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summer 2004



health letter[®]

MEET DR. BRUNOT

Taking Care of Kids

My staff and I work hard to make our office a happy, comfortable place for children and their parents. The first time I see a new patient, we talk about the child's health. Of course, with young children, I let the parents fill me in. Learning about a patient's health and the health of his or her family helps me give each child the best possible care.

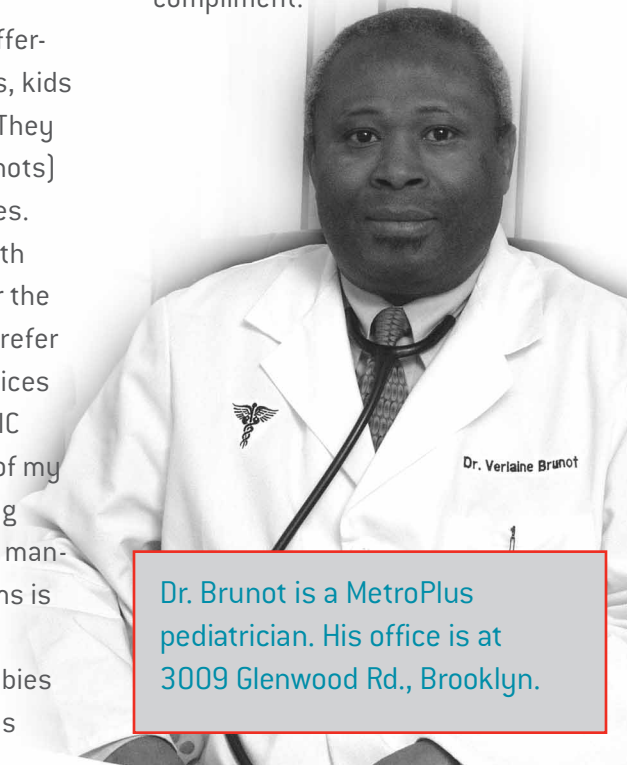
I speak Spanish, French, and French Creole. However, my patients come from many different backgrounds. Sometimes, kids come for a regular checkup. They may need immunizations (shots) to protect them from illnesses. Or, the child may have a health problem. If necessary, I refer the patient to a specialist. I also refer patients and families to services in our community, like the WIC program. An important part of my practice is counseling. Talking about issues such as weight management or behavior problems is part of good health care.

My patients can be new babies or they can be as grown up as

18-year-olds. To respect teens' privacy, I often see them without their parents.

My office hours are Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At other times, my staff knows how to find me.

I have some teenage patients who first came to see me as babies. I can't think of a better compliment.



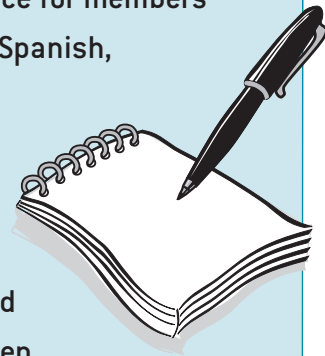
Dr. Brunot is a MetroPlus pediatrician. His office is at 3009 Glenwood Rd., Brooklyn.

Site News And Notes

■ **Bellevue Hospital Center and Gouverneur Healthcare Services** in Manhattan have a new service for members who speak Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Bengali. Patients and doctors listen through headsets.

They hear trained medical staff translate from one language to another. This way, patients and doctors understand each other better.

■ **MetroPlus** health care sites are working to help members get the services they need faster. You will notice shorter waiting times to get an appointment. When you visit your doctor, you will spend less time waiting.



Privacy Notice

MetroPlus Health Plan respects your privacy rights. This notice describes how we treat the nonpublic personal financial and health information (“Information”) we receive about you and what we do to keep it confidential and secure as required by New York State Insurance Law (Regulation 169).

Categories of Information We Collect and May Disclose

MetroPlus collects Information about you from the following sources:

- Information you give us on applications and other forms or that you tell us.
- Information about your dealings with us, the health care providers we work with, and others.

What We Do With Your Information

We do not disclose Information about our members and former members to anyone, except as permitted by law.

We do use Information as permitted by law for health plan purposes, such as the following:

- To provide the health care benefits you receive as a member of MetroPlus Health Plan; for example, to arrange for treatment that you need and to pay for services you receive.
- To communicate with you about programs and services that are available to you as a MetroPlus member.
- To manage our business and comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

How We Protect Your Privacy

- We limit access to your Information to employees and other persons who need it to conduct MetroPlus Health Plan business or comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Employees are subject to discipline,

and may be fired, if they violate our privacy policies and procedures.

- We also use physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards to keep Information confidential and secure in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Former Members

If your membership in MetroPlus Health Plan ends, your Information will remain protected in accordance with our policies and procedures for current members.

You can contact us at the address or phone number below to:

- Request more information about our privacy policies and practices.
- File a privacy-related complaint with us.
- Request (in writing) to review Information about you in our records.

Member Services

MetroPlus Health Plan
160 Water St., 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10038
Phone: 1-800-303-9626
(TDD 1-800-881-2812)

A Notice of HEALTH INFORMATION Privacy Practices Is Also Available

MetroPlus has a Notice of Health Information Privacy Practices that describes in detail how we may use and disclose medical information about you. The notice also tells you about your rights under federal privacy regulations (HIPAA). You can get a copy of this notice by calling Member Services at the number above or by visiting our Web site at www.nyc.gov/metroplus and clicking on the MetroPlus Privacy Notice.

