

# HEALTH letter<sup>®</sup>

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

You're #1 with us!

## TAKE ACTION FOR YOUR ASTHMA

Is your asthma under control? These are warning signs it might not be:

- You have trouble breathing. You cough or wheeze many times in the day or night.
- You use your inhaler more than two times a week.
- You miss school or work because of your asthma.
- You have to visit the ER for asthma treatment.

Have you noticed these signs? Then it is time to visit your doctor. Your doctor can review your asthma medication. He or she can update your asthma plan. Remember, asthma can be controlled.

Work closely with your doctor and keep all of your appointments. Call MetroPlus Health Plan at **1.800.303.9626** for help staying healthy.



[www.metroplus.org](http://www.metroplus.org)



Find MetroPlus Health on

PRSR1 STD  
U.S. Postage Paid  
MHP Inc

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

MEN



## Healthcare Visits **for Kids**

Children should see their doctor for a well visit once a year. Children under age 2 visit more often. Why? Because kids grow and change quickly. A doctor can look for health problems and make sure your child is growing normally.

### Here are 4 tips for your child's next health appointment:

- 1. Make routine appointments well in advance.** This helps you find a time that is best for you. Same-day visits are for when your child is sick or hurt. ER visits are only for emergencies—health problems that may lead to death or losing a limb.
- 2. If you have to cancel an appointment, call the office as soon as possible.** Also, call if you are running late.

**3. Let the office know why you made the appointment.** Does your child need immunizations? A routine checkup? A checkup so they can take part in sports? Mention any questions or concerns.

**4. Call Member Services if you need help scheduling an appointment.** Staff can also help members who don't speak English. Call **1.800.303.9626**.

If your child gets ill after office hours, go to an urgent care clinic. You can also call our 24-hour health line at **1.800.442.2560**.

**DON'T FORGET:** Your baby needs a lead poisoning test. Lead can harm people of all ages, but kids under 6 are at extra risk. High lead levels can cause learning problems and other health issues. Ask your doctor about a lead test before your child turns 1.

## REMINDERS

- ▶ If you move or change phone numbers, tell us. Call **1.800.303.9626**.
- ▶ Do you have trouble hearing? Then use our TTY/TDD number. Call **1.800.881.2812**.
- ▶ Are you turning 65 soon? Then learn about MetroPLUS Medicare. Call **1.866.986.0356**.
- ▶ To get a copy of our list of providers, call Member Services.

## 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 Member Services: **1.800.303.9626** (Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.).
- 2** Visit our website: **www.metroplus.org**.
- 3** Get the latest news on Facebook: **www.facebook.com/MetroPlusHealth**.



# METROPLUS HEALTH PLAN PRIVACY NOTICE

→ MetroPlus respects your privacy rights. This notice describes how we treat the nonpublic 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 health care 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.

## 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–Saturday  
8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

# What Is Congestive Heart Failure?

Congestive heart failure (CHF) occurs when your heart becomes weak and can't pump enough blood for your body. Symptoms grow over time. They include:

- shortness of breath
- coughing or wheezing
- tiredness
- swelling in your hands, legs and abdomen
- confused thinking
- weight gain for no reason
- a quick heartbeat

CHF is often caused by heart disease, when the arteries in your heart become narrowed or blocked. Being overweight and having diabetes or high blood pressure increases your risk for CHF.

Anything that weakens your heart can cause CHF. When your heart is weak, it's hard for it to pump blood. When the heart works harder to keep up, it grows larger. It builds more muscle and pumps faster.

With treatment, you can slow CHF down. Healthy lifestyle changes may reduce your symptoms. If you smoke, you should quit. Talk to your doctor about losing weight and eating better.

Your doctor may prescribe medications, including ACE inhibitors, beta blockers and diuretics. Cardiac rehab, medical devices and surgery are other options.

CHF does not go away. But it can be managed. Make sure to follow your doctor's treatment plan.



