

# HEALTHletter<sup>®</sup>

You're #1 with us!



## CARING FOR KIDS

Raising kids is hard work. Your child's doctor and your health plan can help.

MetroPlus has benefits that support parents. Plus, we cover vaccines and well-child visits. MetroPlus can help you:

- Find a doctor for your kids.
- Make healthcare appointments.
- Learn about lifesaving vaccines and screenings.

Your child's doctor will guide you and your family. He or she will explain milestones in your child's growth. The doctor can advise you about eating well, getting exercise and other health issues.

You want your kids to grow up healthy and strong. So do we. Call MetroPlus today to learn how we can help.



Visit us at [metroplus.org](http://metroplus.org)



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# SCREENING FOR HEPATITIS C

The hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a serious liver infection. You might have it and not know it. That's because many people with the virus do not have symptoms.

The only way to know if you have HCV is with a blood test. Doctors suggest you get tested if you were born between 1945 and 1965.

Symptoms can include:

- Pain or bloating in the stomach
- Yellowing of the eyes and skin
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite

Learn more about HCV and where to get tested. Go to [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) and search "hep c." Or call **311**.



## FIND A DOCTOR

The MetroPlus provider directory is a list of doctors, dentists and pharmacies that we work with. Visit [metroplus.org/member-services/provider-directories](http://metroplus.org/member-services/provider-directories). Or call Member Services. We can connect you to the right doctor.



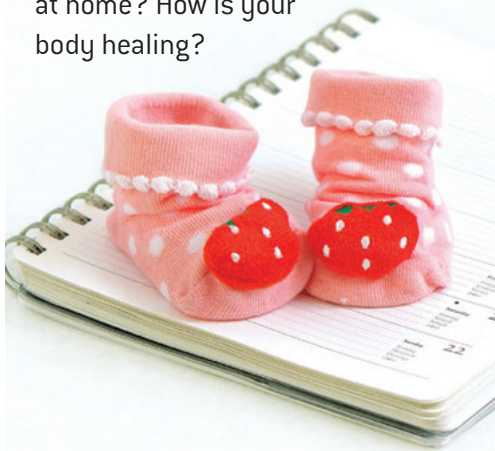
## → How Can We Help You Today?

- We can help you make appointments. In some cases, we can help get you to the appointment. Call **1.800.303.9626**.
- Don't miss out on important information. If you move or change phone numbers, tell us. Call **1.800.303.9626**.
- If you are turning 65 soon, learn about MetroPlus Medicare. Call **1.866.986.0356**.

## NEW MOM CHECKUP

You see the doctor regularly during pregnancy. It is important for the doctor to check on your unborn baby. Just as important is checking on your health—even after you give birth. Schedule a checkup with your doctor for six weeks after you give birth.

This checkup is a good time to discuss how you are feeling and how you are coping with motherhood. Are you feeling sad? Do you have enough help at home? How is your body healing?



### Make Your Voice Heard

Did you know that MetroPlus has a Member Advisory Committee (MAC)? Members who join meet with MetroPlus staff over lunch to talk about how we can improve our health plan. Learn more and how to participate at [metroplus.org/mac](http://metroplus.org/mac).

# Questions and Answers: Breastfeeding Basics

Learn more about this low-cost and healthy way to feed your baby.

### Is breastfeeding hard to do?

It takes practice for both moms and babies. But there is help. Ask other women for tips. Meet with a lactation nurse after you give birth.

A nurse can give tips for getting started. He or she can help you find the best way to breastfeed for you and your baby.

### Does it hurt?

It is different for every woman. You may be sore when you start. Ask your doctor about ointments to soothe nipple pain. Warm compresses and hot showers can ease discomfort, too. Massaging your breasts can help prevent clogs and infections.

### Why is breastfeeding recommended?

Some moms prefer breastfeeding because it is cheaper than using formula. It is also better for the environment.

Health organizations recommend breastfeeding for a few reasons:

- Breast milk is easy for babies to digest.
- Breast milk protects babies from infections.
- Breastfeeding lowers a baby's risk of being overweight as a child.
- Breastfeeding can help a mom's overall health.

### Can I get pregnant while breastfeeding?

Yes. But it is less likely if you are breastfeeding regularly and have not started your period again.



### How long should I breastfeed?

Breastfeeding for the first six months of your baby's life has many benefits for you and your baby.

Learn more at [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov). Search for "breastfeeding." Sign up for **Mobile Milk**, a text-messaging program to help new moms. Get started by texting **MILK** to **877877**.

## You Do Not Deserve Pain

The stress of being parents is too much for some couples. It can lead to violence.

**Remember:** Hitting and bullying is never okay. Staying with each other because of your babies is not safe—especially if you are being hurt. Your pain hurts your children.

You are not alone. And it is not your fault. Call **911** in an emergency. Call the Domestic Violence Hotline at **1.800.621.HOPE (1.800.621.4673)**.

## → The Facts on UTIs

**WHAT IS IT?** UTI stands for urinary tract infection. It happens when bacteria infect part of your urinary tract, such as your bladder.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

- Pain or burning while urinating
- Frequent urination
- Feeling the need to urinate but not being able to go
- Low fever
- Cloudy or bloody urine
- Pressure below your belly button

**HOW IS IT TREATED?** Most UTIs are cured with antibiotics. But UTIs can lead to serious kidney infections if not treated. Call your doctor if you think you have a UTI.

# SIGNS OF ADDICTION


It is natural to look for relief when you are battling pain. But be wary of prescribed painkillers. It is easy to become addicted to these powerful medications. Addiction can happen to anyone.

Opioids are the most troubling painkillers. They include morphine, oxycodone and fentanyl.

Look for signs of addiction if you or somebody you know is taking painkillers. Signs include:

- Sudden money problems
- Extreme changes in mood

- Visiting more than one doctor to get more painkillers
- Staying away from friends or family
- Seeming dazed or sleepy



**DO YOU NEED HELP?** Do not wait. Talk to your doctor. Or reach out to LifeNet. LifeNet is a crisis center for New Yorkers. It offers help in many languages. Call **1.800.LIFENET** or visit **lifenet.nyc**.



## 3 WAYS MEN CAN HELP THEIR HEARTS

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in men. But you can prevent it. Start by following these three tips:

- 1 Visit your doctor regularly.** Your doctor will test you for the signs of heart disease.
- 2 Take medication as instructed.** Prescriptions only work if you take them just as your doctor tells you to.
- 3 Eat more vegetables and fruits.** Every day, swap one fatty snack for a piece of fruit. Your heart will thank you.