



TEAMSTERS TRUST BENEFITS INSIDER



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Is Googling Your Symptoms a Good Thing? When online research is (and isn't) helpful.

There are many ways people seek health information, advice, and care outside of the doctor's office, such as nurselines, virtual medical appointments, and health-based apps.

One of the most popular ways to search for health information is to ask the internet (aka "Dr. Google") about your symptoms, medications, or medical condition. With so much information online, the internet can be a great place to turn to become better-informed, but it can also be a great place for misinformation and lead us to incorrectly self-diagnose.

Dr. Google Should Just Be Step One

You've probably heard of hypochondria, where you feel an abnormal level of anxiety about your health which can lead you to think you may have serious conditions. Similarly, "cyberchondria" is when you develop excessive worry from unfounded concerns based on your online research.

Googling (or whatever search engine you may use) your health concerns can sometimes be useful, but the internet cannot replace the expertise and guidance from a qualified healthcare practitioner. Use online searches to better understand your symptoms and concerns, and to develop a more informed list of questions to talk to your doctor about.

Finding Reliable Online Sources

The internet is full of valuable information, but not all internet content is credible, and following advice from unverified sources can lead to misinformation and potential harm. It is important to check your sources for any medical or health-related information and resist the urge to rely on a single website. Remember, just because a website comes up first in a search doesn't mean it has the most accurate information!

CONSIDER THE SOURCE, AND TRY THESE WELL-RESPECTED MEDICAL INFORMATION SITES FIRST:

- MedlinePlus (National Library of Medicine): www.medlineplus.gov/
- Mayo Clinic: www.mayoclinic.org/
- Harvard Health Publishing: www.health.harvard.edu/
- National Institutes of Health: www.nih.gov/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/

TAKE ACTION

Get your medical questions answered.

- **Teladoc™ virtual care:** Talk to a Teladoc licensed provider 24/7 for free: teladoc.com/premera, or call **(855) 332-4059**
- **Accolade Health Assistants:** Get benefit/medical information: member.accolade.com, or call **(866) 206-0977**



Virta Success: Robert's Story

Support was the missing ingredient to making lasting changes.

Robert and his wife Carolyn are members of the Washington Teamsters Welfare Trust in Bellingham, Washington. When Robert was diagnosed with type 2 Diabetes, together they took on the Keto diet, cutting out most carbs to help Robert lose weight and bring down his A1c numbers. And it worked! But like many people, they found the diet difficult to maintain, especially on vacations and over holidays, and as they fell out of the habit, Robert's numbers came back up—but even worse than before.

Robert started taking Trulicity, a common type 2 Diabetes medication, and eventually was on daily insulin shots. He stabilized with the medication but was on a very high dose of insulin, and on the road to needing two shots a day. That's when he got a call from the Washington Teamsters Welfare Trust about Virta.

Virta is an innovative Diabetes program and research-backed treatment that safely and sustainably reverses type 2 Diabetes without the risks, costs, or side effects of medications or surgery. The Trust started offering Virta earlier this year at no cost to all Trust PPO plan participants, and eligible dependents, between the ages of 18 and 79 diagnosed with type 2 Diabetes.



"I can honestly say that I wouldn't have been able to do this without the check-ins, motivation, and help of all the Virta doctors, coaches, and staff. The support was life changing."



"The Virta program showed up just at the right time for me," said Robert. "The program is basically a version of the Keto diet, but the thing that made the big difference from before is the support! I can honestly say that I wouldn't have been able to do this without the check-ins, motivation, and help of all the Virta doctors, coaches, and staff. The support was life changing."

Being a veteran of the Keto diet helped Robert since he already had products and recipes that he knew worked for him. "The Virta coaches start you off with a select type of foods, and a low amount of carbs a day," said Robert. "As you go along you add more things in as you and your team learn what works for you, how your body reacts to things. They help you plan and keep it going and encourage you not to get hung up if you slip up. It's not easy, but seeing the results so quickly was exciting!"



"My primary care doctor is so impressed with my success that she's started telling her other patients about Virta!"

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Robert's numbers began to drop right away and within a week his Virta team began to wean him off insulin. Within two months Robert was off insulin all together, and already seeing significant weight loss.

"The program sent me everything I would need from testing supplies to a food scale, to even bouillon cubes and other things. They help you find recipes, dial in what works for you, and there are chat groups where you can swap information with other people with type 2," said Robert. "And on top of all of that, you are monitored closely, and your medical team reviews your numbers on a regular basis. They reach out to check in, and you get frequent (if not daily) instructions on what to do—they are really on top of it!"

The Virta program has helped Robert understand his fasting blood sugar, how his body processes insulin, and how with just dietary changes he can reduce his A1c levels. Since January Robert has lost 40 pounds, seen a major reduction in inflammation and joint pain, reduced his A1c, and generally feels better.

"I'm definitely going to keep going with Virta," Robert said. "I would like to get off all medications for my type 2. I'm not there yet but my Virta team feels certain that it's possible and that is very motivating. And not just for me. My primary care doctor is so impressed with my success that she's started telling her other patients about Virta!"

TAKE ACTION

Find out if you qualify! If you or a covered family member has been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes visit virtahealth.com/join/wateamsters or scan the QR code.



Multi-Factor Authentication

Today, it is more important than ever to protect your personal information when on the web. That's why Northwest Administrators (www.nwadmin.com) now requires multi-factor authentication when you login to the site to view plan, claim, and benefits information.

