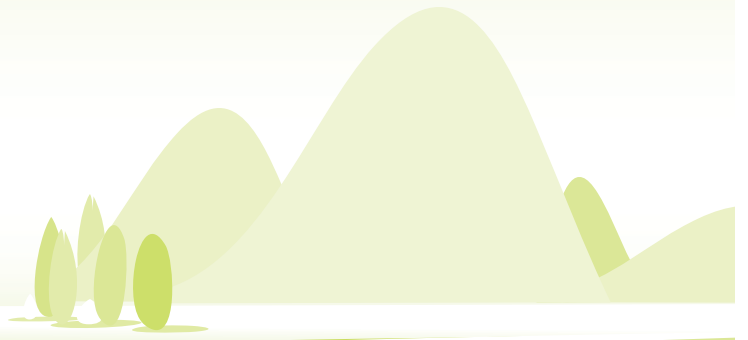


WELL being

FALL 2014

THE PATH TO GOOD HEALTH



Exercise Your Brain

Staying social and keeping your brain sharp helps your overall health—it's also just plain fun.

As colder weather settles in, make regular plans to meet with friends and family. Schedule a weekly brunch or shopping outing. Find activities through your church or community center to make some new friends. Whatever you choose, social engagements should be

something you look forward to.

During down time, focus on your mental acuity. Read every day and play games—crosswords, math puzzles and computer games will exercise your memory and concentration.

Keep a journal to record your reflections and future plans.

The key is to keep learning at every age and to stay engaged with the people around you.

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**. After 8 p.m. and on Sundays and holidays, call our 24/7 Medical Answering Service at **1-800-442-2560**.



Visit us at www.metroplusmedicare.org.

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Health or Wellness or Prevention Information
Phone: 1-866-986-0356
TTY/TDD: 711
Hours of Operation: Mon-Sat, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
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MetroPlus
Health Plan

Don't Forget Your Medication!

Medication adherence means taking medicine the way your doctor tells you to. It is one of the most important ways you can stay healthy.

MetroPlus recently took a survey of our members. We asked what the biggest obstacles are that prevent members from taking their medicine properly. In the next few issues of *Well Being*, we will share tips to make taking your medicines easier.

What's the biggest reason that MetroPlus members don't take their medication? They forget. Forgetting to take medicine regularly can make it less effective for you. Sometimes, it's hard to remember to take your

medicine, especially if you have to take it at a specific time every day.

There are lots of ways you can remind yourself to take your medicine. Try these ideas:

- **Use a pillbox:** If you have pills you must take daily, try using a pillbox marked with the days of the week. This way, you can be sure you took your previous dose. MetroPlus Medicare is happy to send you a pillbox. Just call Customer Services to have a pillbox mailed to you.
- **Set an alarm.** For medicines that need to be taken at certain times, try setting an alarm on your watch or your cell phone. You can even put reminder notes near items you use at

certain times, like your coffee maker or TV.

- **Pair your habits.** Try combining taking your medicine with other daily habits. Take your medicine after you brush your teeth or at mealtimes.
- **Talk with your doctor.** Ask your doctor to see if a different medication schedule might be better for you.

HOW DO YOU REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR MEDICATION?

