

2 Help for Mothers and Babies



3 Health Letter Wins an Award



#1 Medicaid Managed Care Plan in NYC

Spring 2006



health letter®

AT HOME AND AT PLAY

Keep Your Children Safe

Injuries kill more kids than illness. According to the New York State Health Department, the top causes of injury-related deaths for children ages 1 to 4 are:

- House fires.
- Poisons.
- Burns from hot liquids.
- Falls.
- Motor vehicle crashes.
- Bike accidents.

Here are some tips to keep your family safe:

- Have a *working* smoke detector and a fire escape plan. Practice your escape.
- Keep all medicines and cleaning products locked up. If you suspect poison, act fast. Call Poison Control:



(212) 764-7667. The people there speak many languages. Post this number by your telephone.

- Lower the temperature of your hot water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Don't leave children alone in

the bathroom or kitchen. Keep kids away from ovens and heaters.

- If you live with a child age 11 or younger, the law says you must have window guards. For help, call (212) 676-2162.
- Children should *always* ride in a car seat attached in the back seat. Use the right car seat for your child's age and weight.
- Make sure children wear helmets when they bike, skate, or rollerblade.

For more help with safety issues, call 311. Ask your question; the person who answers the phone will direct you to the right place.

Fraud and Abuse

Medicaid fraud is a federal offense. You can 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.

Call MetroPlus Customer Services at 1-800-303-9626

or the Health and Hospital Corporation (HHC) 24-hour hotline at 1-866-435-7442 if you know or suspect any of the following:

- Someone is using your Medicaid or MetroPlus card.
- A provider is billing for services you did not receive.
- A provider is providing you with unnecessary services.
- Anyone at MetroPlus is committing fraud.

Dear MetroPlus Readers:

This is *your* newsletter. We would like to hear what you think about it.

Here is a healthy recipe for you. Do you have a favorite recipe to share? Or a health tip? Have you had a good experience with MetroPlus? Write to us, and we may print your letter.

We hope to hear from you. You can write to us at:

MetroPlus Health Plan
160 Water St.
New York, NY 10038
Attn: M. Gold

Fresh Salsa

One 14 ¹/₄-ounce can
 chopped tomatoes
 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
 2 green onions, sliced
 1 tablespoon plain vinegar
 1/2 teaspoon fresh or bottled garlic
 chopped very small
 A few dashes of bottled
 red-hot-pepper sauce

Stir everything together in a bowl. Salsa can be spooned on eggs, eaten with low-fat chips, or used as a dip for vegetables. Covered, in the refrigerator, it will last for up to one week.

Serves 8 (1/4 cup per serving)



CARING FOR YOU

Special Help for Mothers and Babies



Janice Gabel is the MetroPlus Maternal/Child Case Manager. She helps pregnant MetroPlus members in

many ways.

She can get a pediatrician (baby doctor) for the baby before the birth. You can choose the doctor you prefer from the MetroPlus network.

If you are a Family HealthPlus (FHP) member and less than 28 weeks pregnant, Janice can help you switch to Medicaid. Medicaid gives you:

- Free transportation to medical appointments.
- Unlimited home care if medically necessary.
- WIC, a program that provides extra food.

(If you switch, you must recertify



MetroMom
 The key to healthy babies 

with HRA six weeks after your baby is born.)

If you are a Medicaid or FHP member, Janice can get the baby a Medicaid card before the birth. You don't have to go to HRA. The card shows that the baby has health insurance that is good for one year.

If you have a high-risk pregnancy, Janice works with you to help you have a healthy baby. She also follows up with new mothers for six to eight weeks after the birth. If you need home care, she will arrange it.

"I help our pregnant members any way I can," Janice says. "Please call me at (212) 908-8639 or toll-free at 1-888-275-6837. I can sign you up for **MetroMom** or help with your special needs."

FORTHEIR PROTECTION

Why Kids Need Lead Testing

Some New York City children have too much lead in their blood. Lead can hurt children's brains, stomachs, and kidneys. It can also cause trouble learning and growing.

