

WINTER 2017

WELLbeing

ASTHMA AS YOU AGE

Did you know that older adults can get asthma? According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, more than 7 percent of adults have it. Here are some facts about asthma and seniors.

FACT: Asthma poses a greater risk to seniors.

Older adults are more likely to develop respiratory failure as a result of asthma, even during mild episodes.

FACT: Asthma in seniors can be managed.

Work with your doctor to develop a written asthma management plan. The plan will outline ways to use medicine properly, avoid triggers and respond to symptoms.

FACT: Asthma medication can be adjusted for you.

Take your medication as prescribed to breathe better. If you have trouble remembering or find it hard to use an L-shaped inhaler, tell your doctor. You may be able to use a dry powder inhaler or an oral medication instead.



METROPLUS MEDICARE



Visit us at metroplus.org/medicare

Health or Wellness or Prevention Information
 Phone: 1.866.986.0356
 TTY/TDD: 711
 Hours of Operation: Feb. 15–Sept. 30, Mon.–Sat, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.; Oct. 1–Feb. 14, 7 days a week, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.
 After 8 p.m., Sundays and holidays:
 24/7 Medical Answering Service
 1.800.442.2560

WEN-WSP

Your PCP Is Here to Help

Have you been in the hospital recently? Then a call to your primary care provider should be on your to-do list. Your doctor should know what happened and whether you had a quick trip to the ER or an inpatient stay. It might affect your care for other conditions, and you may need a follow-up appointment. People who don't follow up with their primary care doctors may not heal as fast. They may even end up back in the hospital. Let your primary care doctor know as soon as you're home and settled.



WELCOME TO MEDICARE!

If you enrolled in Medicare within the past 12 months, you are eligible for a special initial exam. Some people call it the “Welcome to Medicare” visit. During the visit, your doctor may:

- Review your medical and family histories
- Ask about your current health conditions and prescriptions
- Check your blood pressure, vision, weight and height
- Talk about safety issues, such as your risk of falls
- Make sure you're up to date with preventive screenings and immunizations
- Assess your risk of mental disorders, such as depression
- Discuss how to set up an advance directive
- Order tests you might need

Make sure to schedule your initial exam within your first year of Medicare coverage. Then, continue working with your doctor to stay healthy. This includes having one wellness visit—a visit focused on preventive care—every year.

➔ Bring Both Cards

If you are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, don't forget to bring both ID cards to every medical appointment. This will help ensure your care is properly covered.

➔ Get in Touch

Between Oct. 1 and Feb. 14, Medicare Member Services is here from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week. Call **1.866.986.0356** (TTY users: **711**).

We also have a 24/7 Medical Answering Service. Call **1.800.442.2560** on holidays or after hours. You can also find information at **metroplus.org/medicare**.

Contact us if:

- You move or change your phone number
- You need help making an appointment
- You speak a language other than English

GIVE YOUR EYES A BREAK

You depend on your eyes for so much information about the world. In turn, your eyes depend on you to keep them healthy. Here's how to protect your eyesight for the long term:

- **Visit an eye doctor regularly.** Anyone over age 60 should have an eye exam every year.
- **Buy quality sunglasses.** Your shades should block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays.
- **Watch out for eyestrain.** Too much screen time can harm your vision. If you have to use a screen for long periods, follow the 20-20-20 rule: Look up every 20 minutes to a point at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- **Purchase protective eyewear.** Wear safety glasses when doing any activity with a risk of eye injury, such as sports, home repair or yardwork.



Help Your Providers Work Together

If you have multiple doctors, some caring for your physical health and others for your mental health, you want everyone to be on the same page. Because conditions and medications can affect each other, all of your doctors should know about all the care you are receiving.

How does that happen? The easiest way is for you to sign a “release of information” form with every doctor you see. This allows the doctors you list to share information about your conditions, medications and treatment plan. You can ask your doctor for this form, or you can call MetroPlus for assistance.



Care When You Need It

When you are deciding between calling your doctor and going to the emergency room for a health issue, don't forget that you have another option: urgent care. Urgent care centers are the best place to go for health issues that aren't life-threatening but need to be addressed quickly. A visit to urgent care is quicker and less expensive than a visit to the emergency room. Find an in-network urgent care center near you at metroplus.org/member-services/provider-directories.





3 Things to Know About CAD

1 **Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the most common type of heart disease.** It's the leading cause of death in the nation, according to the National Library of Medicine.

2 **Symptoms include chest pain or pressure and shortness of breath.** People who experience these symptoms may have a heart that is not getting enough blood. CAD happens when the arteries that supply blood to the heart develop a buildup of plaque inside them.

3 **CAD can be controlled with medicine—or treated with surgery.** Your doctor may prescribe beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, nitrates, low-dose aspirin, ACE inhibitors or statins. If needed, there are also surgical options, such as angioplasty and heart bypass surgery. Diet, exercise, stress management and quitting smoking can also help control CAD. Talk to your doctor to see if lifestyle changes can help you.

MANAGING A CHRONIC CONDITION

If you have a chronic condition such as diabetes, heart disease, depression or HIV/AIDS, MetroPlus can help you manage it. When your condition is under control, you will feel better and visit the doctor less. Here are two ways MetroPlus helps:

- We can connect you with a primary care physician if you don't have one. Everyone needs a PCP to coordinate their care, but it's especially important for people who have complex conditions.
- We can enroll you in a program for people with your condition. Case managers will help you schedule appointments and answer all your questions by phone. Examples of MetroPlus programs are DiabetesCare for people with diabetes and Partnership in Care for those with HIV/AIDS. You can see a list of our programs at metroplus.org/healthy-living/care-management-programs.

Check Your Risk of Falls

Falling is frightening, and it can cause serious injuries. Every day, 140 older adults in New York are hospitalized because of a fall. Are you likely to fall?

These factors increase your risk:

- Vitamin D deficiency
- Lower-body weakness
- Balance difficulties
- Vision problems
- Taking certain kinds of medications
- Conditions such as Parkinson's disease, stroke, arthritis, osteoporosis and incontinence
- History of falling
- Home hazards like throw rugs or broken steps

➔ Prescription Pointers

Prescriptions have the power to heal. But sometimes it's hard to know which drugs are covered. If you have questions about your prescription drug coverage, you can get answers by logging in to your account at metroplus.org or by calling **1.866.986.0356** (TTY users: **711**).

You can save money on prescriptions by asking your doctor to prescribe a generic drug and arranging to receive your medications by mail.



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