## 3 REASONS TO QUIT

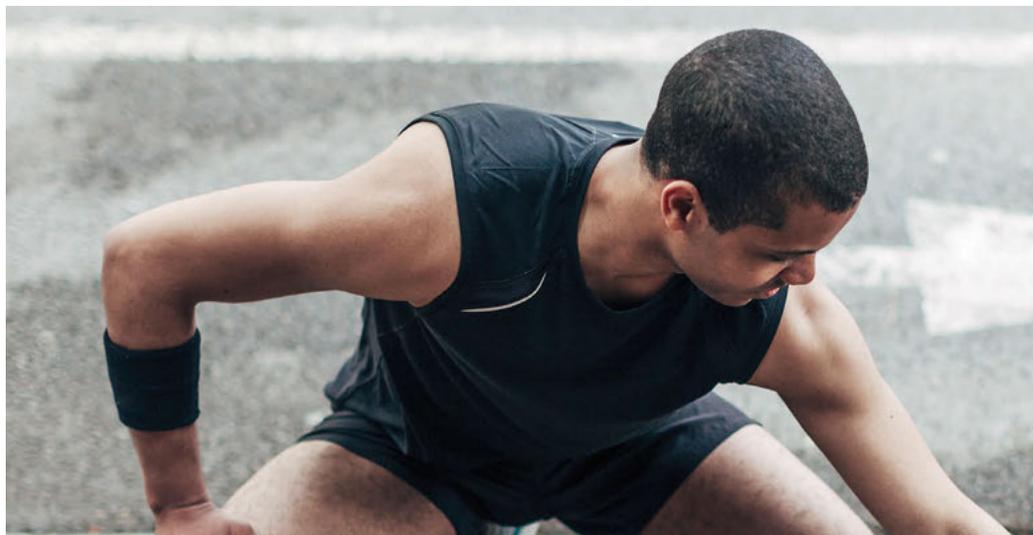
It's hard to stop smoking. Find a reason for quitting to help your chances for success. Here are a few possible goals:

**1. To improve your health:** Smoking increases your risk for cancer, stroke, heart disease and other diseases.

**2. To save money: Cigarettes are expensive!** Depending on how much you smoke, you could save thousands of dollars every year if you quit.

**3. To enjoy life: Smoking affects your sense of taste and smell.** It interferes with your ability to travel and take part in events.

Ready to quit? Get free help from the New York State Smoker's Quit Line (**1.866.697.8487**). Or check out [www.becomeanex.org](http://www.becomeanex.org) and [www.nycsmokefree.org/resources](http://www.nycsmokefree.org/resources). MetroPlus members may be able to get counseling or medication to help them quit. Call us at **1.800.303.9626** to find out more.



## ➔ Hypertension Hurts Your Heart

High blood pressure is also called hypertension. It usually has no symptoms. But it is serious.

High blood pressure means your heart is working hard to pump blood. Over time, this damages your heart. It leads to heart attacks, strokes and other health problems.

Learn your blood pressure numbers. If you have high blood pressure, your doctor may prescribe medication. Eating better and exercising can also help.



# YOUR GUIDE TO DIABETES CARE

What is the most important thing you can do if you have diabetes? See your doctor regularly. That's because diabetes can change quickly. Plus, diabetes can cause serious health problems in your body. Your doctor will work with you to manage your condition.

## You can expect these tests when you visit your doctor:

- **Hemoglobin A1c test**, every three months. This blood test checks your average blood sugar. The goal is 7%–8%. Your doctor can help you determine your individual goal. Your results will tell your doctor if your treatment is working.
- **Blood pressure screening** at every medical visit. The goal is less than 140/90 mm/Hg.
- **Complete foot exam**, once a year.
- **Urine protein test** (microalbumin), once a year to check for signs of kidney disease.
- **Cholesterol screenings**, once a year.

People with diabetes should also have eye and dental exams every year.

## There are things you can do to support your health, too:

- Check your blood sugar at least three times a day. Many people check before meals, after meals and at bedtime. If you take insulin, you may need to check more often.
- Look at your feet every day. Check for color changes, swelling, numbness, sores or cuts.
- Follow your doctor's advice about these tests.



## → 3 Types of Diabetes

There are two main types of diabetes:

- **Type 1** means the body makes little to no insulin. People with type 1 need insulin shots.
- **Type 2** is the most common. With type 2, the body does not use insulin well. Risk factors include being overweight, having high blood pressure and having a family history of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes can be treated with a better diet and exercise habits. Sometimes insulin is used.

A third type is gestational diabetes. It occurs in a small number of pregnant women.

- Work closely with your health team to stay well. MetroPlus can also support you. We have a program to help people with diabetes. Call **1.800.303.9626** to learn more.