

Spring 2023

Health letter



Take care of your health and **earn a reward!** If you see this symbol, go to metroplusrewards.org to learn how you can earn member rewards.

Is your asthma under control?



Exams are an important part of asthma care. During the exam, your doctor will check to see if your asthma is under control. Your doctor might ask you questions about:

- **Sleep.** Do any symptoms wake you up while you are sleeping?
- **Rescue or quick-relief medicine.** How many times each day do you use these medicines?
- **Exercise.** Have you had any symptoms during exercise?

Know how to use your medicine

Do you know how to take your medicine and use your inhaler? Ask your doctor for help. You can also **watch this video**. Some people use an inhaler with a spacer. A spacer helps more of the medicine reach your lungs. Ask your doctor if you need to use a spacer.

Report any side effects

Write down any side effects so you can tell your doctor what happened. Your doctor may change your dose or have you try a different medication.

Request refills on time

Make sure you always have enough asthma medicine. Ask for refills during your visit. If you travel, take an extra supply of medicines in case your return is delayed.



Do you have an Asthma Action Plan?

Ask your doctor to help you make an **Asthma Action Plan**. Take a copy of the Asthma Action Plan to each visit.

VISIT US AT [METROPLUS.ORG](https://metroplus.org)

Do you speak a language other than English? MetroPlusHealth has Member Services staff who speak your language. If you need help making an appointment, call the Member Services Department at **800.303.9626 (TTY: 711)**.

Have you scheduled a well-child visit?

Well-child visits help keep your child healthy. Your child's doctor will check height, weight, hearing, and vision during the exam. The goal is to find any health problems and treat them before they become more serious.

Your child may get vaccines during the exam. Vaccines help protect your child from diseases. If your child missed a shot at the recommended age, you don't need to start over. Your child will receive a shot at their next visit.

The doctor may also give your child a lead test. Lead can cause your children to have learning and behavior problems. A lead test will show how

much lead is in their blood. If the test finds lead in your child's blood, they may need more tests and treatment.

You can ask any questions during the well-child visit. If there is something you don't understand, ask.



How to earn a member reward



Complete all 6 well-child visits in the first 15 months for \$60. Earn \$20 for completing 2 well-child visits between ages 16 and 30 months. Make an appointment today!

What to do after a hospital stay

When a patient gets out of the hospital after heart surgery, they work with their doctor to manage their condition. The same is true for people who leave the hospital after they get treatment for depression or substance abuse.

Here are some tips to help your recovery go well:

- 1. Learn more about your medications.** Write down the medicines you will need to take and when to take them. If you have any side effects, talk with your doctor. They may be able to change your dose.
- 2. Be patient.** You might not feel better right away. Keep track of how you're feeling and tell your doctor.

3. Stay current with your treatment.

Go to all doctor visits and therapy sessions. Take your medication as prescribed.

4. Know your limits.

Don't make too many plans all at once. It's also important to take time out for yourself. Schedule time to exercise, listen to music, or have lunch with a friend. These activities will help keep your stress levels in check.



EPSDT program keeps your children healthy

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) is a program that helps your children stay healthy. If your children are ages 21 and under, they will be enrolled in this program. Find out more about **EPSDT**.

Do you need to find a MetroPlusHealth provider or make an appointment? Call Member Services at **800.303.9626 (TTY: 711)** or visit **metroplus.org**.

Protect yourself and your loved ones from a drug overdose



Too many people are dying of drug overdoses in New York City. In 2022, there were more than 3,000 deaths due to drug overdose. That's more than ever before.

There is some good news: Everyone can be part of the solution. How? By learning about the dangers and sharing the facts with those you love. Here's what you should know.

Be aware of the risks

About 80% of overdose deaths in the city involve fentanyl. This drug is a dangerous opioid. It's up to 50 times stronger than heroin. In some cases, doctors prescribe fentanyl to treat pain. But people can also buy this drug illegally.

Heroin, cocaine, and meth are often laced with fentanyl. But, you can't see, taste, or smell fentanyl. So it's easy to take a deadly mix without even knowing it. Combining street drugs with prescriptions is not safe either.

Reach out for help

If you are struggling with drug use, it's OK to ask for help. Addiction can be treated. Ask your doctor about options such as:

- Medications to help withdrawal and cravings
- Therapy
- Support programs

Local resources

To get free information and treatment referrals, call **800.662.HELP (800.662.4357)** any time of day. Or you can text your ZIP code to **435748** to find help near you. Free overdose rescue kits are available at pharmacies in NYC. Find out where you can get a **rescue kit**.

Does your child need help for substance abuse?

Substance abuse is the abuse of illegal or legal substances. It can cause problems at work, school, and in relationships.

Think your child may be using drugs? Watch for some of these signs:

- Loss of interest in things they usually enjoy
- Lying about what they're doing and where they're going
- Not having much energy or having a lot of energy
- Missed days of school
- Problems with teachers and grades



Help is available

MetroPlusHealth has many types of **support services**. If you think your child needs help for alcohol or drugs, don't wait. Call your child's doctor. You can also find services and resources at **NYC Well**. To learn more, call **888.692.9355**.



ARE YOU UP-TO-DATE? Get your flu shot and COVID-19 shots and boosters if you haven't already. You will receive a \$10 member reward for getting your flu shot. Also, ask your doctor when you should get the pneumonia and shingles vaccines.

Make the most of your diabetes medicine

You can stay healthy when you have **diabetes**. One way is to keep your blood sugar on track. This helps prevent or delay problems with your heart, kidneys, and eyes.

Some people can keep their blood sugar at the target level with diet and exercise. Others may need to take medicine.

Follow the instructions if you take medicine. Here are some things you'll need to know:

- How much to take
- How often to take it
- If you should take it with food
- What to do if you miss a dose or take it late
- Side effects it can cause
- What to do if you have side effects

Diabetes medicines work best when you also eat healthy foods and get exercise. Do you have other health conditions, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol? If so, ask your doctor about how to manage them.



We can help you manage diabetes

MetroPlusHealth Care Managers are available 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Saturday. Call the Diabetes Care Management program at **800.303.9626** (TTY: 711).

Why use MyChart?

MyChart is a free online portal that helps you manage your health information. Use the portal any time to make an appointment or ask for a medication refill. You can also check test results and send a message to your doctor's office. **Sign up for MyChart today!**



Pharmacy plan update

NYRx is a Medicaid pharmacy plan that started covering your prescriptions on April 1. You will not need a new ID card. NYRx covers most medications and supplies. For more information, call the NYS Medicaid Helpline at **855.648.1909**.