QUANTUM
BALANCED LIVING
Wellness, Productivity, and You!
November 2026

Don’t Forget Flu Season



Flu season is here. It usually starts in October, peaks between December and February, and can run into May. The CDC estimates the 2025–2026 flu season caused at least 32 million illnesses, 390,000 hospitalizations, and 24,000 deaths, and at least 174 children died. Most of those children were not fully vaccinated. The CDC still recommends a flu vaccine every year for everyone 6 months and older, with rare exceptions. All three strains in this year’s vaccine were updated to better match the viruses expected to spread this season. The vaccine takes about two weeks to build protection, so if you haven’t had yours yet, get it now, before holiday gatherings and travel. Adults 65 and older should ask about a high-dose, adjuvanted, or recombinant vaccine. Most health plans cover the flu shot at no cost, and many pharmacies offer walk-in appointments. Ask your doctor or pharmacist which vaccine is right for you.

Should You Lend Money to a Coworker?



Should you lend money to a coworker? There’s no simple answer, but an old rule still holds: don’t lend money to a friend unless you can live without being repaid. A loan can strain a working relationship, and a repeated request for money may point to a bigger problem, such as debt, a gambling or substance problem, or a family crisis. In that case, a loan may delay real help. If a coworker asks, try these steps: 1) Show empathy. 2) Don’t judge. Defensiveness shuts down a person’s willingness to accept help. 3) Use “I” statements: “I’d like to help, but I’m not in a position to lend money. Can we talk about what’s going on?” 4) Share a source of help, such as your EAP, which can connect people with financial counseling and other support. 5) Offer to go with them or help them make the call. Even if your coworker says no now, your support makes it more likely they’ll reach out later.

Hidden Stress Hazards of Remote Workers



If you work remotely or on a hybrid schedule, reach out for help before you start “adapting” to stress in unhealthy ways. Don’t let frustrations drag on. Remote workers can face challenges that are easy to miss, including loneliness and fewer chances to talk through problems with peers, interruptions at home, solving technology problems alone, and worrying about whether their work is noticed or done correctly. Many struggle to “switch off” at the end of the day when unfinished work is only steps away, and working parents may feel guilty when work and family needs collide. Protect yourself by keeping regular hours, taking real breaks away from your screen, and setting up a workspace you can walk away from. Schedule regular check-ins with your supervisor and coworkers, and speak up early when something isn’t working. If stress is affecting your sleep, mood, or relationships, your EAP can help.

Boredom and Your Health



Boredom may be one of the most overlooked feelings in daily life. Everyone gets bored, and short bouts are normal. Boredom can even be useful, because it signals that you need more challenge, meaning, or connection. But when boredom becomes a constant state, research links it to overeating, drinking more, risky behavior, negative thinking, and depression. Reaching for your phone may not help. Studies suggest that constantly scrolling and switching between videos and apps can make boredom worse. Instead, try something that engages your mind or body: take a short walk, learn a new skill, start a project, volunteer, or call a friend. Give yourself small goals to look forward to each week. If you’ve lost interest in things you used to enjoy, and it lasts for more than two weeks, it may be more than boredom. Talk with your doctor or your EAP.

Information in *Quantum Balanced Living* is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health or legal professional. For further help, questions, or referral to community resources for specific problems or personal concerns, contact a qualified professional *contact Quantum Health Solutions @ 1-877-747-1200.*

National Family Caregivers Month



November is National Family Caregivers Month, a time to recognize and support the people who care for loved ones. According to a 2025 report from AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving, 63 million Americans, nearly one in four adults, are family caregivers, a 45% increase since 2015. Six in 10 caregivers also have a job, and half of them say caregiving has caused them to arrive late, leave early, or cut back on hours. Nearly one in four provide 40 or more hours of care each week, and about one in five say their own health is fair or poor because of caregiving. Whether you are a caregiver or know one, learn the signs of caregiver stress: feeling overwhelmed or constantly worried, feeling tired often, sleeping too much or too little, weight changes, irritability, losing interest in activities you used to enjoy, sadness, headaches, and body pain. Left alone, these can lead to burnout. Caregiving is demanding because it combines high stress with little control over when care will be needed next. Caregivers need practical help with tasks, errands, and meals, and emotional support, too. Good resources include the Family Caregiver Alliance at www.caregiver.org and the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116. Your EAP can also help you find respite care, support groups, and counseling.

Thanksgiving Safety—Yes, It Is Possible



Thanksgiving is the top day of the year for home cooking fires. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) estimates that U.S. fire departments responded to 1,446 home cooking fires on Thanksgiving Day in 2023, nearly five times the daily average. Unattended cooking is the leading cause. Keep your celebration safe: 1) Stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling, or boiling food, and check the turkey regularly. 2) Use a timer. 3) Keep towels, oven mitts, and packaging away from the stovetop. 4) Keep a lid nearby to smother a small grease fire, and keep children at least 3 feet from the stove. 5) Skip the oil turkey fryer. The NFPA strongly discourages them because they can cause severe burns. Food safety matters, too. Thaw your turkey in the refrigerator, allowing about 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds. Cook it to 165°F, checked with a food thermometer, and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours. Happy Thanksgiving!

Leading a Meeting with Impact



Lead a meeting with these proven but often forgotten tips so you get more done, stay on topic, get more participation, and end on time. Before any meeting, decide what it's about, why it's needed, what should be accomplished, and who really needs to attend. If an email or a quick chat message will do, skip the meeting. Send a short agenda ahead of time, and open by restating the purpose, the results you want, and the time you'll end. In hybrid meetings, make sure remote attendees can see and hear everything, and invite them to speak first so they aren't talked over. When two or three people get pulled into a side discussion, keep the meeting moving and take that topic offline. Don't end without a clear plan: who will do what, and by when. Follow up with a brief written recap. These habits will make you a leader whose meetings people are glad to attend.

Alcohol and Prescription Drugs Don't Mix



Do you take medication for a condition like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, anxiety, depression, pain, allergies, or sleep problems? Many common prescription and over-the-counter medicines interact with alcohol, and the holiday season brings more chances to drink. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), mixing alcohol with certain medicines can cause nausea and vomiting, headaches, drowsiness, fainting, or loss of coordination. Alcohol can also make a medicine less effective or even toxic to your body. Here's what else to know. 1) The two can interact even if you don't take them at the same time. 2) Some medicines, such as cough syrups, contain up to 10% alcohol. 3) Some herbal remedies interact with alcohol, too. 4) Older adults face higher risks, including falls and serious injuries. In one NIH study, nearly 78% of people over 65 who drink reported using medications that interact with alcohol. Read warning labels, and ask your pharmacist or doctor whether it's safe to drink with your medicines. Learn more at www.niaaa.nih.gov (search "harmful interactions").