

health letter[®]

www.metroplus.org

Fall 2010

+ HELP FOR MEMBERS With Heart Failure

Do you have congestive heart failure (CHF)? The CHF House Calls program can help.

Members referred to the program set up a care plan with their Primary Care Physician (PCP). Then, you get help at your home.

You get a blood pressure monitor and a bathroom scale. You take daily readings. If the numbers are high, a House Calls CHF nurse will call your house. The nurse gives you advice about diet and medicine.

This program can help you avoid hospital stays.

If you have heart disease, learn more about the program. Call MetroPlus Customer Services at **1-800-303-9626**.



REPORT HEALTHCARE FRAUD If you see something suspicious or illegal, it might be fraud. Tell us about it. Call 1-888-245-7247. You can choose to give your name. But it is OK if you don't.



Find metroplushealth on

160 Water St., 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10038
Phone: 1-800-303-9626
www.metroplus.org

REMINDERS



- Do you have trouble hearing? Please use a TTY machine to call Customer Services: **1-800-881-2812.**
- Everyone needs a complete checkup once a year. Even teens and adults need one. Make a PCP appointment for each family member now.
- Do you have a second phone number? Did you move? If so, please call Customer Services: **1-800-303-9626.**

ARE YOU TURNING 65?

MetroPlus offers a variety of Medicare programs. Call **1-866-986-0356** to learn more. It can be easy to change from your health insurance to Medicare.



Breastfeeding Is Good for Moms and Babies

Check out all the ways nursing is good for you and your baby.

Babies who breastfeed get the right amount of protein, fat, sugar and water. And this helps them grow healthy.

Breastfed babies also get:

- Antibodies that help them fight ear infections, pneumonia, diarrhea and constipation.
- Less risk of allergies, high blood pressure and obesity when they're older.
- Food that is easier to take in than formula.

It is good for moms, too.

Mothers get:

- Bonding time with their babies.

- An easier, cheaper way to feed their babies.
- A lower risk of ovarian, breast and cervical cancers.
- Better bone strength.

Moms who breastfeed usually get back in shape faster. But that doesn't mean moms should use nursing as a way to diet.

Also, breastfeeding helps our planet. It makes less trash and plastic waste than formula cans and bottles.



Shots Aren't Just For Kids



By Oladipo Alao, M.D.
Dr. Alao is an infectious disease doctor at Harlem Hospital Center and a MetroPlus provider.

Vaccines protect us from disease. Even older teens and adults need these shots. Here are general guidelines to follow.

Everybody needs a flu shot in the fall. When you get your flu shot, ask your doctor about H1N1. Every 10 years, adults need a booster against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough).

Starting in their early teen years, girls need vaccines for human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a virus that causes genital warts.

Do you know if you need a shot for measles, mumps and rubella? Your doctor can check your blood levels to find out. If you do need it, it is just one shot.

People with long-term health issues need extra protection. Every five years, people with asthma, diabetes or liver disease need a shot to help protect them from pneumonia.

The vaccine against hepatitis A is given to:

- Those with chronic liver disease.
- Men who have sex with men.
- People traveling to certain countries outside the U.S.

The hepatitis B shot is usually for people:

- With kidney or liver disease.
- Who work in healthcare settings.
- Who have sexual partners who have hep B.
- Who travel outside the U.S.
- Who inject street drugs.

Teens going off to college should get the vaccine for meningitis.

→ **Don't forget:** Follow your doctor's instructions. If you get a shot and are told to come back for others, keep those appointments. Protect yourself to stay healthy.



How to Keep Your Healthcare Coverage

If you're due to recertify for Medicaid and Family Health Plus, you'll get a call from MetroPlus. We also mail a reminder notice.

Do you need help filling out the forms? Call **1-800-303-9626**. We can come to your home or help you over the phone.

MetroPlus Child Health Plus members get a notice in the mail 90 days before recertification is due. We also remind you by phone.



NEED HELP?

Call **1-800-303-9626** for help at your home or by phone.





HIV Counseling, Testing and Free STD Services

Do you know your HIV status? Testing is the only way to know for sure. Your PCP (Primary Care Provider) can test you.

Plus, MetroPlus members and non-members can go to certain New York City health clinics for:

- quick HIV testing.

- confidential (only you know) STD services.

- counseling.

These clinics can also give sex partners and people who share needles free sterile needles and syringes.



Call 311 to find a clinic or learn where to get free needles. You can also call MetroPlus Customer Services at **1-800-303-9626**.



Take Care of Your Eyes

Your eyes work hard. So it is good to look after them. Have your vision checked regularly.

Kids up to age 3 should see an eye doctor every three to six months. In general, children under 20 should have a vision test every year. Adults ages 21 to 64 need a vision check every two years as part of their health checkup.

You do not need a referral for a vision care visit. To find an eye doctor, go online to www.metroplus.org. Or check your Provider Directory. If you need more help, call MetroPlus Customer Services at **1-800-303-9626**.

SUNY College of Optometry

Members can now go to the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Optometry for vision care. Optometry means “care for eyes.” You can get routine eye care and exams at SUNY.

Right now, SUNY is not set up to provide glasses to MetroPlus members. But they can give you a prescription for glasses. Then, you go to a MetroPlus eyeglass vendor to get your glasses.

SUNY Optometry is at 33 West 42nd St., New York, NY 10026. You can call them at **212-938-4036**. If you have questions, call MetroPlus Customer Services at **1-800-303-9626**.

