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wellness

YOU'RE WELL-BEING MATTERS EVERY DAY.

focus

E-NEWSLETTER | FALL 2026

ALMOST TIME TO ENROLL FOR BENEFITS

Tips to Prepare You for Open Enrollment

1. Know Your Dates

Mark your calendar for **Open Enrollment: November 2–13, 2026**. This is your opportunity to review and make changes to your benefits for the upcoming plan year. Look for emails from EmployeeBenefits@summitoh.net.

2. Review Your Current Benefits

Take a few minutes to look at your current medical, dental, vision, FSA/HSA, life insurance and supplemental benefits. Ask yourself: *Does my current coverage still meet my needs?*

3. Think About What Changed

Did you get married, divorced, have a baby, gain or lose other coverage, or have another life change? Make sure your benefit elections and covered

dependents reflect your current situation.

4. Review Your Health Care Needs

Consider your expected medical and prescription needs for the coming year. Think about doctors, prescriptions, planned procedures, and how often you typically use health care services.

5. Check Your Beneficiary Information

Review beneficiaries for your life insurance and other applicable benefits. Make sure the people you want listed are up to date.

6. Estimate Your FSA/HSA Needs

Think about your expected health care and dependent care expenses. If you're eligible for an FSA or HSA, review how

much you may want to contribute for the upcoming year.

7. Visit the Employee Benefits Website

Make the most of the resources available to you! Visit the *Employee Benefits website* to review plan information, educational resources, wellness information and Open Enrollment materials before making your elections.



TYPES OF GRIEF

Anxiety, anger, sadness, but also loss of appetite, stomach discomfort, difficulty concentrating and forgetfulness are just a few.

CO-REGULATION

when a child is assisted by an adult to help manage their feelings by calming them down. Giving comfort, support and guidance helps children learn how to cope with emotions by themselves.

MINDFUL EATING

It is all about the experience, take your time, enjoy your meal and being grateful for every meal can be very beneficial. Benefits: reduces stress and anxiety, better digestion letting you know when you are full, and fosters a relationship with your food. ...*read more on p3*

BONE HEALTH

Prioritize bone health by including calcium-rich foods like dairy, leafy greens, beans, and lentils. Make sure you get enough vitamin D, along with performing daily weight-bearing exercises and strength training at least two times a week. Weight-bearing exercises include brisk walks, jogging, and dancing. Be sure to make healthy choices by limited alcohol and avoiding smoking, which accelerates bone loss. Women are at higher risk of osteoporosis.



CREATE A SAFE SPACE WITH YOGA

Personify Health | 2026

CHILD'S POSE

- You will be on the floor, so grab a mat if needed.
- Start on all fours.
- Bring your knees and feet together.
- You will want to sit back with your butt on your heels.
- Keeping your arms shoulder with, stretch them forward, palms down.
- Lower your forehead to the floor.
- Relax, releasing your entire body.
- Hold your pose for the length of time needed.

EMERGENCY PREPARATION

Personify Health | 2026

The AED, automated external defibrillator is used to help someone whose heart has suddenly stopped (cardiac arrest). The device is automatic once turned on, giving you clear instructions to guide you step by step. To learn more, *[click here](#)*.

First-Aid kits are available in the workplace, but what about at home or in your automobile. Key essentials to create your own kit: medications, health care provider phone numbers, adhesive bandages and gauze pads, antibiotic ointment, antiseptic wipes, elastic gloves, and a blanket. For a more advanced list, visit the *[link](#)* provided.

Contact your HR representative to get the location of your AED's and First-Aid kits.



INTERESTED IN LEARNING CPR?

Contact Leah Acker, Safety Coordinator in the Human Resources Department.

MINDFULNESS PROGRAM

Kim Bader | Holistic Wellness Solutions



When busy, stressed, and exhausted become our normal, we may not even recognize how much we are carrying. We get used to pushing through, moving from one responsibility to the next, and giving our attention and energy to whatever feels most urgent. But our energy is finite, and mindfulness can help us become more intentional about where we place it. This training is not about adding one more thing to an already full plate. It is about becoming more aware of what is on the plate, how we are responding to it, and where we want to direct our time, attention, and energy. Through practices that explore the nervous system, breath and body awareness, movement, emotions, loving-kindness, communication, eating, and creative expression, we experience mindfulness as something we can bring into everyday life. As we become more aware of our automatic patterns, we create more space to choose our response, our priorities, and what receives our energy. Mindfulness is not simply about slowing down. It is about taking back our capacity to choose how we participate in our lives.

