

Winter 2024



# WellBeing



When you see this symbol, go to [metroplusrewards.org](https://metroplusrewards.org) to learn how you can earn a member reward.

## Maximize your health care benefits

With the busy holiday season, it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle. Yet it's important not to neglect your health — or forget your health care benefits.

This checklist can serve as a helpful reminder. Put a check mark next to the steps that you've already completed. Then tackle any remaining steps as soon as possible.

- Schedule your yearly wellness visit with your doctor.** If you're new to Medicare within the past 12 months, schedule a **Welcome to Medicare visit** instead.
- Ask your doctor which screening tests you're due for, and get them done.** These tests help find health problems early, when they may be easier to treat. Examples include screenings for bone loss, heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers.
- Get your flu shot and COVID-19 shots and boosters, and stay up-to-date on other vaccines.** 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. Also, ask your doctor when you should get the pneumonia and **shingles** vaccines.



### It's not too late for a flu shot



**Report your flu shot** to get a \$10 reward. Go to [metroplusrewards.org](https://metroplusrewards.org) to register and report. Also, updated COVID-19 shots are now available. To find a vaccine near you, [click here](#).

Visit us at [metroplus.org/medicare](https://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)**.

# Chronic illness can lead to depression

A **chronic illness** is a condition that lasts for a long time. Examples include diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and kidney disease. But healthy habits, medications, and good medical care can help you manage symptoms.

It's normal to be sad about a long-term condition. For example, you may worry about your future. Chronic pain may limit your mobility and keep you from doing things you enjoy. But if you feel sad for more than a couple of weeks, you may also have depression.

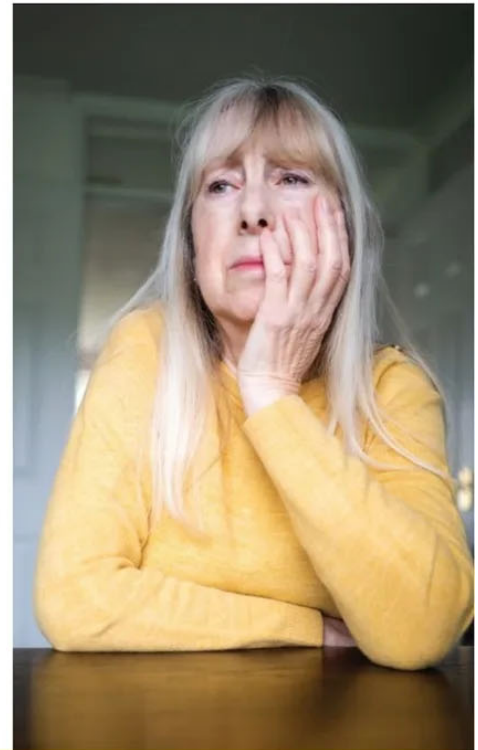
**Signs of depression** include:

- Feeling hopeless
- Losing interest in activities
- Having trouble sleeping
- Changes in weight or appetite
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering

Your overall health includes both physical and mental wellness. Depression is treatable, even if you have a chronic condition.

Here are some tips for talking with your doctor about your chronic condition or feeling depressed:

- Make a list to take to your appointment.
- Describe your symptoms and when they began.
- Include details of other **stressors** that may be making your symptoms worse.
- Remember that anything you discuss stays confidential.



## Depression is treatable

Our Member Services team is here to help. Call **800.303.9626** or **click here**. To reach the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**, call or text **988** or **800.273.TALK (8255)** to get help right away. You can also chat with counselors at **988lifeline.org**. The Lifeline is free and available 24/7.

## How can we help?

Local services are available to help with the following:

- Childcare
- Groceries
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Medical costs
- Health literacy
- Social isolation
- Immigrants/asylum seekers
- Legal assistance
- Disability

To get more information on these services, **click here**.

## Fill out the CAHPS® survey

Watch your mail for the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey. This is your chance to say how well MetroPlusHealth and your doctors are meeting your needs.

*CAHPS is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.*

# 3 tips to help you manage your medicines

Prescription medication may be part of your treatment plan. The advice below can help you stay on track with taking it correctly.

- 1. Fill prescriptions right away.** Getting your medicines right away is critical to improving and protecting your health. Once you start taking a medication, don't miss any doses. Do you have questions about **side effects or interactions** with other prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, or foods? Talk with your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- 2. Take the correct dose.** Don't take pills less often or break them in half to make a prescription last longer. Doing so lowers the dosage and may be dangerous. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about generic brands and assistance plans.
- 3. Follow a routine.** Take your medication around the same time each day. Make it a habit so you're less likely to forget. Breakfast and dinner time can be good options.



## Do you want a 90-day supply?

Tell your doctor if you want a 90-day supply of medicine. To learn more about getting a 90-day supply, [click here](#).

## What you need to know about antibiotics



Dealing with a bad cough? An **antibiotic** will help you feel better, right? Maybe not.

Antibiotics don't work on most cases of bronchitis. What if your mucus is yellow or green? It doesn't mean you need an antibiotic. Antibiotics should not be taken for viral illnesses. This includes colds, flu, most sore throats and sinus infections, some ear infections, and bronchitis.

When you use unnecessary antibiotics, bacteria will become resistant to the antibiotic. That means that your infections will become harder to treat.

Antibiotics can treat a bacterial infection like strep throat. If your doctor gives you an antibiotic, it's because the treatment will help you get better. Take it exactly as prescribed.

# Improve Your WellBeing

## How to lower A1c levels



If you have diabetes, meal planning can be a challenge. However, you can reach your target **A1C levels** with some simple food swaps. Here are some ideas: Replace regular pasta with whole-grain or cauliflower-based versions. Better yet, have spaghetti squash or zucchini noodles. Also, try adding black or pinto beans in place of meat. To search for healthy recipes, [click here](#).

## Quit smoking in the new year

To learn how to create a quit tobacco plan, [watch this video](#). Get support through the NY State Smokers' Quitline at **866.697.8487**, or [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov) or [nysmokefree.com](http://nysmokefree.com). To receive free nicotine patches or lozenges, call **311** or **866.697.8487**.

## Know your numbers

About one in three adults with **high blood pressure** isn't aware they have it. High blood pressure occurs when blood pushes against artery walls with extra force. This can contribute to heart attacks, strokes, and other health problems. Ask your doctor for a blood pressure check. For most adults, readings of 130/80 mmHg or higher indicate hypertension.



## Sit fit with chair exercises

Everyone benefits from physical activity. Are standing exercises difficult? Try seated workouts instead. For example, roll a wheelchair on a paved nature trail, use an arm-crank machine at the gym, or sign up for a chair yoga class. Ask your doctor for suggestions.

**TIP:** Try seated strength exercises using hand weights or elastic bands. For tips and examples, go to [nchpad.org](http://nchpad.org) and do a search for "seated strengthening exercises."

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