

WELL being

SPRING/SUMMER 2015

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Visit us at www.metroplusmedicare.org.

1-800-442-2560

24/7 Medical Answering Service

After 8 p.m., Sundays and holidays:

Hours of Operation: Mon-Sat, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

TTY/TDD: 711

Phone: 1-866-986-0356

Health or Wellness or Prevention Information

 Metro Plus Health Plan

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➔ Your "Welcome to Medicare" Preventive Visit

Here is what you can expect when you see your doctor for this preventive visit. Your doctor will:

- Review your medical and family history, current health conditions, and prescriptions.
 - Check your blood pressure, vision, weight, and height to get a baseline for your care.
 - Make sure you're up-to-date with preventive screenings and services, such as cancer screenings and shots.
 - Order health tests, depending on your general health and medical history.
- Here's what you should bring to your "Welcome to Medicare" preventive visit:
- **Medical records, including immunization records.** Even if your current doctor does the visit, gather as much medical information as you can to make sure nothing is overlooked.
 - **Family health history.** Try to learn as much as you can about your family's health history before your appointment. The information will help you and your doctor better understand what screenings you should get and what to watch for in the future.
 - **Prescription drugs.** Bring a list of your prescription drugs, over-the-counter

drugs, vitamins and supplements.

Your doctor will give you a plan for free screenings and preventive services that you need.

Stay In Touch

- ▶ **Call MetroPlus Medicare Customer Services:** We are here to help you Monday to Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Call **1-866-986-0356**. If you have trouble hearing, call our TTY/TDD number, **711**.
- ▶ **Visit us online:** www.metroplusmedicare.org.
- ▶ **Join our Member Advisory Committee (MAC).** Share feedback about your care! Call Customer Services for more information.

Do Your Part to Stop Fraud

MetroPlus wants to help stop healthcare fraud. We look into all possible cases of fraud, waste, or abuse.

Fraud includes member fraud, provider fraud, employee fraud and vendor fraud.

Tell MetroPlus if you notice fraud. Contact us privately by calling our hotline at 1-888-245-7247. Or write to MetroPlus Special Investigation Unit, 160 Water St. 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10038.

DON'T MISS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Have you moved recently? Or changed phone numbers? Let us know so that we can stay in touch. Call our Customer Services at **1-866-986-0356**.

Small Ways to Make **BIG** Health Changes

Enjoy the weather and feel your best.

GET WALKING. Now is a great time to start a regular walking routine. Start small. Try to take a 10-minute walk most days.

DRINK WATER. A cold drink on a warm day tastes great. And water is the best choice. Water hydrates better than drinks that have sugar in them. Drinking water can also improve your blood pressure.



Take Care of **Your Smile**

If you don't take care of your teeth, you can get cavities or develop bad breath. You can also get infections like gingivitis.

Here are tips for keeping your teeth clean and your mouth healthy:

- **Brush your teeth** for two minutes twice a day. Brush your molars in a back-and-forth motion. Brush the rest of your teeth either up-and-down or in small circles.

- **Floss once a day.** Flossing removes plaque and food particles from between your teeth.
- **Brush your tongue** to remove bacteria.
- **Replace your toothbrush** every 3 months or whenever the bristles are frayed.
- **Use a fluoride toothpaste.**
- **See your dentist** at least once a year for a cleaning and checkup.



Your Feedback Is Important

Have you gotten a survey from The Myers Group on behalf of MetroPlus? If you have already returned your survey, thank you!

If you have not done the survey, please fill it in as soon as possible. Then follow the instructions for returning it to The Myers Group. You may get a phone call from The Myers Group to finish it over the phone.

We want to know what you think of MetroPlus. It will help us serve you better.

Fight Your Cravings

You know smoking can increase your risk for cancer and other disease. Even so, it's hard to quit smoking. It's easy to be tempted, especially if you are under stress or around people who smoke.

Here are four ways to beat your cravings:

1. Call a friend.
2. Tell yourself you'll light up 5 minutes from now. If you can delay smoking, the urge could pass.
3. Think about why you are quitting.
4. Consider medication. It can increase your chances of quitting.

If you do smoke, do not give up on quitting. Think about what went wrong and make a new plan to fight cravings.

Learn more and get help from the New York State Smoker's Quit Line (**1-866-697-8487**). Or check out **www.becomeanex.org** and **www.nycsmokefree.org/resources**.

