and hope you find this newsletter both enjoyable and informative!

## What is the MCBS?

The Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey or 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 help policymakers improve the Medicare program by providing a wealth of information about you, the

beneficiary, and your overall health care experience. We do this by recording costs associated with health care services, as well as information on topics including health insurance coverage, knowledge of the Medicare program as well as 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 at the University of Chicago is an objective, nonpartisan, research organization. NORC conducts research and analysis that decision-makers trust, providing high quality insights for more than eight decades. We have professional interviewers across the nation working on the MCBS. As a professional research organization, NORC is deeply committed to protecting the privacy of all respondents' personal information; the answers you provide will be kept private to the extent permitted by law, as prescribed by the Federal Privacy Act of 1974.

**NORC** at the University of Chicago

Call us at  
1-844-777-2151

Email us at  
[mcbs@norc.org](mailto:mcbs@norc.org)

Visit us at  
[www.mcbs.norc.org](http://www.mcbs.norc.org) &  
[www.cms.gov/MCBS](http://www.cms.gov/MCBS)

# Focus on You!

It can be easy to get caught up in day-to-day life caring or worrying about others whether you are a caregiver for a loved one with a serious illness, watching the news, or supporting friends, a spouse, or children through their daily lives, but it is important to take time to focus on yourself and your needs.

## Leisure Activities and Hobbies<sup>1</sup>

- Your hobbies may be good for your health, as well as being fun!
- Older adults who spent at least an hour a day engaged in a hobby, like reading, had a decreased risk of dementia than those who spent less than 30 minutes a day enjoying a hobby.<sup>2</sup>
- Pet ownership, or regular contact with pets, was associated with better cognitive function in older adults.<sup>3</sup>
- Look for opportunities to participate in the activities you enjoy most.



## Getting a Good Night's Sleep<sup>4</sup>

- Getting a good night's sleep helps you stay healthy and alert.
- Sleep allows your body to effectively fight germs and sickness.
- Try to follow a regular sleep schedule, such as falling asleep and getting up around the same time each day, can help your body sleep better each night.

## Values-Based Actions Self-Reflection

Give yourself time to pause and reflect on what you value (such as relationships with friends and family, your career, your community, etc.). What do you find fulfilling? What are you excited to do? What is meaningful about those things? And then think about what actions fulfill those values. Are you taking those actions? Do you want to give more time to any actions? What steps can you take to better match your actions to your values?

## Centering YOU in Your Treatment Plan: Exploring Palliative Care<sup>5</sup>



One place where you and your values can be centered is in your medical treatment, especially if you have a serious illness. Often serious illness treatment can include various specialists, medications, symptoms and side effects, or other complexities that can negatively affect quality of life. A palliative care team will work closely with you to ensure that your treatment plan fits your needs. The goal is to combine specialized knowledge of symptom relief and treatment options with a more wholistic understanding of your situation and values.

Palliative care does not replace your primary treatment, nor does it require you to stop treatment. It is available at any time during your illness and the goal is maintain comfort throughout the treatment process by providing relief from symptoms, dealing with treatment side effects, and addressing the stress that comes with living with a serious illness. Studies of palliative care “consistently show improvements in patient quality of life.”<sup>6</sup>

If you want to learn more or find palliative care in your area, go to [www.getpalliativecare.org](http://www.getpalliativecare.org) to search by state and city.

# Telehealth: What Is It, How to Prepare, Is It Covered? | National Institute on Aging (nih.gov)<sup>7</sup>

Telehealth is a way of receiving healthcare services via video calling or telephone technology, which enables you to talk with your doctor from home rather than in a medical facility. It can save time and energy getting to and from your doctor's office for routine check-ins, especially if you live far from your primary care provider or have limited access to transportation. It can also make it easier for a patient or caregiver to get questions answered quickly since they can do it through an online portal rather than having to wait for an appointment. Some helpful tips to make your telehealth visit a success are below:

1. Try to use the best video camera you can find. This may be attached to your phone, laptop, tablet, or desktop computer. A clear picture can help your doctor understand and address your concerns more easily and effectively.
2. Test the camera, sound, and video you plan to use in advance. Video calling a friend before your appointment can help ensure that everything is working properly.
3. Use the best internet connection possible. If you are not using Wi-Fi, try getting the best signal by using a wired connection to your router or an Ethernet cable. If you are using Wi-Fi, being physically close to the internet router and minimizing devices connected to it can help improve your connection.
4. Prepare a list of questions/concerns. Being prepared for your appointment will help make it easier for you and your doctor to cover everything you need to talk about.<sup>7</sup>

