



Benefit Options Wellness is focusing on Healthcare Consumerism to educate employees on how to be more proactive about their healthcare. Continue to visit the wellness website at [www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness](http://www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness) to find classes and screenings near you.

## Generic vs. Brand Name Drugs

Today, nearly 8 in 10 prescriptions filled in the United States are for generic drugs. The use of generic drugs is expected to grow over the next few years as a number of popular drugs come off patent through 2015. If you are looking for ways to cut costs, consider switching to a generic drug prescription. Here are some facts about generic drugs:

**The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires generic drugs to have the same quality and performance as brand name drugs.** When a generic drug product is approved, it has met rigorous standards established by the FDA with respect to identity, strength, purity, and potency. However, some variability can occur in manufacturing but the FDA limits how much variability is acceptable. The good news is, the generic drug manufacturer must prove its drug is the same as the brand name drug. For example, after the patient takes the generic drug, the amount of drug in the blood stream is measured. If the levels of the drug in the bloodstream are the same as the levels found when the brand name product is used, the generic drug will work the same.

**Research shows that generics work just as well as brand name drugs.** A study evaluated the results of 38 published clinical trials that compared cardiovascular generic drugs to their brand name counterparts. There was no evidence that brand name heart drugs worked any better than generic heart drugs.

**The FDA does not allow a 45 percent difference in the effectiveness of the generic drug product.** The FDA evaluated 2,070 human studies conducted between 1996 and 2007. These studies compared the absorption of brand name and generic drugs into a person's body. These studies were submitted to the FDA to support approval of generics. The average difference in absorption was 3.5 percent. Some generics were absorbed slightly more, some slightly less. This amount of difference would be expected and acceptable, whether for one batch of brand name drugs tested against another batch of the same brand, or for a generic tested against a brand name drug. As a rule, the difference for the generic-to-brand comparison was about the same as the brand-to-brand comparison.

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## Focus on Women's Health

In May, the State of Arizona celebrated Women's Health Week in an effort to help educate women on the importance of maintaining health and preventing illness and injury. While each woman is unique in her specific health needs, there are several preventive factors that all women should consider when caring for personal health.

Staying current on recommended screenings for every stage of life is critical. Determine which screenings are appropriate based on age, current health status, and in some instances ethnicity, family history, and prior health history. For tests such as diabetes screenings (blood glucose) and blood pressure, call your nurse line or speak with your doctor to understand what a normal range of values includes, as well as common physical signs and symptoms, so that you can be an active participant in detecting any abnormalities. If a screening *does* indicate an elevated or abnormal result, be sure to consult with your doctor about lifestyle changes that can be made, follow up screenings or tests to schedule, and treatment options if necessary.

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## May-June 2013 Topics in this Issue:

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## Mobile On-Site Mammography (MOM)

Mobile On-Site Mammography (MOM) travels to perform mammography screenings at worksites across Arizona. MOM will directly bill insurance. Benefit Options health plan members do not have to pay a copay at these events. **PPO members who have not reached their deductible will pay coinsurance.**



**Call MOM at 480-967-3767 to schedule your appointment**

### Scheduled Screenings:

- May 22 -- AZ Dept. of Gaming  
1110 W. Washington St, Phoenix  
7:00a-11:00a**
- May 22 -- AZ State Hospital  
2500 E. Van Buren St, Phoenix  
7:30a-4:00p**
- May 29 -- AZ Dept. of Insurance  
2910 N. 44th St, Phoenix  
7:00a-1:00p**

For additional dates visit: [www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness](http://www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness)

## It's Sunscreen Season

As summer weather quickly approaches, protecting skin becomes critically important. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggests when outdoors, always use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Apply 20 minutes before going out into the sun to allow for absorption, then reapply generously (about one ounce) every two hours. When swimming or sweating, reapply at the same frequency, but more liberally as sweat and water will remove some of the protective layer.

Do not forget about lips, ears, hands, feet, and behind the neck. Apply under bathing suit straps, jewelry, and sunglasses. If using water resistant versions, remember reapplication guidelines remain the same.

