



June is The Great Outdoors Month

The latest health and wellness news, tips, and updates from the Lay Benefits Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston

LOOKING AHEAD...

Exploring New England

Discover new local adventures!

Wellness Webinars

This month's offerings are ready to help you make healthier food choices and improve your posture.

Summer Safety

Keep you and your loved ones safe this summer by following these summer safety tips.

NEW RCAB WellRight Challenges

Preview the new Wellness Challenges starting in September.

Calling All Wellness Champions

Are you ready to help promote wellness and earn HRA or HSA dollars?



Getting Outside and Embracing Nature

June is The Great Outdoors Month! This month is designated to celebrate nature and all it has to offer. With the school year coming to a close, our RCAB community taking well deserved vacations, and the much-anticipated lifting of the mask mandate, it is a wonderful time to take advantage of the summer weather and go exploring! There are more benefits to being outside in nature than just enjoying the scenery. A [study](#) published in *Nature* found that people who spent at least two hours every week outside, relaxing at the beach, hiking, or exploring a park, reported better health and mental wellbeing compared to those who did not. This study also found that those who live in "greener urban areas," spaces with parks, sports fields, forests, or gardens, face a lower probability of developing heart disease, diabetes, asthma, mental health problems, and obesity. Time spent outdoors is also associated with increased cognitive development in children. In addition, being in nature helps improve mood, reduces feelings of stress, decreases blood pressure, decreases muscle tension, improves mental health, increases productivity, and promotes increased physical activity¹. So, what are you waiting for? Let's find a new outdoor adventure today!

Exploring New England

What better way to spend your summer than finding new outdoor adventures in New England! Check out our list below for some ideas on the best spots to visit.

Cape Cod Rail Trail

Spanning 25 miles and 6 towns, walk, run, or bike this great trail! For more information on parking, accessibility and trail etiquette, visit <https://www.mass.gov/locations/cape-cod-rail-trail>.

Horseneck Beach State Reservation

Located in Westport, MA, this 2-mile stretch of beach offers spaces for walking, swimming, camping, and bird watching. For more information on parking, beach hours, and camping, visit <https://www.mass.gov/locations/horseneck-beach-state-reservation>.

Manuel F. Correllus State Forest

Within its 5,300 acres of forest, you will find miles of walking and biking trails and even a disc golf course at this State Forest in Edgartown, the center of Martha's Vineyard. Parking is free! Find out more at <https://www.mass.gov/locations/manuel-f-correllus-state-forest>.

Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park

Located in Uxbridge, MA, this park offers 1,000 acres of trails, historical sites, horseback riding, canoeing, fishing, and picnic areas for your enjoyment. Parking is free! Find out more about this park at <https://www.mass.gov/locations/blackstone-river-and-canal-heritage-state-park>.

Mount Lafayette and Franconia Ridge Trail

This 8.4-mile-long hiking loop located in Lincoln, New Hampshire is for experienced adventurers. The park highly recommends that you come prepared with water, comfortable hiking boots, and walking poles. More information can be found at <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/new-hampshire/mount-lafayette-and-franconia-ridge-trail-loop>.

To find a full list of U.S. National State Parks in New England, please visit <https://www.nps.gov/articles/newenglandprovince.htm>.

Monadnock State Park

Mount Monadnock, with an altitude of 3,165 feet, offers three unique hiking trails and recreational opportunities! Reservations are required to hike at the state park in Jaffrey, NH. More information can be found at <https://www.nhstateparks.org/visit/state-parks/monadnock-state-park>.

Killington Resort

Located in Killington, VT, this ski mountain offers families a great summer experience! Not only will you find 30+ miles of biking trails, but the mountain also offers a golf course, gondola rides up to the peak, and an adventure center for the kid in all of us. For more information on opening dates, please visit <https://www.killington.com/plan-your-trip/summer-activities/bike-park?season=summer>.



Newport Harbor Cliff Walk

The Cliff Walk (pictured above) in Newport, Rhode Island offers 3.5 miles of scenic ocean views and historic mansions. The Cliff Walk is also a great spot for bird watching and learning about geology. Find out more at <http://www.cliffwalk.com/>.

Sleeping Giant State Park

This 2-mile trail offers picnic areas, a lookout tower, and stream fishing in Hamden, CT, right next to Quinnipiac University. To find out more information, please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/State-Parks/Parks/Sleeping-Giant-State-Park/Overview>.

Wellness Webinars

Employees and spouses enrolled in one of the RCAB Health Plans and registered in the Blue Cross *ahealthyme* program can earn \$20 into their HealthEquity HRA accounts for attending a wellness webinar. Points are awarded for a maximum of five wellness webinars/family activities per Plan Year.

Note: The 2020-2021 Plan Year ends June 30th.