Multi-factor, or two-factor identification is when a website uses two different ways to log you in and access your personal information. An example is when a passcode is sent to you via text or email on top of your usual login information. Northwest Administrators will be requiring multi-factor authentication as an added layer of security to protect you when using the site.

If you have any issues logging in, please contact us: websupport@nwadmin.com.





The Impacts of Social Media

Create healthy social media habits.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are an ever-present part of modern life and have transformed how we engage and communicate. It is often where we connect with family and friends, build community, and pursue our interests. However, there is a dark side to too much social media time, and studies show that social media can lead to or worsen feelings of depression, isolation, and insecurity.

Negative Effects of Social Media

Comparison and inadequacy, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), cyberbullying and harassment, body image concerns, attention and focus issues, and sleep disturbances are just a few of the negative consequences that un-checked social media use can trigger for people of any age. Doom scrolling, scrolling compulsively through bad and troubling news, is a common problem and creates a cycle where increased time spent on social media worsens our mood or feelings of loneliness, driving us to spend even more time scrolling. For some, the answer may be to delete social media apps from phones and devices all together, but with a few practical guidelines you can keep your apps and maintain a more positive relationship with social media while protecting your mental health.

These strategies take a little self-control and effort, but by adopting them you can create a healthier relationship with social media and lessen the potential negative impact on your mental health!

Tips for Healthy Social Media Use



REDUCE ONLINE TIME: Track your social media use and then set achievable goals to decrease screen time. Avoid using your phone during driving, meals, or social interactions. You can even try setting a time limit and timer for online time.



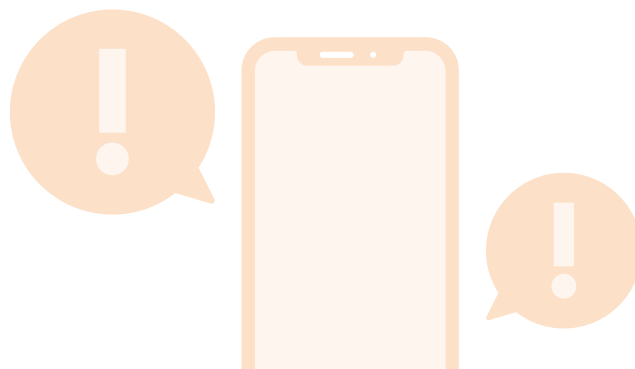
LIMIT NOTIFICATIONS: Getting that notification ding or buzz is hard to ignore. Disable social media notifications to reduce distractions and feelings of constant connectedness.



WEAN YOURSELF OFF COMPULSIVE CHECKS: Gradually reduce the frequency with which you check your phone to break the habit of constant monitoring. Try leaving it in another room or at home when you go out.



PRIORITIZE IN-PERSON CONNECTIONS: Set aside phone-free time each week for face-to-face interactions with friends and family. Engage in hobbies or activities you enjoy and join groups where you can meet like-minded people in person.





Sleep Tight, Feel Right




How sleep shapes emotional well-being.

Anyone who has ever had a run of bad nights of sleep knows how much the lack of sleep can impact your ability to think, make decisions and feel good physically. Sleep also plays a major role in our mood and how we manage stress.

Restful sleep is a crucial aspect of maintaining good mental health.

Emerging research shows that poor sleep can be both the cause and consequence of mental health issues. This means that poor sleep may be why you feel depressed, sad, or extra stressed, and by addressing sleep issues you may relieve these feelings.

Not getting enough sleep may impact your mental health by:

-  **INCREASING EMOTIONAL REACTIVITY:** Too little sleep has been associated with a bigger response to common stressors, making it challenging to cope with the pressures of daily life. At the same time, positive emotions are dulled, which affects your overall mood, perspective, and resilience.
-  **DECREASING COGNITIVE REGULATION:** Sleep plays a pivotal role in our ability to pay attention, learn, and remember things. Poor-quality sleep impairs our ability to think and process information, which in turn increases our sense of anxiety and frustration.
-  **INTENSIFYING EXISTING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:** Chronic sleep problems can make depression, anxiety, stress, and other mental health issues worse. Inadequate sleep has also been linked to an elevated risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Getting enough restful sleep is an important part of nurturing a healthy mind and body. Prioritizing good sleep hygiene and seeking help if you have chronic sleep issues can help improve your emotional resilience, decision-making abilities, and overall quality of life.

Source: Article sources available upon request.

DID YOU KNOW?

That the Trust offers a completely free and confidential mental health and wellness service? **ComPsych® GuidanceResources®** is available to all participants and can help you with stress, anxiety, depression and more! Call **(866) 301-0313** or visit **guidanceresources.com** and register with Web ID: **WATEAMSTERS**.





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THE TAKEAWAY

Medical Plan News

Recent benefit updates.



New Survivor Dependent Benefit

As of July 1, 2023, the Trust has added a new survivor dependent benefit. With this new benefit, in the event of your death, coverage for your surviving eligible dependents will continue for twelve months without a contribution from an employer or individual payment. This coverage will run concurrently with the COBRA term. Please see your Plan booklet for more information.



COVID-19 Coverage Changes

The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency officially ended in May 2023. As a result, the temporary coverage changes for COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatment returned to being covered like any other condition covered under your Plan, and over-the-counter test kits are no longer covered. If you have any questions about your benefits, please call an Accolade Health Assistant at **(866) 206-0977**.