Your **Diabetes Plan**

Have you have been diagnosed with diabetes? Then you and your doctor will make a plan to manage your condition.

- You will need to test your insulin throughout the day and give yourself insulin.
- Regular exercise and healthy meals can help keep your blood glucose level stable. Watch how food and activity affect your insulin.
- Remember your medication!

Your doctor may prescribe medicine to help you manage your condition. Ask your doctor when to take your medication. Never stop taking it without checking with your doctor first.

- Routine tests and checkups are another way to help you and your doctor watch your diabetes. Use the table below to keep track of your tests and to write down notes.

Learn the Signs of Kidney Disease

Diabetes can lead to kidney disease. People with diabetes should talk to their doctor if they notice their feet and ankles swelling, if they feel more tired than usual and if they are confused or forgetful. Chest pain and shortness of breath are other red flags.

DIABETES EXAM	TIMEFRAME	NOTES
A check-up with your diabetes doctor	Every 3 to 6 months	
EYE EXAM	TIMEFRAME	NOTES
A check-up with an eye doctor who takes care of people with diabetes	Once a year (your doctor may schedule more often)	
FOOT EXAM	TIMEFRAME	NOTES
Your doctor checks your reflexes and the blood pulse in your feet	Once a year (or every 3 to 6 months if you've had foot ulcers)	
HEMOGLOBIN A1C TEST	TIMEFRAME	NOTES
A lab test that shows how well you're controlling your blood glucose level	Every 3 months	
CHOLESTEROL TEST	TIMEFRAME	NOTES
A lab test that measures the cholesterol and triglycerides in your blood	Once a year, or more often if your cholesterol is high	
KIDNEY TEST	TIMEFRAME	NOTES
A blood test and a urine test for a protein that can indicate kidney damage	Once a year	

Love Your Heart



Many heart attacks and cases of heart disease can be prevented. We just need to take better care of our hearts.

Here are some ways you can show your heart the love—every day, every week and every year.

DO THIS EVERY DAY

Follow a healthy diet: If you eat a lot of soda, fast food or fried foods, you can become overweight and get high blood pressure. This makes your heart have to work harder to do its job. Most of your diet should be fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fish.

Quit smoking: Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease. If you're still lighting up, talk to your doctor about ways to kick the habit.

Lower stress: When you are anxious, your body releases certain hormones. These stress hormones increase blood pressure and can even lead to a heart attack. Find healthy ways to manage stress. Deep breathing, exercise, yoga, walking and reading are good options.

DO THIS EVERY WEEK

Work up a sweat: Exercise helps you manage your weight. It can also lower your risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, which raise the risk of developing heart disease.

Experts recommend exercising for at least 30 minutes five days per week. Swimming, biking, brisk walking, and aerobics or dance classes are good activities.

DO THIS EVERY MONTH

Check your blood pressure:

High blood pressure damages the walls of the arteries. The damage increases the risk of narrowing and hardening of the arteries, along with developing blood clots.

Your blood pressure reading includes two numbers: the systolic pressure (the top number) and the diastolic pressure (the bottom number). A normal blood pressure reading is 119/79 or lower, while 140/90 or up is considered high.

Refill medications: If lifestyle changes are not enough to reduce your risk of heart disease, your doctor may prescribe medications. You may need to take beta blockers, anticoagulants ACE inhibitors, statins or antiplatelet medications.

DO THIS EVERY YEAR

Go to your annual health exam: Your healthcare team plays an important role in creating a treatment plan that reduces your risk of heart disease.

During checkups, your doctor will assess your risk factors for and do a complete medical examination. Your doctor may also measure your cholesterol and triglyceride levels.



More than 18,000 New Yorkers die from heart disease and stroke each year. Schedule an appointment with your doctor today to check your risk.

Tips for Living With COPD

COPD stands for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. It is a long-term (chronic) disease that affects your lungs (pulmonary system). It makes it very hard to breathe. You cannot cure COPD. But you can find ways to cope with it.

QUIT SMOKING. This is the best way to feel better. You'll start breathing better as soon as you quit. Turn to page 3 for tips to stop your cravings.

PRACTICE BREATHING EXERCISES. Your doctor can help you learn exercises that can help.

KNOW YOUR TREATMENT PLAN. Your doctor may suggest oxygen therapy. You might get inhalers. Surgery is also an option for a few people. No matter what your treatment is, be sure to follow it. Work with your doctor.

