

# HEALTHletter®

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

You're #1 with us!

## Next Time You're At **the Doctor...**


Make the most of your checkup. Give the doctor an update on your general health and lifestyle. Ask questions. Here are two topics you should cover.

- 1. Your meds.** Tell the doctor about all the medicine you take. That includes vitamins and anything over-the-counter, such as allergy medicine or aspirin. Ask about side effects and if this medicine is safe for you. Also, show your doctor the pill bottles. He or she will check dosage and directions.
- 2. Screenings.** Are you due for any routine tests? If you're a woman, ask about breast cancer screening and a Pap test. Other tests for men and women include blood cholesterol and blood pressure. All these tests can alert you to health issues early, so don't delay screenings.



Find MetroPlusHealth on

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MHP Inc

  
160 Water St., 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10038  
Phone: 1-800-303-9626  
[www.metroplus.org](http://www.metroplus.org)



## QUICK TIPS

- ▶ We offer special programs for people living with asthma, diabetes and HIV/AIDS. Call **1-800-303-9626** or TTY **1-800-881-2812**.
- ▶ Do not miss information about your health insurance. If you move or change phone numbers, tell us. Call **1-800-303-9626**.
- ▶ If you have trouble hearing, use our TTY/TDD number. It's **1-800-881-2812**.
- ▶ Are you turning 65? MetroPlus offers Medicare programs. You may be able to change from your current health insurance to MetroPlus Medicare very easily. Call **1-866-986-0356** to learn more.

## Do You Have **Children?**

Raising healthy kids is hard work. MetroPlus can help you. We can give you tips and information. This is called “anticipatory guidance.”

Visit [www.metroplus.org](http://www.metroplus.org) for health tips and resources. You can

also call Customer Services at **1-800-303-9626**. We can help you:

- Get information about children's health.
- Find a doctor for your kids.
- Make an appointment.

## 3 Ways to Connect With Us

MetroPlus Health Plan wants the best for your health. We can help you if you have any questions about how to get care, how to find a doctor or how to use your benefits.

Here are three ways to learn more:

- 1 Talk to Customer Services: **1-800-303-9626** (Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.).
- 2 Visit our website: [www.metroplus.org](http://www.metroplus.org).
- 3 Get the latest news on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MetroPlusHealth](https://www.facebook.com/MetroPlusHealth).

# When It's Time to See Your **Eye Doctor**

The eyes can be a window to your health. That's where the eye doctor comes in. Eye exams can find early signs of diabetes, glaucoma, high blood pressure and arthritis. Plus, you'll see how your vision is holding up. You might need glasses for the first time. If you have glasses, it might be time for stronger lenses.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Most healthy people should have an eye exam every few years. But it should not be stressful. Discuss your family health history with the doctor. Describe any vision problems. Give details about fuzziness or spots you see. If you get headaches or have to squint, mention that, too.

Then it's time for vision tests. You'll read charts of random letters and numbers at

various sizes. The doctor will test each eye and give you a prescription for glasses or contact lenses if you need them.

A dilated eye exam is typically needed every few years. Drops are placed in your eyes to widen the pupils. Then the doctor looks for damage to your retina and optic nerve. While not painful, your vision may be blurry for several hours. You'll be more sensitive to light, too. Plan ahead and make sure someone can drive you home.

## LOOK OUT FOR GLAUCOMA

A glaucoma test is also standard. This involves a puff of air in your eye. It tests your eye pressure and doesn't hurt. Glaucoma is more common with age and can cause blindness. But early detection can protect against further vision loss.

## DIABETES AND YOUR EYES


If you have diabetes, you have a higher risk of vision problems and blindness. Regular eye care is important. See your eye doctor at least once a year.

People with diabetes should have a dilated eye exam every year. You need an eye doctor who can look for retinopathy.

These vision changes should bring you to eye doctor right away:

- Blurry vision
- Double vision
- Trouble reading signs, books or computer screens
- Eye pain and eye redness that doesn't go away
- Eye pressure
- Seeing spots or floaters
- Distorted or restricted side vision



 Most healthy people should have an eye exam every few years.

# How to Fight the Flu

We all want to avoid the flu. Well, flu season is here again, so let's review ways to stay healthy.

## GET YOUR VACCINE

A new flu vaccine is made each year. It's available now. Everyone age 6 months and older should get it. The

vaccine can be given as a shot or a nasal spray. The vaccine is safe and effective. It takes effect after about two weeks. Your doctor can give you the shot or help you find other places to get it.

The vaccine is your best protection from flu, so don't skip it.



## ➔ Other Tips to Avoid Getting Sick

There are everyday ways to help ward off flu.

- Stay strong by getting plenty of rest, eating healthy food and drinking enough water.
- Wash your hands often using soap and water. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer is a good backup option to kill germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes and mouth so you don't let germs into your body.
- Try to stay away from sick people—even in your own home.
- If you do get sick, cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze. Stay home for at least 24 hours. This gives you time to recover and prevents the spread of illness.

Flu can make you sick for a few days to weeks. If you don't start to feel better, talk to your doctor.

## YOU DON'T ALWAYS NEED ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics do not cure everything. They only treat bacterial infections. Antibiotics do not work on viruses such as flu and colds.

Your doctor will decide what to

prescribe. Taking antibiotics if you do not need them could make them not work when you do need them. This is called "antibiotic resistance." It is a major health problem.

Antibiotics are strong drugs. If you do need them, follow directions and finish the medicine. Do not share the drugs with others or save leftovers.