

Spring 2024



WellBeing



When you see this symbol, go to metroplusrewards.org to learn how you can earn a member reward.

Feeling lonely? You're not alone

Even if you have friends, it's possible to feel alone or disconnected from others. Why? Not all friendships are close, meaningful relationships that offer a sense of belonging. Loneliness results from the difference between the level of connection you want and the level you have.

Connections with others can help protect you from health problems such as heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline. So, it's important to maintain ties. There are many ways to build more social connections. Here are some ideas:

- Meet new people by volunteering; taking a class; or joining a book, sports, art, or other club.
- Invite others to join you for exercise, meals, and other activities you already do.
- Join a church or other spiritual organization.

The NYC Department of Aging offers a Friendly Visiting program. To learn more, call **212.244.6469** or click [here](#).



We're here to help

Tell your doctor about your feelings and concerns. They can refer you to a mental health provider. To reach Member Services, call **800.303.9626**. To get help right away from the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**, call or text **988** or **800.273.TALK (8255)**. The Lifeline is free and available 24/7.

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.

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)**.

Are you due for an annual wellness visit?

When life gets busy, it's easy to let health care slip off your to-do list. But if you still need to go to your **Medicare Annual Wellness Visit (AWV)**, it's time to put it on the calendar.

The AWV gives you a chance to talk with your doctor about your physical and mental health.

Together, you can spot small health problems and address them early. And, you can make plans to prevent new issues from arising.

Prepare for your visit by making a list of topics. Here are some common topics:

- 1. Exercise.** Ask your doctor if you should add more exercise. They can offer tips on the best activities for your fitness level.
- 2. Bathroom habits.** Are you having any trouble controlling your bowels or bladder? Bring it up now so things can get better—not worse.
- 3. Fall risk.** Poor eyesight and balance issues may increase your risk of falling. Tell your doctor if you recently had a fall. For tips on preventing falls at home, click [here](#).
- 4. Emotional health.** It's normal to feel sad or stressed sometimes. But if your bad mood doesn't go away, tell your doctor.



Feeling your age? Your diabetes might be, too

If you have diabetes, age-related changes inside your body may affect how you respond to medicine. With some **diabetes medicine**, the dose you need might change. With others, you might have side effects.

Following the right treatment is crucial. Over time, poor blood sugar control can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, nerve damage, and vision problems.

As you age, several factors could affect your response to a diabetes drug. Your body may not handle the drug as well as when you were younger. Plus, your diabetes medicine may interact with other medications you take.

Some people need a lower dose of diabetes medicine as they get older. Often, when they start a new diabetes medicine, the doctor might prescribe a low dose. The doctor can then adjust the dose as needed.

Earn a reward

Stay on top of your health and receive a \$30 reward for going to your Annual Wellness Visit. To register for rewards, click [here](#).



Fill out your health risk assessment

Receive a \$10 reward for filling out your Health Risk Assessment. To register for rewards, click [here](#).



Don't let kidney disease sneak up on you

If you're among the 37 million Americans with chronic kidney disease (CKD)—kidney damage that happens gradually—you might not know it.

That's because your kidneys can stay on task while CKD takes hold. As the situation gets worse, however, you may notice swelling in your legs, feet, ankles, hands, or face. You might also experience the following symptoms:

- Fatigue and sleep problems
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Weight loss

If untreated, CKD can also lead to kidney failure, heart disease, and stroke.

CKD often gets worse over time, but you can take steps to protect your kidneys. Fortunately, two simple tests can help you and your doctor track your kidney function:

- **Glomerular filtration rate (GFR):** This test measures how well your kidneys work to filter your blood. Readings of 60 or higher count as normal. Many people with kidney disease will have lower readings.



- **Albumin:** This urine test checks for albumin. Albumin is a protein found in your blood. When your kidneys work well, they prevent any albumin from passing into your urine. A result below 30 is normal, while readings higher than 30 may mean you have kidney disease.

Are you at risk for kidney disease?

Learn more about kidney disease. Click [here](#) to take a simple quiz.

Do you have high blood pressure?

If you have high blood pressure, making heart-healthy lifestyle changes is important. But if you're like many people, you may also need medicine to help lower your blood pressure.

Blood pressure medicine can reduce your risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

There are many types of blood pressure medicine. You may need to take two or more types of medicine. Talk with your doctor if you have questions about your blood pressure medicine.



Get help managing your medicine

The MetroPlus Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program helps you manage your medicine. To find out more about MTM, click [here](#).

Improve Your WellBeing

Put your best foot forward



Happy feet start with what you put on them. Thick cotton socks help keep your feet less sweaty, which means they'll be less likely to smell and have skin problems. Also, avoid shoes that aren't too narrow or tight. You'll better sidestep blisters, corns, bunions, and other pains. To take a quick quiz on foot health, click [here](#).

Change drinking habits to ease urinary incontinence

Changing your drinking habits may help manage **bladder control problems**. Reduce leaks by limiting your intake of coffee, tea, carbonated drinks, and other caffeinated beverages. Your doctor can help you determine how much water and other liquids you need to stay hydrated.

Are you due for a cholesterol check?

Ask your doctor how often you will need a **cholesterol test**. While healthy adults should be screened every four to six years, you might need more frequent testing. If your numbers are high, ask what you can do to lower them. You may need to take a statin medicine to control your cholesterol levels.



A small bean with big benefits

Lentils are a good source of protein, fiber, folate, iron, and other vitamins and minerals. Lentils may also help guard against cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Add lentils to soup or salad. For more nutrition tips, click [here](#).



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