

Health Letter®

Understanding Other Cultures

Dr. Correa is the chairman of OB/GYN and women's health at Lincoln Hospital. She also heads the program on cultural sensitivity.

We are training our doctors how to care for patients from different cultures. Training helps doctors understand each person's beliefs, needs, and concerns.

To start, a doctor must find out if the patient understands English. If not, the doctor needs a translator. The doctor and the patient must be able to understand one another.

Doctors should ask about health beliefs. Does the patient use home medicines or herbs? Does the patient go to family members for health advice? Who makes health decisions in the patient's home? How does the patient feel about being touched?

Doctors need to understand that different cultures have different habits. Some people don't make eye contact with a doctor. Others feel you must touch a child when you praise or admire him. Some women prefer a woman doctor.

When doctors and nurses understand other cultures, they can give better, safer care.



By Nereida Correa, M.D.

What Happens During Prenatal Care?

Prenatal (before birth) care is important for mothers and babies. It should begin as soon as you think you are pregnant.

The first visit includes lab tests, a pregnancy and medical history, and screenings. Sometimes, it includes a sonogram (a test in which sound waves make pictures of your baby).

On your monthly visits, your obstetrician (OB) checks the baby's



MetroMom
The key to healthy babies

growth. You get advice on healthy eating. Be good to your baby and yourself: Don't drink alcohol and don't smoke. Take your prenatal vitamins.

At the seventh month, you are tested for gestational diabetes. Going forward, you see your OB every two to three weeks.

You discuss different ways to give birth. The month your baby is due, you should see your OB weekly. You talk about family planning and what to expect after the birth.

Site News & Notes

■ **Woodhull Medical and Mental Health Center** had a makeover. There are new, comfortable waiting areas for many clinics and other improvements. The goal: to give patients "one-stop shopping" for many services. Woodhull is at 760 Broadway, Brooklyn.

■ **Bellevue** and **Harlem** in Manhattan, **Woodhull** in Brooklyn, and **North Central Bronx Hospital** all scored high in a recent government survey. Congratulations!

■ **Pediatrics for Queens and Kings** is a new urgent care center for kids in Jackson Heights at 95-42 Roosevelt Avenue. The center is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Mondays through Fridays and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Telephone: **(718) 565-7900**.

Longer Member Services Hours

Member Services is now open Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Longer hours make it easier for you to reach us. Call **1-800-303-9626** with questions or problems.

Reminders

■ **Your dental visit.** When you make your appointment, please say you are a MetroPlus member. Bring your dental benefit card and your MetroPlus ID card when you go.

■ **Free STD services.** MetroPlus members and nonmembers can get confidential (only you know) STD services at certain New York City health clinics. Sex and needle-sharing partners can also get help here. To find a clinic or to ask questions: **(212) 427-5120**.

■ **Do you have a hearing problem?** Use a TDD machine to call MetroPlus Member Services: **1-800-881-2812**.

■ **Make an appointment now for your yearly physical examination.** Call your PCP.

Recertify By Mail

Watch for a packet in the mail from HRA. It includes a new, easier application.

Now, you don't have to go to HRA. Just fill out the application and mail it in. If you have questions, please call MetroPlus Member Services: **1-800-303-9626**.

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Attention MetroPlus Members

MetroPlus Health Plan Mandated Benefits Notice

MetroPlus Health Plan wants to be sure that you are aware of your rights to receive the services listed below as part of your MetroPlus health coverage.

■ **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, even if the specialist is not part of the MetroPlus network. A written referral from your Primary Care Physician (PCP) is required.

■ **Hospital care with breast cancer surgery.** If you need a lumpectomy, lymph node dissection, or mastectomy, MetroPlus will pay for in-hospital care for as long as your doctor decides it is necessary, after discussing it with you.

■ **Breast reconstruction following mastectomy.** If you have a mastectomy, MetroPlus will pay for reconstructive surgery on either or both breasts in the manner you or your doctor deems appropriate.

■ **Mastectomy-related services.** If you have a mastectomy, MetroPlus provides benefits for mastectomy-related services including reconstruction and surgery to achieve symmetry between the breasts, prostheses, and treatment of complications resulting from mastectomy (including lymphedema).

■ **Direct access to obstetric and gynecologic services.** You can self-refer (without a referral from your PCP) for care from an in-network obstetrician or gynecologist in the following situations: for at least two routine exams annually, for care and services related to pregnancy, and for care as a result of annual examinations and/or for care of an acute gynecologic condition.

If you have questions about these benefits or any other aspect of your MetroPlus coverage, please call MetroPlus Member Services at 1-800-303-9626.

Fraud Prevention

You can help prevent health care fraud. Protect your MetroPlus Health Plan

identification card (and your Medicaid card, if you have one), as you would a credit card. Be careful about giving your ID number to strangers. Someone could use your number to commit fraud. If your ID card is lost or stolen, call MetroPlus Member Services right away. Also, if you get a bill for services that should be paid by MetroPlus, call Member Services.

Office of Professional Medical Conduct

You can call the New York State Office of Professional Medical Conduct if you have questions about your provider's license. Call toll-free (1-800-663-6114) Monday through Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

MetroPlus Member Services

1-800-303-9626 (TDD: 1-800-881-2812)

Announcing MetroPlus Partnership in Care

MetroPlus has a new special needs plan (SNP). Partnership in Care is a plan for members with HIV and their families. When you join, your doctor will be an HIV specialist. Each member will have his or her own care manager.

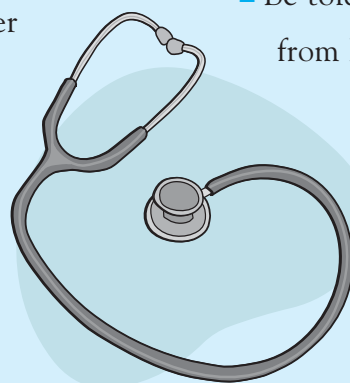
Who Can Join?

Anyone who:

- Is eligible for Medicaid and is HIV-positive or has AIDS.
- Is a child (up to age 19) of an HIV-positive parent enrolled in MetroPlus Partnership in Care.
- Lives in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, or Queens.

For more information, call toll-free: 1-800-475-

METRO.



Know Your Rights

MetroPlus members have a right to:

- Be cared for with respect, and without regard to 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 what is wrong, what can be done for you, and what likely will be the result in 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.
- For all your rights, check your MetroPlus member handbook.