Finally, use sunscreen only until the expiration date. Expired sunscreen loses its protective factor, and will no longer protect at the same level. Have a fun and safe summer outside!

For more sun safety information visit: [www2.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www2.epa.gov/sunwise)

## Mini Health Screenings

**All State employees and Benefit Options members are eligible to participate in mini health screenings.**

The basic screenings are **FREE** and optional screenings are priced as indicated:

- Height & weight; BMI;s blood pressure; and percent of body fat (body composition).
- Cholesterol and blood sugar (fasting and non-fasting available)
- Facial skin analysis with Visiderm machine
- Free osteoporosis screen for women 40 and older. \$30 for women under age 40.
- \$5 PSA screen (blood draw) for men 40 and older. \$42 for men under age 40.

*You will need your Employee Identification Number (EIN) and/or Insurance card for these events. No appointments necessary.*

### Schedule of Worksite Screenings:

- May 23 -- Water Resources  
3550 N. Central Ave, Phoenix  
9:00a - 11:00a**
- May 28 -- ADOT, Prescott Valley  
6989 E. 2nd St, Prescott Valley  
9:00a - 1:00p**
- Jun 5 -- ASU, Tempe\*  
College of Law– Center for Law and  
Global Affairs  
8:00a-10:00a  
\*ASU Employees Only**
- Jun 12 -- ADOT, Payson  
200 N. Colcord Rd., Ste. C  
7:00a-9:00a**

For questions about these screenings, please contact Benefit Options Wellness at [wellness@azdoa.gov](mailto:wellness@azdoa.gov) or 602-771-9355. If you would like to have a Mini Health Screening at your agency please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you and your employees.

## Generics, continued

When it comes to price, there is a big difference between generic and brand name drugs. On average, the cost of a generic drug is 80-85 percent lower than the brand name product. In 2010 alone, the use of FDA-approved generics saved \$158 billion, an average of \$3 billion spent every week.

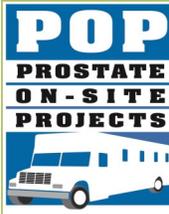
**Cheaper does not mean lower quality.** Generic manufacturers are able to sell their products for lower prices because they are not required to repeat the costly clinical trials of new drugs and generally do not pay for costly advertising, marketing, and promotion. In addition, multiple generic companies are often approved to market a single product; this creates competition in the market place, often resulting in lower prices.

**FDA monitors adverse events reports for generic drugs.** The monitoring of adverse events for all drug products, including generic drugs, is one aspect of the overall FDA effort to evaluate the safety of drugs after approval. Many times, reports of adverse events describe a known reaction to the active drug ingredient. Reports are monitored and investigated, when appropriate. The investigations may lead to changes in how a product (brand name and generic counterparts) is used or manufactured.

**FDA is actively engaged in making all regulated products, including generic drugs, safer.** The FDA is aware that there are reports noting that some people may experience an undesired effect when switching from brand name drugs to a generic formulation or from one generic drug to another generic drug. The FDA wants to understand what may cause problems with certain formulations if, in fact, they are linked to specific generic products. In addition, the FDA is encouraging the generic industry to investigate whether, and under what circumstances, such problems occur. They do not have the resources to perform independent clinical studies and lack the regulatory authority to require industry to conduct such studies. However, FDA will continue to investigate these reports to ensure that it has all of the facts about these treatment failures and will make recommendations to healthcare professionals and the public if the need arises.

Talk to your doctor if you are prescribed a new medication or if you are currently taking a brand name prescription to find out if a generic is available. Many times, utilizing Step Therapy is helpful in reducing costs when starting a new medication. Step Therapy is a clinical tool used in your prescription benefit to promote the use of effective, clinically appropriate medications that may be less costly. For example, if a patient wants to obtain Ambien CR and does not have a history of being on this medication, they will need to try the generic Zolpidem Tartrate prior to getting the brand Ambien CR.

