

WELL. being

SPRING 2010

THE PATH TO GOOD HEALTH

Control Those Allergies

Are you sneezing more often lately? Do you have itchy eyes? A scratchy throat? If you have allergies, it's not surprising. There are lots of plants and flowers growing this time of year. Plus, traffic and pollution are always around. All of this can make it hard to breathe.

Allergies can feel like having a cold, but allergy symptoms usually last longer. And they may get worse when you're outside, or close to what you are allergic to. Other signs include coughing, swollen or watery eyes, or a runny or clogged nose.

To help your allergies, shut your home's windows. Use an air conditioner or humidifier to keep the air inside clean and moist. Check the local news for smog or pollen counts. If you can, avoid going

outside when these numbers are high. Your pets might make your allergies worse, especially if they go outside. So try to keep your pets clean and out of your bedroom.

Talk to your doctor if your allergy symptoms are getting in the way of your daily life. Your doctor might be able to help you avoid what you're allergic to.

He or she may also be able to prescribe medicine to lessen your allergy symptoms.



**NEW YORK
IN THE SPRING**

On page 4, find a list of free outdoor activities to enjoy in the city.



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HEALTH INFORMATION
www.metroplus.org
New York, NY 10038
160 Water St., 3rd Floor

Know Your HIV Status

ONE IN FIVE PEOPLE living with HIV in New York City doesn't know that he or she is infected. That's because when you're first infected with HIV, you may not have any signs or symptoms. This is why everyone needs to get tested. MetroPlus Medicare now covers HIV testing, including the rapid test.

Ask for an HIV test at your next doctor's visit. If you learn you are HIV negative, take steps to stay that way. If you learn you are HIV positive, we can help you find an HIV specialist to look after your specific healthcare needs. Today's HIV treatments are easier to take and have few or no side effects. They can help you lead a healthy, productive life.

Turn to page 4 to learn more about the support MetroPlus offers for Medicare members living with HIV.



Pressure Points to Follow

Did you know that 74 million adults have high blood pressure in our country? If you're one of these people, you know that you have to take care of yourself. It's a dangerous condition. High blood pressure can cause a stroke or heart attack.

To keep your blood pressure in a healthy range, follow these six tips:

- **Know your numbers.** Learn your weight. Keep it at a healthy level.
- **Don't drink alcohol or smoke.** Both can increase your blood pressure.
- **Exercise, any way you can.** You don't have to go to the gym to be fit. It's also good to move your arms and legs while you sit, or walk as far as you are able.
- **Take your pills.** Follow the directions. If you have any questions or worries about it, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- **Check in with your doctor.** You should have your blood pressure checked regularly. Your doctor can help you avoid a heart attack, so listen up!
- **Eat your greens.** Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits. Avoid salty and fatty foods.



YOUR PERSONAL CARE PLAN

➔ **MetroPlus can help you reach your health goals.**

As a MetroPlus Special Needs Plan (SNP) member, you are eligible for special programs to keep you healthy. MetroPlus develops a personal Care Plan for each Medicare SNP member. When you join our plan, we will look at your health risks. Then we'll design a Care Plan to meet your specific healthcare needs. We will continue to do this every year that you're a member. You can choose not to participate.

MetroPlus works with the Visiting Nurse Service (VNS) to learn more about members enrolled in one of our SNPs. VNS will call you and come to your home at a time that's convenient for you. The nurse will ask some questions about your health history. Then MetroPlus will use this information to help create your Care Plan. Your Care Plan will include:

- ✓ Information on any health problems you have
- ✓ Medications you take
- ✓ Information on family members who can help you if you need it
- ✓ Information about visits to your doctor
- ✓ Information about whether you can get to the store for food or medicine
- ✓ Goals for improving your overall health outlook

MetroPlus will work with you to reach your goals. We will use your Care Plan to figure out if you need additional services or care that we can help you with. Do you have questions about your Care Plan? Call Customer Services at **1-866-986-0356** or **TTY 1-800-881-2812**. You can call Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.



An Important Test for Your Colon

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. That's why it's so important to get screened for this cancer starting at age 50. The good news is there are tests you can take that spot colon cancer early, when it's easier to treat.

The best way to look for colon cancer is a colonoscopy. If you are nervous about getting a colonoscopy, talk to your doctor about other options. Your doctor can help you choose a test that's right for you. Then he or she can tell you how often to have that test.

No matter what your age, if you have blood in your stool, or diarrhea, constipation, fatigue or stomach pain that persists, it's a good idea to talk with your doctor.

Outdoor Activities to Try

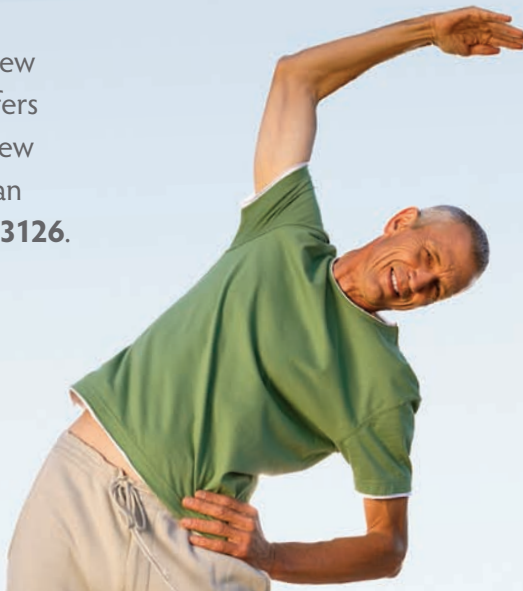
Now that spring is here, you probably can't wait to get outside. New York City has plenty of outdoor options that are both fun and good for you too! Try one of these local, free activities next time the sun is shining. If you are beginning a new exercise program, be sure to talk with your doctor first.

➔ **Stroll in the Park:** Central Park Conservancy offers free, educational walking tours through Central Park. Call **212-794-4064** or visit **centralparknyc.org/walkingtours** for information.

➔ **Walk for Health:** Take A Walk, New York is a free program that encourages New Yorkers to get moving. It offers walking tours throughout New York's five boroughs. You can sign up by calling **212-228-3126**.

➔ **A Wednesday Adventure:** Enjoy The New York Botanical Garden for free every Wednesday. For help planning your visit, go to **nybg.org**.

➔ **Yoga and Art:** Every spring, the Socrates Sculpture Park kicks off its fitness program. Classes are free and held outdoors. Choose from yoga, martial arts and tai chi! All experience levels are welcome. To learn more, call **718-956-1819** or visit **socratessculpturepark.org**.



Support FOR YOU

On May 16, 45,000 people will take part in the 25th AIDS Walk New York. The walk raises money to help men and women living with AIDS. Are you a Medicare or Medicaid member living with HIV/AIDS? Then MetroPlus can help you too.

The MetroPlus Health Plan Partnership in Care program offers members with HIV/AIDS a team for their care. The team includes:

- PCPs (primary care providers) who specialize in HIV
- Social workers
- Nutritionists
- Nurse Case Managers

The program has other benefits too. To find out more about the program or how to enroll, go to **www.metroplus.org**. Or call **1-800-475-6387**.

3

STEPS TO AVOID A FALL

It's easy to trip when you are outside on the go. But it's also easy to avoid taking a tumble. Follow these steps:

1

Wear the right shoes. Make sure they fit well. The soles should be non-slip and not too thick. Lace or fasten them securely.

2

Pack lightly. Don't carry too much. If you must bring a bag, try a backpack with straps for both shoulders.

3

Take breaks. Stop and rest when you feel tired.