

Fall 2023



WellBeing



You can earn a reward for taking care of your health! When you see this symbol, go to metroplusrewards.org to learn how you can earn a member reward.

It's time for a flu shot

Millions of people get the flu each year. It usually starts with fever, muscle aches, sore throat, and a cough. Getting a flu shot every year can help prevent the flu.

Adults ages 65 and older are more likely to have serious health problems when they get the **flu**. The flu could lead to **pneumonia**, heart attack, and stroke. Aging can weaken your immune system. This makes it harder for your body to fight the flu.

Try to get your flu shot in September or October. Also, ask your doctor about the pneumonia and **shingles vaccines** and get all COVID-19 shots.

Need another reason to get your flu shot? A recent study suggests that flu vaccination may reduce risk for Alzheimer's disease. People in the study who had at least one flu vaccine were 40% less likely to develop Alzheimer's than those who had none during the same four-year period.



Earn a \$10 reward

You can earn a \$10 reward for getting your flu shot. To report your flu shot, [click here](#).

Visit us at metroplus.org/medicare

Don't miss important information about your coverage. Let us know when you move or change your phone number so that we can stay in touch. Call Member Services at **866.986.0356 (TTY: 711)**.

3 ways to eat healthier when you have COPD

Following a healthy diet can affect how well you breathe when you have **COPD**. Making healthier choices can also help you have more energy, fight off infections, and maintain your weight. These three tips can help you eat well and feel better:

① **Eat four to six smaller meals each day instead of three larger ones.** Smaller meals help the diaphragm move freely, which makes breathing easier. Do you get tired when you eat late in the day? Try to eat more food in the morning. Also, sit up straight when eating to reduce the pressure on your lungs.

② **Limit salt intake.** Eating too much salt can cause swelling, which may increase blood pressure. This can lead to reduced blood flow to the lungs. Instead of salt, use herbs or spices to flavor your food.

③ **Avoid foods that cause bloating.** They may make breathing more difficult. Limit carbonated beverages, as well as beans, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and bran. You should also limit milk and other dairy products or substitute lactose-free alternatives.



Live well with COPD

To learn more about managing COPD symptoms, **watch this video.**



Are you at risk for falling?

Falling isn't just a matter of bruised pride. One in five falls causes serious harm. Some adults may break a bone or get a head injury. These injuries may make it harder to do everyday activities.

Several things increase your risk of falling as you get older, including:

- Lower-body weakness, often related to lack of physical activity
- Poor vision, often due to conditions such as cataracts and glaucoma
- Hearing loss, which is linked to a higher risk of falling
- Osteoporosis, which makes it more likely you'll break a bone if you fall

Help prevent a fall

For tips on preventing falls at home, **watch this video.**

What level is your emergency?



Knowing where to go in a health emergency is key to getting the best treatment possible. And it isn't always the emergency room (ER). Urgent care centers treat minor injuries and illness when you can't wait to get to the doctor.

Find out where the closest ER and urgent care center is in your area. Then learn the differences between them so you know where to go if an emergency occurs. Here are some tips that can help:

When to go to the ER

The ER is always open to treat serious problems. Get to the ER right away if you or a family member has sudden symptoms that need emergency care, including:

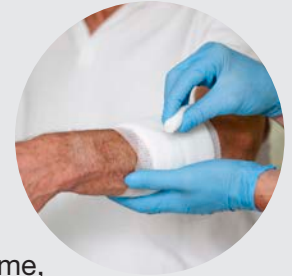
- Chest pain
- Trouble breathing
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Vomiting
- Loss of consciousness
- Choking
- Sudden slurred speech
- Seizures
- Severe burns
- Head or back injuries

When an urgent care center is a better choice

Urgent care centers offer many of the same services as the ER, such as X-rays and blood testing. But they don't treat life-threatening conditions. If you need treatment right away for a less serious problem, an urgent care center is your best bet.

Urgent care centers can treat:

- Sinus or ear infections
- Urinary tract infections
- Minor cuts and burns
- Sprains or broken bones
- Fever and sore throat



Virtual Visit offers 24/7 care anytime, anywhere, over video or phone. Find out more about **Virtual Visit**.

Did you schedule a mammogram?

Mammograms can help find cancer that can't be seen or felt. A mammogram is a low-dose X-ray that looks at your breast tissue for any abnormalities.

Here is when women at average risk should get a mammogram:

- **Ages 40 to 44:** You have the option to get a mammogram every year.
- **Ages 45 to 54:** Get a mammogram every year.
- **Ages 55 and older:** Keep getting mammograms every year. Or you can get one every two years. Your doctor will help you decide.



Earn a \$20 reward



Get your mammogram to earn a \$20 reward. To report your mammogram, **click here**.



Dilated eye exams help protect your vision

During a dilated eye exam (DEE), the eye doctor uses eye drops to make your pupils larger. This helps the doctor look for problems like **diabetic retinopathy**. Many adults should have a DEE every year or two. Do you have diabetes or high blood pressure? You may need a DEE at least once a year. Ask your doctor for advice.

Get help to stop smoking

If you smoke, ask your doctor about using tobacco-cessation products to help you quit. It's worth the effort to stop smoking. Cigarettes are linked to about 25% of heart disease-related deaths. Within just a year of quitting, you will have cut your chances of developing heart disease in half.

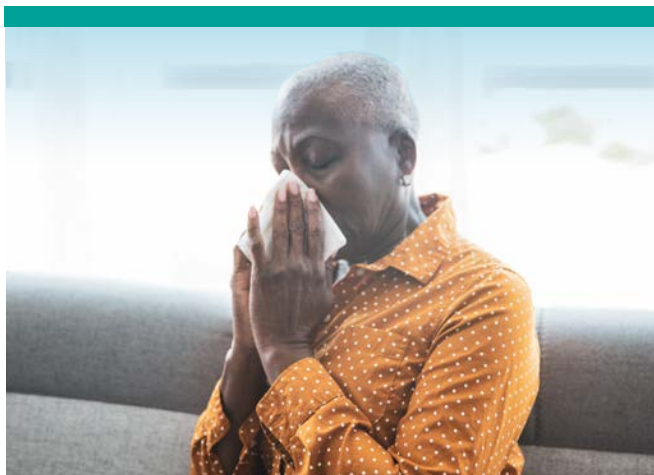
Learn more about our **online tobacco-cessation program**. For resources, go to **smokefree.gov** or **nysmokefree.com**.

To receive free nicotine patches or lozenges, call **311** or **866.697.8487**.



Sugary drinks raise the risk for type 2 diabetes

Don't overdo it on fall favorites like cider and cocoa. Like regular soda and fruit juice, they often have lots of added sugar and extra calories. It's not just weight gain that can increase the risk for type 2 diabetes. Research has linked sugary beverages to diabetes. Rely on water and make sugary options an occasional treat. Learn more by taking our **type 2 diabetes quiz**.



STUFFY NOSE? Take care with decongestants

Allergies and colds can lead to sneezing and a stuffy nose. If you take over-the-counter **decongestants** for colds, only use the amount shown on the label for a maximum of three days. More won't make it work better; longer could worsen stuffiness. Do you take prescription medicine? Ask your doctor if it's safe before you take a decongestant.

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Llame al 866.986.0356 (TTY: 711).

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