A HEALTHIER LIFE

Want Help to Stop Smoking Or Lose Weight?

MetroPlus knows that many members want help with these problems.

Here is the good news. You'll find quit-smoking programs at all our major health care sites. They provide treatment like counseling by yourself or in a group. They also can provide medicines to help you quit smoking.

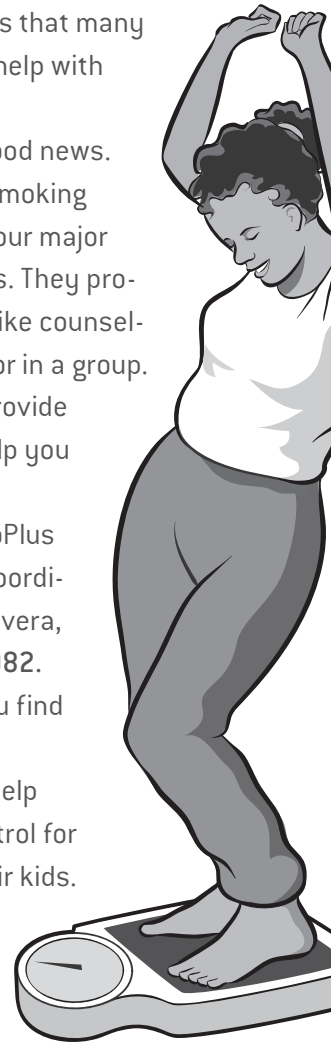
Call the MetroPlus stop-smoking coordinator, Juanita Rivera, at (212) 908-8982. She can help you find a program.

We can also help with weight control for members or their kids.

Some of our sites have their own programs. Others link you with

community programs like the Park's "Wake Up New York" or the YMCA.

Many weight-control programs give you help from a nutritionist. You learn about planning meals and food shopping. To find out more, or find a program near you, ask your Primary Care Physician (PCP). Or, call the MetroPlus Care Management Helpline at 1-800-579-9798.



GET THE FACTS

Think Twice Before You Pierce or Tattoo

Perhaps you want to change the way you look. You don't think that a new hairstyle or different clothing is enough. You want a tattoo or body piercing.

Before you act, talk to people who have been tattooed or pierced. How much did the procedure cost? Was it painful? How long did it take to heal? If they could do it over again, would they?

Know the Risks

When you pierce or tattoo, the skin is broken. Anytime this happens, you risk infection. The most serious infections are Hep C, HIV, and tetanus. Tattoos and piercings also increase your risk of allergic reaction, bleeding, damage to the nerves in the area, and keloids (thick scars at a piercing site.)

Tattoos are meant to be permanent. Removing a tattoo is expensive and does not always work. In piercing, your body can react against the jewelry because it is a "foreign object."

Doing It Right

Check out the salon you plan to use. Be sure operators wash their hands and wear new, sterile gloves each time. Instruments should be brand new and thrown away after one use or sterilized in pouches. Needles must be thrown away after one use.

Is the salon clean? Is the lighting good so that operators can see well? Don't allow the use of a piercing gun. It is dangerous because the gun cannot be sterilized.

Follow-Up Care

While your tattoo or piercing site heals, keep it clean. Use soap and water.

Use an antibacterial rinse after a mouth piercing. If redness, swelling, or pus develops around a piercing, see your doctor.

Remember, you do not have to get tattooed or pierced to "belong." You can change your mind or wait if you are not sure. If you do get pierced, never do it yourself or let a friend do it.

Reminders

- Do you have trouble hearing? With a TDD machine, you can call TDD Member Services at 1-800-881-2812.
- Everyone needs a complete checkup each year. Please call your PCP for an appointment now.

Remember to Recertify/Renew

Keep health care coverage for yourself or your family.

- CHP B members: When you get your packet in the mail, call MetroPlus Customer Services at 1-800-475-METRO.
- Medicaid/FHP members: Call MetroPlus Member Services at 1-800-303-9626.

We will help you recertify/renew for all programs. That way, you will keep your health care coverage.

MetroPlus Dental Services

Medicaid members can visit any dentist who sees Medicaid patients. CHP and FHP members now get dental care through Doral Dental. You can see any dentist in the very large Doral network. Use your regular MetroPlus ID card when you go. Need help finding a dentist? Call Doral Member Services at 1-800-508-2056.



Twins, Triplets, and More

Carrying more than one baby increases your risk of an early delivery. Almost 60 percent of twins, more than 90 percent of triplets, and all quadruplets are born before their due date. An early baby is likely to be small. Low-birth-weight babies often need special care. Some have ongoing health problems.

Moms who expect more than one baby have certain health risks.

Some women develop diabetes. Other women get a pregnancy-related type of high blood pressure called preeclampsia.



Special Care for a Special Situation

If you suspect you are pregnant with more than one baby, see your doctor early. Regular prenatal visits help control any problems that may develop. If yours will be a multiple birth, your doctor may want you to visit more often than the regular schedule. If you start labor too early, bed rest and drug treatment may stop it.

MetroMom
The key to healthy babies 

New HIV Quick Test

A new HIV test takes only 20 minutes to complete. This test is almost 100 percent accurate. It uses less than a drop of blood. Ask your doctor about this new, fast test.

Remember to Vote!

The presidential election is Tuesday, November 2. Be sure to vote. Every vote is important.

MetroPlus Has Moved!

Our new address is 160 Water St., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10038. Members can visit us here. To talk to a Member Service Representative, the telephone number is still **1-800-303-9626**. We are always happy to hear from you.

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