

health letter[®]

www.metroplus.org

Winter 2009



MetroMom Is BIGGER And Better!

→ **Get the support you need** for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. The MetroMom program now offers three confidential calls to see how your pregnancy is going and your own nurse case manager to help you when you need it. You can also reach a maternity nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through our new BabyLine: **1-877-222-9604**. You get a copy of *Your Journey Through Pregnancy* about having a baby. And, if you have e-mail, you can sign up for a free newsletter. By taking part in the MetroMom program and keeping your postpartum visit (3 to 8 weeks after delivery), you are also eligible for a special gift.

Call us at **1-877-222-9604** to join MetroMom or ask us questions.



 MetroPlus Health Plan

Prenatal Care Is Important Start prenatal (before birth) care as soon as you think you are pregnant. Keep all your appointments. When they see mothers regularly, doctors can spot health problems and treat them. Early and ongoing prenatal care is best for mother and baby.

PRSR7 STD
U.S. Postage Paid
MHP Inc

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

SITE NEWS & NOTES


Harlem Hospital Center is the first NYC hospital to be certified as "Baby Friendly" for its comprehensive approach to breastfeeding newborns. The certification comes from Baby Friendly USA, sponsored by The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF). Only 64 U.S. facilities have been certified.

In August, Bellevue Hospital Center celebrated World Breastfeeding Week with MetroPlus Health Plan as a lead sponsor. Bellevue promotes breastfeeding by encouraging new moms to breastfeed infants for their first feeding and trains staff to help mothers succeed.

REMINDERS

- Do you have a hearing problem? If so, use a TTY machine to call Customer Services: **1-800-881-2812.**
- Every family member needs a complete physical exam once a year. Call your PCP now to make an appointment.
- Help MetroPlus Customer Services help you. We want to be able to reach you. If you moved or have a new phone number, let us know. Call Customer Services: **1-800-303-9626.**



 If you have grief that continues to get worse, call your PCP.

Dealing With Complicated Grief

→ **It is normal to grieve** after any kind of serious loss such as a death, especially a suicide, loss of a job, losing a love or having a miscarriage. A normal grief response includes being sad, crying and not being able to concentrate. Some people don't function the way they did before the loss.

"This kind of grief is *not* depression," says Sam Ribowsky, LCSW, the MetroPlus Behavioral Health case manager. "Normal grief symptoms usually start to fade within six months or so. Complicated grief gets worse and hangs on. The grief colors the person's life completely," Sam adds.

You may notice grief getting in the way of your life or someone else's.

Some of the signs of complicated grief are extreme focus on the loss; bitterness; and the feeling that life holds no purpose. If, after a major loss, you or someone you know has these feelings, it is time to talk to a Primary Care Provider (PCP).

Explain the loss, when it happened and how badly you still feel. Ask for a referral to a specialist in behavioral health. That doctor will talk with you and help you deal with the problem. In some cases, medication may be prescribed.

You can also call Sam Ribowsky at **(212) 908-8585** who will help you get the help you need. Your call will be completely confidential.





Call CUSTOMER SERVICES FOR YOUR UPDATED PROVIDER DIRECTORY

→ You can get the most recent MetroPlus Provider Directory by mail or online at www.metroplus.org. If you want a copy, please call Customer Services: **1-800-303-9626.**

✓ Case Management at MetroPlus

Our case managers provide ongoing help to members to help them get the best care possible. MetroPlus has case management programs for members with asthma, diabetes, behavioral health problems, pregnant women (MetroMom), those receiving SSI benefits, those with complex health issues and those living with HIV/AIDS. Besides special help, our programs provide ongoing education. We work with your doctors, nurses and social workers to make sure you get the care you need. To learn more about our case management programs, call **1-800-303-9626**.

CHILDREN'S IMMUNIZATIONS are important

By **Tosan Oruwariye, M.D.**
Dr. "Tosan" is a pediatrician and practices at Tiga Pediatrics, 3510 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY.