## If you are enrolled in Medicare Part B, certain telehealth services may be covered, including:<sup>8</sup>

- Therapy and online counseling
- Prescription Management
- Urgent care issues
- Post-surgical follow-up
- Treatment of recurring conditions
- Treatment of skin conditions
- Lab test or X-ray results

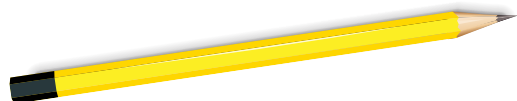
Coinsurance and deductibles still apply, so you will often pay the same amount for a telehealth service that you would if you went in person.

Medicare Advantage Plans may offer more telehealth benefits than Medicare Part B so check with your insurance provider to see what additional coverage they may offer.

Learn more at <https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/telehealth>.

## Sudoku Puzzle

Sudoku is played on a grid of 9x9 spaces. Within the rows and columns are 9 – 3x3 squares. Each row, column and square needs to be filled out with the numbers 1 – 9, without repeating any numbers within the actual row, column, or square. Use process of elimination to fill in spaces to complete the board.



		5			1	8		4
		8			4		3	
				9			6	
			4	5				7
3	4		6	2	7		1	8
7				1	3			
	8			3				
	2		1			7		
5		6	7			9		



# Recipe: Sweet or Savory Dutch Baby Oven Pancake<sup>9,10</sup>

## Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 3 tablespoons butter
- ¾ cup milk
- ¾ cup flour
- 1 pinch salt

## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Place butter in an oven proof pan, pie plate, or cast iron skillet and place in the oven.
2. Combine eggs and milk in a bowl. Add flour and salt and whisk until smooth.
3. Remove pan from oven and swirl melted butter to coat. Pour batter into the hot pan and return to oven.
4. Bake until puffed in the center and golden brown on the edges: 20 – 25 minutes.
5. Top as desired and serve.

## For Sweet Dutch Baby:

Add 2 teaspoons vanilla extract and 1 tablespoon sugar to the batter during step 2.



Top with: Powdered sugar, maple syrup, berries, lemon, jam, or anything else you would want on a pancake

## For Savory Dutch Baby:

Add any toppings or seasonings you would like. Some ideas include:

- Mixing in ½ teaspoon each of dried oregano and basil into the batter
- Adding ½ cup of shredded cheese and 4 slices of diced bacon to the top before baking
- Topping with fried eggs, sauteed kale, and avocado or smoked salmon and crème fraiche

## Meet the Field Interviewer: Michele Duran



I was born & raised in Newark, NJ & now live in sunny Miami, FL. I have had the pleasure of working for NORC since 2016. Two years later, in 2018, I joined the MCBS team. Being from up north, well...let's just say we talk a lot...so it sounded great to me! I also had a medical background and am familiar with insurance companies & medical terminology. Over the past four years, I have met and spoken to the most interesting people. I listened when they told their stories about their lives and met their family members. It has truly been a rewarding experience that is for the most part heartwarming.

I am a proud mother to three sons & four grandsons. A bit over ten years ago I married a man with three daughters, one granddaughter & now one on the way. Our children are all about the same age, so they get along well. Family has always been important, and we love getting together all the time. I am enjoying being a grandmother as I go to football games, karate & jujitsu tournaments. We have a German shepherd named Buddy who loves attention and a cockatiel bird that loves to sing as soon as I start an interview.

The best part of working the MCBS is the flexibility we have to meet people either in person or on the phone. We share life experiences & laugh a lot too.

I look forward to meeting more amazing Medicare beneficiaries!

## References

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-do-we-know-about-healthy-aging#stress>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20660517/>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32671105/>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/sleep-deprivation/health-effects>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/files/docs/palliative-care-brochure.pdf>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32025964/>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/telehealth-what-it-how-prepare-it-covered>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/telehealth>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/264986/vanilla-dutch-baby>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.therecipe.com/10-savory-dutch-baby-recipes>

## Answer

2	9	5	3	6	1	8	7	4
6	1	8	5	7	4	2	3	9
4	7	3	2	9	8	1	6	5
8	6	1	4	5	9	3	2	7
3	4	9	6	2	7	5	1	8
7	5	2	8	1	3	4	9	6
1	8	7	9	3	5	6	4	2
9	2	4	1	8	6	7	5	3
5	3	6	7	4	2	9	8	1