

Take Control of Your Diabetes



Dr. Katz is a MetroPlus provider and chief of endocrine services at Bellevue Hospital Center. She specializes in diabetes and endocrinology.

Diabetes is on the rise. More people find out that they have diabetes every day. In many cases, they are also overweight. Being overweight increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke, as well as many other medical problems. It's important to manage your weight to help control diabetes and other health conditions.

If you have diabetes, you need to work closely with your health care team. You need regular medical checkups at least every three to six months. At every doctor visit, your weight, blood pressure, and feet should be checked. Every three months, your A1C, the test that shows how well your blood sugar level has been controlled for this period, should be checked.

High blood sugar can cause problems with the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and feet. You should see an eye doctor at least once a year. If you have foot problems, you should see a podiatrist regularly. Diabetes can also affect your teeth and gums. See your dentist at least twice a year. When

you visit, be sure to say you have diabetes.

What Else Should You—the Patient—Do?

Start by learning all you can about your illness. Work out a healthy food plan and stick to it. Find out about your medicine. When and how should you take it? What does it do? How will it help? Learn how and when to check your blood sugars. Learn what to do if your sugar levels go off-track.

Get moving. Being active and eating foods that are right for you will help you stay at a healthy weight. If you are overweight, losing weight may help control your diabetes, cholesterol, and blood pressure better.

Smoking also makes the complications of diabetes worse. Stop smoking. If you need help, ask your doctor.

You are in charge of your diabetes. Your doctor, nurse, and nutritionist will help you manage it. But it is also up to you to make the changes needed to keep you healthy. For more information, visit www.diabetes.org.

Holly Lopez-Velasco is the MetroPlus diabetes case manager. She can help you manage your diabetes. Call Member Services at 1-800-303-9626 and ask for Holly to get more information about this program.

Attention Teens

When you have your yearly check-up, pick up a copy of the new free “Adolescent Resources Guide.” It has information just for teenagers.

If You Get a Denial Letter From MetroPlus

A denial letter or claim denial notice is not a bill.

However, we have to send you a notice explaining why we denied the service requested or received.

If you get a denial letter or a claim denial notice from us, or a bill from your Primary Care Provider, and don't understand it, call Member Services at **1-800-303-9626**. We will help you.

Reminders

- Do you have a hearing problem? If so, use a TDD machine to call Member Services at **1-800-881-2812**.
- Every family member needs a complete physical exam once a year. If your child needs a back-to-school checkup, make an appointment *now*.

MetroPlus Members: Renew/Recertify to Keep Your Health Care Coverage

Medicaid, Family Health Plus, and CHP B members: You will get a packet in the mail. For help, call MetroPlus Member Services at **1-800-303-9626**.

Your Postpartum Doctor Visit

You need to see your doctor three to eight weeks after your baby is born, possibly sooner if you had a C-section. At the postpartum (after-birth) visit, your doctor checks your vagina, uterus, and cervix to be sure they are healing well. You will have a repeat Pap smear. You discuss family planning. Don't think that breastfeeding keeps you from getting pregnant again—it doesn't.

If you notice any of these signs, call your doctor right away. You might have an infection.



- Fever over 100 F.
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge.
- Bad abdominal pain.
- Bright-red vaginal bleeding or passing large blood clots.
- Burning when you urinate or not urinating at all.
- Pain or red streaks on the calf of either leg.
- Hard, very tender, or red breasts; sore or cracked nipples.

Site News and Notes

Kings County Hospital Center, 451 Clarkson Avenue, Brooklyn, opens a new emergency, diagnostic and treatment pavilion this summer. Patients can get many services under one roof, including emergency care; imaging and nuclear medicine; radiation therapy; and ambulatory surgery. There is a birthing center with modern labor, delivery, and recovery suites. The entire building has state-of-the-art equipment.

Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center, East 149th and Morris Avenue, Bronx, and **Metropolitan Hospital Center**, 1901 First Avenue, Manhattan, are now state-of-the-art stroke centers. Fast treatment is key to reducing the brain damage a stroke can cause. These are symptoms of stroke: sudden weakness in the face, arm, or leg; loss of balance; trouble talking or understanding; and a sudden inability to walk. The faster you are treated, the greater your chance of recovery.



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 Street
 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 Internet Web site at www.metroplus.org and clicking on the Privacy Policies link.

Medicaid and Family Health Plus Members: When You Renew by Mail

When you send your renewal back to HRA, please:

- Show proof of income even if your income is the same as it was before. If you have no income, the letter of support must be filled out. If you get unemployment, send a copy of the check or award letter.
- If the form says “supply Social Security number,” write

in your number. If you can’t get a Social Security number, send a copy of the letter from Social Security.

- If it says “send proof” in the citizenship status column, send it.
- Remember to sign your application.
 HRA needs all this information to handle your renewal. If you don’t provide it, your case will be closed.
 Please check your renewal and be sure it is filled out the right way. We want to help you keep your health care coverage.

Bugged by Bugs or “Poisoned” by Ivy?

In the summer, you are outdoors a lot. So are bugs and plants. If a bug bites, what should you do?

If you have a mild itch or stinging, wash the spot with soap and water. Put on a cold pack. Apply calamine lotion or a paste of water and baking soda.

Get medical help *right away* if you have trouble breathing, feel faint, or get hives (red bumps); if your lips or throat swell; or if you feel sick or vomit. You may be allergic to the sting.

If you are with someone who has a bad reaction, the person may carry special medicine, like an EpiPen. Give any help that is needed. The victim should lie still, with the feet higher than the head. Cover the person with a shirt or blanket. Don't give anything to drink.

Suppose you accidentally touch a plant like poison ivy? You may get a rash 12 hours to several days later. The rash usually goes away by itself. Calamine lotion or hydrocortisone cream from the drugstore helps take away the itch. If the itch is really bad or is on your face

or genital area, or in your eyes, see your doctor.

Protect yourself by staying away from bee and wasp nests. Keep food covered. Learn what poison ivy and poison oak look like. Don't go where these plants grow. Be smart, and enjoy the summer sting- and itch-free.



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