→ **Immunizations help prevent bad illnesses.** They keep your child healthy, which also keeps other children healthy. Immunizations are safe. The protection they provide is bigger than the very small risk of a problem. If you have questions, talk to your child's Primary Care Provider (PCP).

Kids should get their shots on time. Your child's doctor will tell you when each immunization is due. Your job is to see that your children get their shots when they should. Most shots are given when kids are young, but certain shots need a booster later on. Teens need immunizations as well.

All children need a flu shot *every* year as flu affects children and older people more than others. Because the flu virus changes every year, what goes into the shot is different each year, too. The flu shot should be given in the fall before flu season begins.

Protect your children. Find out their immunization schedule from their PCP and stick to it.

Keep Moving This Winter

→ **IT'S A FACT:** One of the best things you can do to stay healthy is exercise. But you may feel like the winter weather is stopping you from keeping active. Luckily, exercise can fit into your regular indoor activities and it doesn't have to cost anything. All you need to do is get your heart rate up for at least half an hour every day. Try some of these ideas:

1. Use your feet. Take the stairs—for even a few flights—instead of the elevator.



2. Make everyday tasks work for you. Household chores like mopping the floor, scrubbing the tub or carrying the groceries can count as exercise. Simply do these things faster to get your heart pumping.

3. Keep TV time active. Do sit-ups, push-ups and stretches during commercial breaks.

ARE YOU TURNING 65? MetroPlus offers several Medicare programs. Please call **1-800-303-9626** for more information. You may be able to change from your current health insurance to Medicare very easily.

Health Dangers OF ENERGY DRINKS

A typical energy drink contains ingredients that pep you up, called stimulants.

→ **One energy drink may contain more caffeine than three cups of strong coffee.** Some studies show that lots of caffeine makes the heart beat faster. Caffeine can also make the heart beat abnormally and increase blood pressure. If you have a heart problem, caffeine can make it worse.

Energy drinks have lots of sugar, so drinking them often may lead to weight gain. A sugar rush can energize you for a while, but it will also make you crash later.

No one knows yet what happens if we consume large amounts of stimulants. We do know that energy drinks together with alcohol are dangerous. The combination makes your heart beat faster.

Consuming energy drinks before you exercise dehydrates you.

To boost your energy in a natural and less expensive way:

- ▶ **EAT EVERY FEW HOURS.** Your blood sugar won't drop.
- ▶ **DRINK WATER.** When you are dehydrated you often feel tired.
- ▶ **CUT BACK ON SWEETS** to avoid a blood sugar drop.
- ▶ **EXERCISE.** Getting in shape helps your body work better.
- ▶ **SLEEP.** Aim for at least seven hours of sleep every night.

Recertify to Keep Your Healthcare Coverage

We call Medicaid and Family Health Plus members who need to recertify. We also mail a reminder notice. For help filling out an application, call **1-800-303-9626**.

We can come to your home or help you on the phone. MetroPlus Child Health Plus members get a notice in the mail 90 days before recertification is due. We also remind you by phone. Call **1-800-303-9626** for help at home or on the phone.

about cancer screening

Most people need to follow a standard schedule for cancer screening. But if you are at high risk for any cancer, you may need to follow a different screening schedule. Ask your Primary Care Provider (PCP) to advise you. If you note a symptom that might be cancer, see your PCP right away.

Starting at age 40, women need a mammogram every year to screen for **breast cancer**. Women in their 20s and 30s need a breast exam as part of their regular checkup every three years. Women over 40 need a breast exam yearly.

Both men and women at average risk for **colon cancer** need one of several tests. Talk to your doctor about which test is right for you. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need a different test at a younger age.

Women should be screened for **cervical cancer** when they start to have sex, or at age 21, whichever comes first.

African-American men and men whose father or brother had **prostate cancer** should begin testing at age 45. Other men should consider testing after age 50.