For more information on Step Therapy or on FDA approved generics visit: [www.FDA.gov](http://www.FDA.gov) or [mp.myrxinfo.com](http://mp.myrxinfo.com).



## Prostate On Site Projects (POP) Screenings

**Take a Stand Against Cancer...  
It could be the most important 15 minutes you spend**

The State of Arizona offers FREE Prostate Cancer Screenings for benefit eligible, male employees 40 years and older. The POP mobile medical unit takes convenient, 15 minute appointments at your workplace. Man up; schedule your appointment NOW!

**Appointments required.  
Call Today 480-964-3013**

### What you Need:

- **UnitedHealthcare** and **BCBSAZ/AmeriBen** members please bring your Benefit Options insurance card to your appointment.
- **Aetna** and **CIGNA** members and **non-Benefit Options members** please bring your State ID badge and Employee Identification Number (EIN) to your appointment
- **Retired Benefit Options members** please bring your Benefit Options card and your Employee Identification Number (EIN)

### Scheduled Screenings:

- Jun 12 -- Shamrock Foods\***  
2540 N. 29th Ave, Phoenix  
1:00pm - 5:00pm
- Jun 20 -- City of Scottsdale, City Hall\***  
3939 N. Drinkwater, Scottsdale  
7:00am - 11:00am
- Jun 25 -- City of Chandler\***  
22 S. Delaware St, Chandler  
7:00am - 11:00am
- Jun 27 -- Town of Gilbert\***  
50 E. Civic Center Dr, Gilbert  
8:00am - 1:00pm

\*Locations are non-state sites, however State of AZ employees are welcome to attend

For additional dates visit: [www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness](http://www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness)

## Women's Health, Continued

Also important, make preventive lifestyle choices to ensure your health before becoming ill. The most common lifestyle factors that contribute to disease in women include: tobacco use, physical inactivity, and poor diet.

If you are interested in smoking cessation assistance, State of Arizona employees have several resources available to help kick the habit:

- Call the State Employee Tobacco Cessation Program at 1-866-218-6646 to learn what is available to you as part of your benefits.
- Utilize Benefits Options, which covers cessation prescriptions and over-the-counter medications at no cost to employees.

When at work, it is easy to sit for several hours at a time while absorbed in various tasks and projects. However, sitting for these extended periods contributes to a lack of physical activity which over time can lead to a variety of negative consequences. Commonly, this results in weight gain, but there are other health risks to consider:

- Back pain, especially low back pain can result from the continuous compression of the lower disks of the spine.
- Neck and shoulder pain can develop if the ergonomics of your desk area are not in the correct alignment.
- Increase in bone mineral density loss with the absence of weight bearing activities (such as walking).

Aim to move for at least five minutes every two or three hours. Set a reminder on your calendar or smart phone to signal you to get up, walk the perimeter of your office, or do some simple stretches at your work station. Aim for 30 total minutes of physical activity each day, and try to include some weight bearing activity at least two times per week.

Finally, choose wisely when it comes to food. While nutrition may seem confusing at times, there are several easy ways to make minor improvements with major results:

- Aim for the most color in your diet as possible. Especially when it comes to fruits and vegetables, more color variety indicates a larger amount of vitamins and minerals.
- Reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet. Limit red meat and convenience foods when possible to reduce risk for the leading killer of adult women in the United States, heart disease.

Start small and make huge improvements to your personal health for a longer, healthier, and happier life.

For more benefits information related to women's health visit: [www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness](http://www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness)

## Flexible Spending Accounts Save You Money!

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) allow you to set aside money from your paycheck on a pre-tax basis to pay for medical and child/elder care expenses. That means you do not have to pay federal, and in most cases, state income tax, or FICA taxes on those dollars, which means you have more money in your pocket! Most people can save at least 25% on each dollar that is set aside, for expenses they are paying for anyway.