Children get lead in their blood playing in dirt that contains lead dust. If your home has old pipes, the drinking water may have lead in it. Kids may eat paint chips that contain lead. Some food from other countries comes in cans made with lead. Litargo, a powder used in the Dominican Republic, contains lead. Some South Asian herbal medicines contain lead. So does kohl, a popular eye makeup.

Children should be tested for lead by their Primary Care Physician (PCP) at least once before their second birthday. If lead levels are high, ask the doctor what to do.

MANDATED BENEFITS NOTICE

Attention MetroPlus Members

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 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 deem 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; 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](tel:1-800-303-9626).

Site News and Notes

HHC Hospitals Rank Highest in All-City Rating

Seven HHC hospitals ranked at the top of the list based on data reported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. All 11 HHC hospitals ranked in the top 17 (out of 50). The CMS ratings were based on how well hospitals cared for patients admitted for heart attack, heart failure, and pneumonia. MetroPlus congratulates all the HHC hospitals.

The Magnet Recognition for Excellence in Nursing Services was awarded to **Elmhurst Medical Center**, Queens, for its nurses' wonderful work with patients.

Reminders

- If you have a hearing problem, use a TDD machine to call Member Services: [1-800-881-2812](tel:1-800-881-2812).
- Everybody needs a complete physical exam once a year. Call your PCP to make an appointment *now*.
- **MetroPlus Members: Renew/Recertify to Keep Your Health Care Coverage**
Medicaid, FHP and CHP B members: You will get a packet in the mail. For help, call MetroPlus Member Services: [1-800-303-9626](tel:1-800-303-9626).



MetroPlus Health Letter Wins an Award

The New York chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators gave the MetroPlus *Health Letter*® an award for excellence in communications. The newsletter committee, L to R, is: Maria Rivera, Customer Services Manager; Debra Corbett, Associate Executive Director, Quality Management; Linda Cummings, Director, Utilization Management; Virgilian Gonzalez, Relationship Manager, Network Relations; Mari Gold, Director, Communications and *Health Letter* Editor; Erin Carney, Assistant Director, Communications.

HOW THE DOCTOR CAN HELP

Teens Need a Checkup Every Year

Teenagers grow and change fast. You have many choices to make. Your PCP is there if you get sick. You also need a yearly "well-care" PCP visit. This includes a checkup and time to talk about important teen health concerns. Don't worry about anything you tell your doctor. He or she respects your privacy.

Important Issues for Teens

- **Your weight and eating habits.** There is no perfect body shape. Your goal is a healthy weight that is right for you.
- **Safety habits.** These include wearing a seatbelt in the car, gun safety, and dealing with violence. Does your boy-



at home? Let your doctor know the truth.

- **Depression.** Some teens feel hopeless. Some cut themselves. Others think about suicide. Talk about your feelings. If you need help, say so. Your doctor is on your side.
 - **Sex.** Maybe you worry that you are gay. Or your boyfriend or girlfriend is pressuring you to have sex. Don't be shy about your concerns. No one will judge you.
 - **Drug and tobacco use.** Drugs can make you lose control. Smoking poisons you. Getting clean and quitting smoking can be rough, but you can do it. Your doctor can help.
- Your teen years are complicated. Seeing your doctor every year can make some things simpler. It is your life. Make it a long, healthy one.

MetroPlus Health Letter® is published four times a year by MetroPlus Health Plan in cooperation with Redspring Communications, Inc. © 2006 MetroPlus Health Plan. All rights reserved. MetroPlus Health Letter is a registered trademark of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited. No material in this issue may be reproduced without permission from MetroPlus Health Plan. Health Letter does not promote any form of medical treatment, nor does it encourage the self-management of medical problems. It is meant to supplement, not replace, care from health care professionals.

Editor: Mari S. Gold



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

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage Paid
MHP Inc