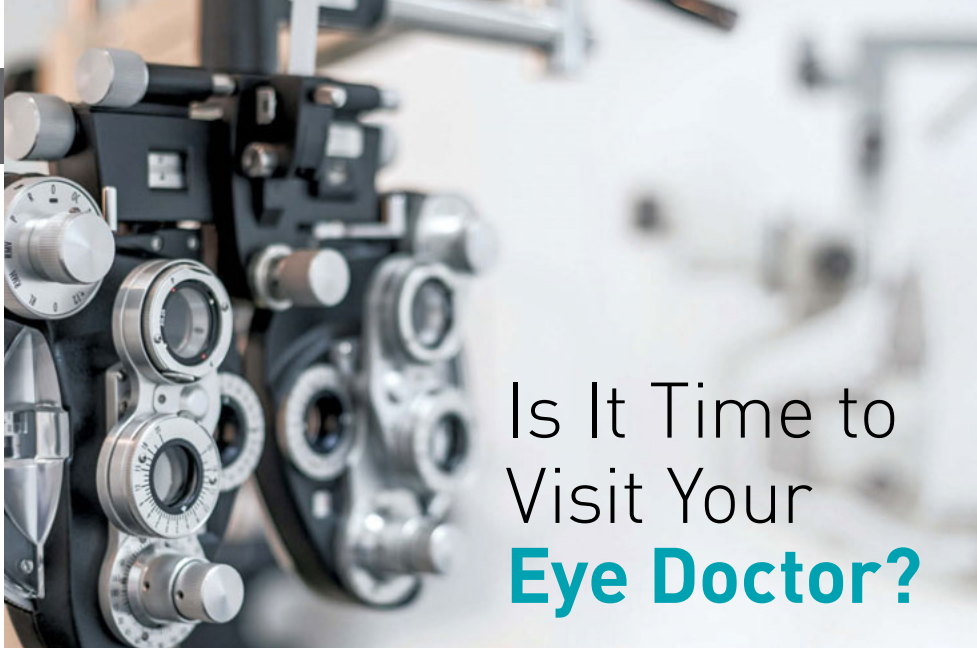
Do you have any tricks that you use? Send your ideas to MetroPlus_Communications@nychhc.org and your tip might make it into our next issue!

3 WAYS to Connect with MetroPlus

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.

- 1 Call Customer Services: **1-866-986-0356** (Monday to Saturday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.)
- 2 Visit our website: www.metroplus.org/medicare.
- 3 Get the latest news on Facebook: www.facebook.com/MetroPlusHealth.





Is It Time to Visit Your Eye Doctor?

Did you know that eye exams can find early signs of diabetes, glaucoma, high blood pressure and arthritis? More commonly, you'll see how your vision is holding up. It might be time for a stronger prescription or reading glasses.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Plan to see the eye doctor once a year. Be ready to describe any vision problems. Give details about any fuzziness or spots you see. If you get headaches, feel dizzy or have fallen due to poor eyesight, make sure to mention that.

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, but those with diabetes and other medical conditions need dilation more often. 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 and you'll be sensitive to light. Plan ahead and make sure someone can drive you home.

LOOKING FOR GLAUCOMA

A glaucoma "eye puff" test is also standard, and the quick screening doesn't hurt. As you might know, glaucoma is more common with age and can cause blindness. Cataracts are another age-related vision problem. In fact, about half of Americans have them before they reach age 80. But early detection can protect your eyesight.

→ QUICK TIPS

- ▶ Have you moved recently? Let us know so we can stay in touch. Call Customer Services at **1-866-986-0356**.
- ▶ Like us on Facebook for health tips and event information. Go to **www.facebook.com/MetroPlusHealth**.
- ▶ Do you have trouble hearing? Use a TTY/TDD machine to call our Customer Services at **711**.
- ▶ Some Medicare members may also be eligible for Medicaid. Being a member of both could save you money. Call Customer Services at **1-866-986-0356** to learn more.

Next Time You're at the Doctor ...

Make the most of your appointment. Give your doctor an update on your general health.

Check if you need any screenings. You might be

due for a cancer test, such as a colonoscopy. Women should ask when they are due for mammograms. Adults should have regular cholesterol tests.

Don't delay scheduling any of

these screenings if the doctor says you need them.

Finding health problems early—when they are most treatable—can make all the difference.



How to **Fight the Flu**

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 and everyone age 6 months and older should get it. Those age 65 and older are more susceptible to flu and are encouraged to get the vaccine early. The flu is a serious illness for seniors and can lead to hospitalization and even death.

The vaccine can be given as a shot or a nasal spray. The vaccine is safe and effective but it takes about two

weeks to kick in, so you are still at risk during this time. Your doctor can give you the shot or direct you where else to get it.

OTHER PREVENTION TIPS

Stay strong every day by getting plenty of sleep, 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, tell your primary health care provider right away. Depending on your condition and health history, the doctor might prescribe antiviral drugs to get you better faster. Also, take care of yourself by resting and treating fever, cough and congestion as best you can.

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 or 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.