PLAN YOUR DAYS. Plan activities for when you feel your best. Rest when you need to. And make everyday chores easier on yourself. For example: Keep a chair in the kitchen and sit when you need a rest. Take baths instead of showers.



Healthy Ways to Deal with Depression

Everyone feels sad or anxious sometimes. Depression is a condition that causes these feelings to overwhelm you. If you notice the signs of depression, take action to feel like yourself again.

Signs of depression include:

- Feeling sad for a number of weeks
- Avoiding things you usually enjoy
- Sleeping too much or having trouble sleeping
- Swings in weight or appetite
- Having problems with concentration, memory or making decisions
- Feeling hopeless or guilty
- Thoughts of suicide

There are many positive ways to feel better. The first step is to talk with your doctor. You can decide together what treatment is right for you.

Healthy options for treating depression include:

- **Talk therapy.** Therapy can help

you change thought patterns that are part of depression. And having someone to listen to your worries can feel like a relief.

- **Medicine.** Work with a doctor to find an antidepressant that's right for you. The right medicine can be used with other treatment to help you feel more stable.
- **A healthy sleep schedule.** People with depression often sleep too much or too little. Aim to get 8 hours of sleep every night.
- **Connecting with others.** Isolation can make depression worse. Reach out to friends and family for support.

Remember: Depression can make it seem like you won't ever feel better. But treatment can help you feel like yourself again.

Beacon Health Strategies manages all Behavioral Health Services for MetroPlus Health Plan. Visit our website for more information.

ARE YOU DUE FOR A MAMMOGRAM?

Regular mammograms are important for women. They are a way to look for early signs of breast cancer. Finding breast cancer early means it's easier to treat.

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast. Women between 40 and 74 should get one every year.

Here's how to prepare for your mammogram: Do not wear deodorant, perfume or powder on the day of your appointment. These can sometimes look like a spot on the X-ray. Try not to schedule your x-ray during or the week before your period.



The Facts About CHF

About 5 million people in the United States have congestive heart failure, or CHF. It is also called heart failure.

CHF happens when your heart can't pump enough blood for your body. Blood can gather in your veins. Your feet and ankles can swell. Fluid can build up in your lungs.

What causes CHF? Heart disease and heart attacks can lead to CHF. Being overweight, having diabetes or high blood pressure can also cause CHF.

CHF does not go away. But you can manage it. Quit smoking. Eat a diet that is low in salt and fat. Follow your doctor's treatment plan to feel better.

3 WAYS to Fight High Blood Pressure

Medication is just one way of helping your hypertension. Follow these tips to manage high blood pressure:

- 1. Know your numbers.** What was your blood pressure at your last appointment? For most people, the goal is to keep blood pressure at or below 119/79 mmHg.
- 2. Eat a healthy diet.** Avoid fat and salt. Fill up on whole grains, vegetables and fruits.
- 3. Stay active.** Find an exercise that works for you. Maybe you can walk for 10 minutes every day. Or you would enjoy swimming at a local club. Just make sure you do a little every day.

MetroPlus Health Plan

Privacy Notice

MetroPlus respects your privacy rights. This notice describes how we treat the non-public 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 application and other forms or that you tell us; and
- Information about your dealings with us, the healthcare 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; and

- 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 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 with MetroPlus ends, your Information will remain protected in accordance with our policies and procedures for current members.

You can contact MetroPlus at the address or phone number below to:

- Request more information about our privacy policies and practices,
- File a privacy-related complaint with us, or
- Request (in writing) to review Information about you in our records.

Can House Calls Help You?

If you have diabetes or congestive heart failure (CHF) that's hard to control, MetroPlus can help. MetroPlus has a telehealth program called House Calls. The program gives members:

- Tools to track their health.
- A telephone modem to send health information to a nurse.

The program helps members manage their medications. And members get support to stick to their diet and activity plans.

All House Calls help comes right to members' homes. House Calls can help members avoid trips to the hospital. Learn more today. Call MetroPlus at **1-866-986-0356** and ask about House Calls.



Customer Services

MetroPlus Health Plan

160 Water Street, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10038

Phone: **1-800-303-9626**

TTY: **1-800-881-2812** or **711**

Customer Service Hours:

Monday to Saturday

8 a.m. to 8 p.m.