

health letter[®]

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Fall 2009



STAY FIRE SAFE

DID YOU KNOW that heating and electrical fires are a leading cause of home fires and injuries during this time of year? Follow these tips to keep your home safe this season.

- R Give space heaters and candles space.** Keep them at least three feet away from things that can burn, like decorations, curtains and paper. Do not use space heaters to dry clothing or blankets.
- R Never leave a child or pet alone with a space heater or burning candle.** Turn off heaters and blow out candles before leaving the room or going to bed.
- R Follow the directions on the packaging of holiday lights.** They will tell you how many strings of lights to use together. And be sure to check lights carefully. If they are cracked or broken, don't use them.
- R Never use the oven or gas range to heat your home.**
- R Do not plug in too many things at once.** Use a surge protector.
- R Unplug all holiday lights before leaving home or going to bed.**
- R Put smoke alarms in your home,** especially near bedrooms. Test them monthly and change the batteries once a year.
- R Make a fire escape plan for your family.** Practice family fire drills at least twice a year.

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Phone: 1-800-303-9626
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SITE NEWS & NOTES



Jacobi Medical Center and North Central Bronx Hospital (NCB) now use fewer and greener cleaning products, making their environments safer for staff and patients.

REMINDER

- Having trouble hearing?
Please use a TTY machine to call Customer Services at **1-800-881-2812**.
- Everyone needs a complete physical exam once a year. Make an appointment with your PCP (Primary Care Provider) right away.
- If you moved or have a new phone number, please call Customer Services at **1-800-303-9626**.

ARE YOU TURNING 65?

MetroPlus offers several Medicare programs. Please call **1-866-986-0356** to learn more. You may be able to change from your current health insurance to Medicare very easily.

What Do You Know About HIV AND STDs?



→ **TAKE THIS TRUE/FALSE QUIZ** to find out how much you know about HIV and STDs. Answers by Sanjiv Shah, M.D., MetroPlus' Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Medical Director for Partnership in Care, the MetroPlus program for people with HIV/AIDS.

[1] YOU CAN TELL IF SOMEONE HAS HIV BY HOW HE OR SHE LOOKS.

FALSE. The only way anyone can know his or her HIV status is to be tested.

[2] IT TAKES MANY DAYS TO GET RESULTS FROM AN HIV TEST.

TRUE, if your PCP (Primary Care Provider) does a regular blood test. **FALSE,** if your PCP does rapid testing that takes about 20 minutes. MetroPlus members can go to certain New York City health clinics for rapid testing. Call **311** for locations.

[3] CHLAMYDIA IS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

FALSE. Chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease (STD), can damage your sex organs and make it impossible to be a mother or father later on.

[4] IT'S OK TO SHARE A RAZOR BLADE IF YOU KNOW THE PERSON YOU BORROWED IT FROM.

FALSE. One way the virus that causes HIV spreads is through blood. Razor blades often have tiny blood droplets on them.

[5] CONDOMS CAN PROTECT YOU FROM STDs.

TRUE. Both men and women need to use a new, latex condom every time they have any kind of sex—vaginal, anal or oral.

[6] A PREGNANT WOMAN WHO IS HIV-POSITIVE AND GETS TREATMENT IS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A HEALTHY BABY.

TRUE. Starting treatment right away improves the chance that your baby won't be born with HIV.



MEMBER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

→YOUR RIGHTS

As a member of MetroPlus Health Plan, you have a right to:

- Be cared for with respect, without regard for health status, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status or sexual orientation.
- Be told where, when and how to get the services you need from MetroPlus.
- Be told by your PCP (Primary Care Provider) what is wrong, what can be done for you and what will likely be the result, in a language you understand.
- Get a second opinion about your care.
- Give your OK to any treatment or plan for your care after that plan has been fully explained to you.
- Refuse care and be told what you may risk if you do.
- Get a copy of your medical record, and talk about it with your PCP, and to ask, if needed, that your medical record be amended or corrected.
- Be sure that your medical record is private and will not be shared with anyone except as required by law, contract or with your approval.
- Use the MetroPlus complaint system to settle any complaints, or you can complain to the NY State Department of Health or the local Department of Social Services any time you feel you were not fairly treated.
- Use the State Fair Hearing system.
- Appoint someone (relative, friend, lawyer, etc.) to speak for you if you are unable to speak for yourself about your care and treatment.
- Receive considerate and respectful care in a clean and safe environment free of unnecessary restraints.

→YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

As a member of MetroPlus Health Plan, you agree to:

- Work with your PCP to guard and improve your health.
- Find out how your healthcare system works.
- Listen to your PCP's advice and ask questions when you are in doubt.
- Call or go back to your PCP if you do not get better, or ask for a second opinion.
- Treat healthcare staff with the respect you expect yourself.
- Tell us if you have problems with any healthcare staff. Call Customer Services.
- Keep your appointments. If you must cancel, call as soon as you can.
- Use the emergency room only for real emergencies.
- Call your PCP when you need medical care, even if it is after hours.

CLARIFICATION

Cancer Care Second Opinion: For the diagnosis of cancer, recurrence of cancer, or a recommendation regarding cancer treatment, MetroPlus will pay for a second opinion from a cancer specialist including one affiliated with a specialty care center for the treatment of cancer. In the event that the Plan does not have a Participating Provider in its network with appropriate training and experience, MetroPlus will make a referral to an appropriate Non-Participating Provider.



CALL US TO REPORT HEALTHCARE FRAUD Call 1-888-245-7247 to report fraud or abuse, illegal activities and questionable activity. You may choose to give your name, or you may report anonymously.



[7] PEOPLE WITH HIV CAN LIVE A LONG, HEALTHY LIFE WITH APPROPRIATE CARE.

TRUE. New medicines with fewer side effects work well. If you are a member of the MetroPlus program Partnership in Care, you can have an HIV specialist as your PCP. You also get case management, counseling and other help.

[8] SINCE MY PARTNER AND I ARE BOTH HIV-POSITIVE, WE CAN HAVE SEX WITHOUT USING A CONDOM.

FALSE. This plan does not protect either of you from other STDs or getting another strain (kind) of HIV on top of what you already have.



It's smart to know your HIV status. Get tested. Practice safer sex. For more information on Partnership in Care, the MetroPlus program for people with HIV/AIDS, call 1-800-303-9626.



Eat Well During Your Pregnancy

→ Most people eat three big meals a day. But for pregnant women, eating smaller meals throughout the day can help prevent nausea and heartburn. Good food choices include:

- **High-fiber foods** like fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain breads and cereals.
- **Low-fat meats**, like chicken, lean beef and fish. Avoid shark, swordfish and albacore tuna, which have high levels of mercury.
- **Low-fat milk** and other dairy products for calcium.
- **Plenty of water.** You should drink about eight glasses of water a day.

Avoid beer and alcohol, raw or undercooked meat, and soft cheeses. These can harm your growing baby. Cut back on or skip coffee and dark-colored soda. Milk, water or 100 percent fruit juices are healthier options.



MetroPlus Health Plan



Getting a flu shot each year is the best way to prevent the flu.

No Flu FOR YOU

→ With flu season around the corner, it's time to see your PCP (Primary Care Physician) about seasonal flu and H1N1 (swine flu) vaccines.

If you're in one of the following groups, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you get a seasonal flu shot this fall.

- Children ages 6 months to 19 years
- Pregnant women
- People age 50 and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from the flu

The CDC recommends that the following groups also get the H1N1 vaccine.

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than age 6 months
- People between ages 6 months and 24 years old
- People ages 25 to 65 years who have a chronic medical condition

If you're not sure if you should have this shot, ask your doctor.

If you are billed for your seasonal or H1N1 flu shots, call Customer Service at **1-800-303-9626**.



JUST FOR YOU Members and Plan staff meet over lunch several times a year to work on improving our health plan. If you would like to join the Member Advisory Committee (MAC), call **1-800-303-9626**.

The Member Advisory Committee from left to right: Front row: Marva Boxill, Tamira Boynes, Nella Lewis, Margo Bishop, Wayne Richards. Second row: Maurice Spigner, Jean Masse, Mari Gold, Lauren Small, Gail Smith, Latrese Brackett, Rebecca Santana, Linda Cummings, Maria Rivera, Shalette Washington. Third row: Dr. Arnold Saperstein, Dr. Van Dunn, Thelvis Alston, Giselle Robinson.