The FSA is easy to manage, and you can take advantage of the savings accounts by following three easy steps:

- Review your expenses for medical and/or child/elder care for the previous year. Make note of what you spend on regular, planned expenses, and what expenses you may incur in the coming year.
- Sign up for your FSA during the annual open enrollment period.
- Submit your claims to ASIFlex for reimbursement of your expenses.

Estimating your annual election amount can be the most difficult part of the process, but even this is pretty easy! ASIFlex offers the following tips and tools to help. First, take a look at your prior year's expenses, as this is a good indicator of what you might anticipate for next year.

Then make a list of your predictable or recurring expenses that you know you have, such as annual deductible, monthly prescriptions, contact lens supplies or ongoing child care costs. Next, think about any other anticipated expenses you plan to incur next year, such as eyeglasses or orthodontia.

You can review ASIFlex's Eligible Expense list as a reference of the hundreds of eligible expenses. Then you can use the ASIFlex expense estimator and the tax savings calculator to see your savings.

Remember that the more you set aside, the more you save, so it is to your advantage to do a thorough review of your expenses.

For more information about ASIFlex visit:

[www.asiflex.com](http://www.asiflex.com) or [www.benefitoptions.az.gov](http://www.benefitoptions.az.gov)

## Healthy Recipe Honey Chicken Kabobs



### Ingredients (Makes 6 servings):

- 2T vegetable oil
- 2T and 2t honey
- 2T and 2t soy sauce
- 1/8t black pepper
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1" cubes
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 1/2 small onions, cut into 2" pieces
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 2" pieces
- Skewers

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together oil, honey, soy sauce, and pepper. Before adding chicken, reserve a small amount of marinade to brush onto kabobs while cooking. Place the chicken, garlic, onions and peppers in the bowl, and marinate in the refrigerator at least 2 hours (the longer the better).
2. Preheat the grill for medium to high heat.
3. Drain marinade from the chicken and vegetables, and discard marinade. Thread chicken and vegetables alternately onto the skewers.
4. Lightly oil the grill grate. Place the skewers on the grill. Cook for 12-15 minutes, until chicken juices run clear. Turn and brush with reserved marinade frequently.

You can pair this meal with grilled or steamed vegetables, or vegetable salad with a low-fat dressing.

For more healthy recipes visit: [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)

### Nutrition Information

Servings per Recipe: 6

Calories:	178
Protein:	17g
Carbohydrates	12g
Total Fat	7g
Cholesterol	45mg
Sodium	442mg
Fiber	1g

## Keep Those Eyes Healthy

Optical health may not be the number one priority when thinking about personal healthcare. However, healthy eyes are important to most tasks of daily living for the majority of people. While some decline in vision may be inevitable with age, there are several ways to help keep eyes healthy for as long as possible.

Many people spend a significant amount of the day looking at a computer screen. While crucial to many jobs, this can quickly result in eye strain, fatigue, and chronic dry eye. To help reduce pain or discomfort, have your eyes checked regularly, position your computer at eye level, and take frequent vision breaks from the computer.

If you do experience vision problems, that doesn't mean your sight cannot improve. Pay closer attention to your diet, and incorporate foods rich in vitamin A and beta carotene, which help keep eyes healthy. Both nutrients contribute directly to eye health and can have a positive impact on vision.

For more information on vision and optical health visit:

[www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov)



**The Wellness website has the complete list of screenings, classes and other programs available for request and scheduling at State worksites.**

Wellness events are requested and coordinated by State employees at worksites. If you are interested in hosting a program at your worksite, visit the Wellness website at:

[www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness](http://www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness)

to view what is available and learn what Wellness has to offer.

Event request forms must be completed and submitted online to [wellness@azdoa.gov](mailto:wellness@azdoa.gov)

Complete the brief form, including contact information, location and preferred event and click submit! A Wellness team member will reply to your request and begin scheduling your event.

**Log on Today!**

**Take advantage of the many available programs and services to keep employees healthy.**

Persons with a disability may request accommodations by contacting the ADOA Benefits Office. If you need this issue in an alternate format, please call 602-771-9355.