Eating on the Go

Thursday, June 3rd @ 12:15pm

Learn how to make healthy choices while you eat on-the-go! Participants will learn tips for making better food choices when pressed for time, including healthier fast-food choices, food substitutions and modifications to heavier foods to make them "light," and healthy snacks.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Hidden Causes of Health Issues with Anne from Health and Harmony

Thursday, June 10th @ 5pm

In this webinar, we will focus on common health problems such as hypertension, blood sugar imbalances, arthritis, fatigue, and weight gain. You will learn more about the hidden causes behind some of the most common health complaints and find natural ways to improve your symptoms.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Postural Improvement Class with James Parker-Ashley

Monday, June 14th @ 5pm

After sitting and standing for prolonged periods of time, our posture can suffer, leading to muscle soreness, stiffness, back pain, and injury. Join James for a fitness class focusing on easy exercises to improve your posture at home or at your desk.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Nutrition for Kids & Family Meal Planning

Tuesday, June 22nd @ 12:15pm

Participants will learn about the problems associated with childhood obesity and how to combat obesity through proper nutrition. Topics for discussion include information on the USDA nutrient requirements for children/teens and how to apply healthy lifestyle strategies to improve overall wellness.

[Click Here to Register](#)



In Case You Missed It...

You can still view the recorded webinars from May listed below. After viewing these webinars, please self-report your viewing to Kayla Fuller, Benefits Assistant, at kfuller@rcab.org and you can earn 20 HRA dollars if you are registered in *ahealthyme* and have not yet exceeded the maximum number of wellness webinars/family activities for the current Plan Year (max of 5).

Create Mental Well-being with Everyday Mindfulness Practices

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

Detoxifying Your Diet

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

Healthy APPetite

[Click Here to Access Webinar](#)

Summer Safety

Don't Forget Sunscreen: There are various types of sunscreens out there for sensitive skin, sports/physical activities, babies, skin tones and more, but no matter which you choose, always make sure you have a broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB rays. The CDC recommends at least SPF 15+ when outside. Make sure to reapply a generous coat every two hours and more frequently after every swimming, sweating, and drying off.



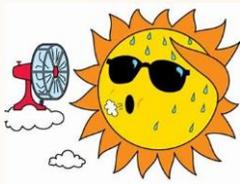
Avoid Pesky Ticks: Ticks like to live in grassy or wooded areas, so make sure to check your clothes, backpacks and pets after spending time outdoors, and do a skin check before taking a shower. When you're outside, walk in the middle of trails, wear clothing that will protect your legs and ankles, and avoid areas where ticks may thrive.

Plan Safe Hikes: While hiking is a great way to enjoy nature, it can also be hazardous. Always research which trails are best for your or your group's hiking abilities, bring plenty of food and water, wear comfortable, supportive shoes and check the weather beforehand. Cell phones are not always reliable, even when fully charged, in remote areas. You should consider bringing walkie-talkies or a locator beacon to ensure that you have a means of communication. You should also craft an emergency plan in case someone gets lost or injured.



Be Careful Around Water: Beaches and pools can be a great place for the family to relax, but they can also be very dangerous. Drowning is the second highest cause of death in children and they should always be supervised while in the water. Regardless of age, do not dive in shallow or unfamiliar waters and never swim alone.

Protect Against Bug Bites: Summer is great, except for those annoying bugs! It's important to protect yourself and your loved ones against bug bite-related illnesses. Use insect repellent and protective clothing to prevent bites, close doors and windows in the house, and turn on the air conditioning - mosquitos prefer warm, damp places.



Beat the Heat: Heat exhaustion and heat stroke can affect anyone in hot temperatures for long periods of time. Make sure to take frequent breaks, stay hydrated, find some shade, and avoid spending time outside during the hottest times of the day (usually between 11am and 3pm).

Ride Smart: Biking is one of the best ways to exercise and get where you want to be! Bicyclists can face hazards by sharing the road with cars or even on a designated path. Always make sure before riding that your tires are inflated, front and back brakes are functional, and reflectors are on the front, back, tires and pedals of the bike. You should also wear bright clothing so others can see you clearly and wear a proper-fitting helmet. When riding on a road, make sure to follow the same rules as motorists, use hand signals when turning, remain alert, and if traveling in a group, ride single file in the direction of traffic.



Get Ready – The RCAB Health Benefit Trust WellRight Challenge Program Starts in September

The RCAB Health Benefit Trust has partnered with WellRight, an online wellness vendor, to offer you a variety of monthly Wellness Challenges starting this Fall! You will have the opportunity to earn HRA/HSA dollars by participating in 10 diverse and customized Challenges! Stay tuned for more information this Summer!

ARE YOU READY TO BECOME A WELLNESS CHAMPION?

The RCAB Benefits Department is recruiting Wellness Champions for the new Plan Year!

We are looking for those who:

- ✓ Are passionate about health, wellness, and wellbeing
- ✓ Advocate for a healthy, supportive work culture
- ✓ Encourage co-workers and other employees to engage in worksite wellness activities to help them earn HRA or HSA dollars
- ✓ Participate in monthly calls to learn about wellness incentives, new wellness offerings, tools, and related resources
- ✓ Serve as an informational resource at their worksites regarding the RCAB Health Plans
- ✓ **Earn \$150 HRA or HSA for satisfactory completion and engagement**

Our current Wellness Champions program is winding down in June but will return in September. If you are interested in signing up, please contact Kara Lavertu at klavertu@rcab.org.

Activity Challenge Update

Congratulations to the participants who completed the Activity Challenge this Spring! We had **215** employees and spouses participate for a total of **380,769** activity minutes. The top team and the five individuals with the most Activity Challenge minutes will be awarded prizes. Great work everyone!

In good health,
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Benefits Department