Physical Benefits

Mindfulness offers a wide range of physical benefits by promoting relaxation and reducing the harmful effects of chronic stress on the body. Regular mindfulness practice has been shown to lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and boost immune function. It can also alleviate symptoms of chronic pain, reduce inflammation, and enhance overall

heart health. By fostering a calm and centered state, mindfulness supports the body's natural ability to heal and maintain balance.

Mental Benefits

Mindfulness has profound benefits on the brain, promoting positive changes in both structure and function. Research shows that regular mindfulness practice increases gray matter density in areas associated with learning, memory, and emotional regulation. It also enhances connectivity in the prefrontal cortex, improving focus, decision-making, and self-control. Additionally, mindfulness reduces activity in the amygdala, the brain's fear and stress center, helping to lower reactivity to stress. These changes support improved mental clarity, emotional balance, and overall cognitive health.

Emotional Benefits

Mindfulness fosters emotional well-being by helping us develop greater awareness and acceptance of our emotions and feelings. It encourages a non-judgmental approach to emotions, enabling us to observe our thoughts and feelings without becoming overwhelmed by them. This practice enhances emotional regulation, reducing impulsivity and reactivity, while promoting greater empathy and compassion, both for ourselves and others. Over time, mindfulness can lead to improved emotional resilience, helping us cope more effectively with challenges and cultivate a sense of inner peace and balance.

Nicole Lohr of Job & Family Services, reflects on her experience with the Mindfulness Program...

"I really enjoyed learning all the different techniques for being mindful and how to use them in everyday life. Between the in-person sessions and the handouts, I feel like Kim did a great job teaching us while also giving us the tools to continue practicing on our own. Kim's calmness and her belief in the program were so motivating and made the experience even better. I'm so glad I had the opportunity to participate and would definitely recommend the program to others."

LOCAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Find activities to do around the County. Click the links below. Also, be sure to visit the Employee Benefits website for our events.

Akron-Summit Public Library
services.akronlibrary.org/events

Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau
www.visitakron-summit.org/things-to-do/

Downtown Akron Partnership
www.downtownakron.com/calendar

Summit Metro Parks
www.summitmetroparks.org/ProgramsAndEvents.aspx

You know what's happening while you're fantasizing about another life? You're wasting the one you've got. #makesense -Chip Gaines



Healthy Recipe Grilled Tofu

-Source: Costco Connection, August 2026

Serves: 4-6 servings

Ingredients and Measurements

- 2 16 oz blocks extra firm tofu
- 2 Tbsp avocado oil, extra for brushing
- Sea salt, to taste

Seasoning & Top Options

- 1 1/2 Tbsp fajita seasoning
- 1 1/2 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 1/2 Tbsp curry powder
- 1/4 cup tamari or soy sauce
- Lime wedges and/or cilantro lime dressing
- Sesame ginger dressing

With a papertowel, wrap the tofu. Put under a heavy cast iron skillet for 30-minutes to remove access water. Preheat grill or pan to medium-high heat. Cut tofu into 4 slabs. Drizzle it with avocado oil and sprinkle with salt and your desired seasoning. If using tamari, do not oil tofu. Use hands to coat both sides.

Brush grill with oil. Grill the tofu for 2 to 3 minutes per side or until you see grill marks. Remove from grill then add salt to taste and other seasonings you prefer, along with the toppings.

SUBMIT YOUR OWN RECIPE to the Wellness Team and we will include it in our newsletter for other County Employees to enjoy.

Banana-Blueberry Muffins

Carrie Hill Executive Human Resources, Family Recipe

Serves: 12 servings

Ingredients and Measurements

- 3 Bananas
- 1 Egg
- 1/2 Stick Butter Melted
- 2 cups All Purpose Flour
- 1/2 cup Sugar
- 1 Tbsp Baking Powder
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1 cup Frozen Blueberries

Pre-heat oven at 350 degrees. Grease muffin pans or use muffin cups. In a bowl, mash the bananas with the one egg and melted butter. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.

Add the dry ingredients into banana mixture, stir in slowly until combined. Add blueberries into the mixture then spoon into the muffin pan. Bake between 24-to-30 minutes.

H&W EVENTS

Be sure to catch what we have coming up. The upcoming events include monthly Lunch & Learn's, live fitness classes, Lose4U Program, The Mindfulness Program, 2027 Health Fair, Kickstart your Metabolism Program, Mindfulness Monday's, the Akron Marathon Series, and so much more. Visit our website to learn more.



GET THOSE POINTS...

The Personify Health Year. is fastly approaching. Keep accruing Points/Rewards before the end of the 4th quarter. If you have not already done so, sign-up today to start earning Rewards and saving on medical expenses.

Enjoy the perks of our benefits, visit the *Human Resources - Employee Benefits website.*