

Summer 2024



WellBeing



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What to do after an ER visit

As you heal and get your strength back, there are some things you can do to prevent going back to the hospital. One of the most important? Get the follow-up care you need.

When you left the ER, you should have received instructions about what happens next. Stick to them by:

- **Making — and keeping — any appointments.** This may involve getting more tests, visiting with new doctors, or checking in with your primary care provider (PCP). Your next appointment should be within seven days of your discharge date.
- **Closing the loop.** If your next appointment is with a specialist, make sure your PCP also knows about your ER visit.
- **Taking care of yourself. Self-care can help you recover.** Make sure you get rest and drink plenty of enough fluids. You might also need to steer clear of some activities for a while.
- **Minding your medicines.** Fill any new prescriptions and take them as directed. If you have any questions about your medicine, call your PCP or ask the pharmacist.
- **Monitoring symptoms.** Contact your PCP if you have new health problems.



Speak up for good health

The better you and your doctor communicate, the more likely you are to feel better and be healthy. Asking **questions** — and understanding the answers — can lead to a quicker, more accurate diagnosis and the best possible care.

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).

Keep your cool with COPD

The warmer weather can worsen symptoms of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Fortunately, you can take steps to keep symptoms under control this season.

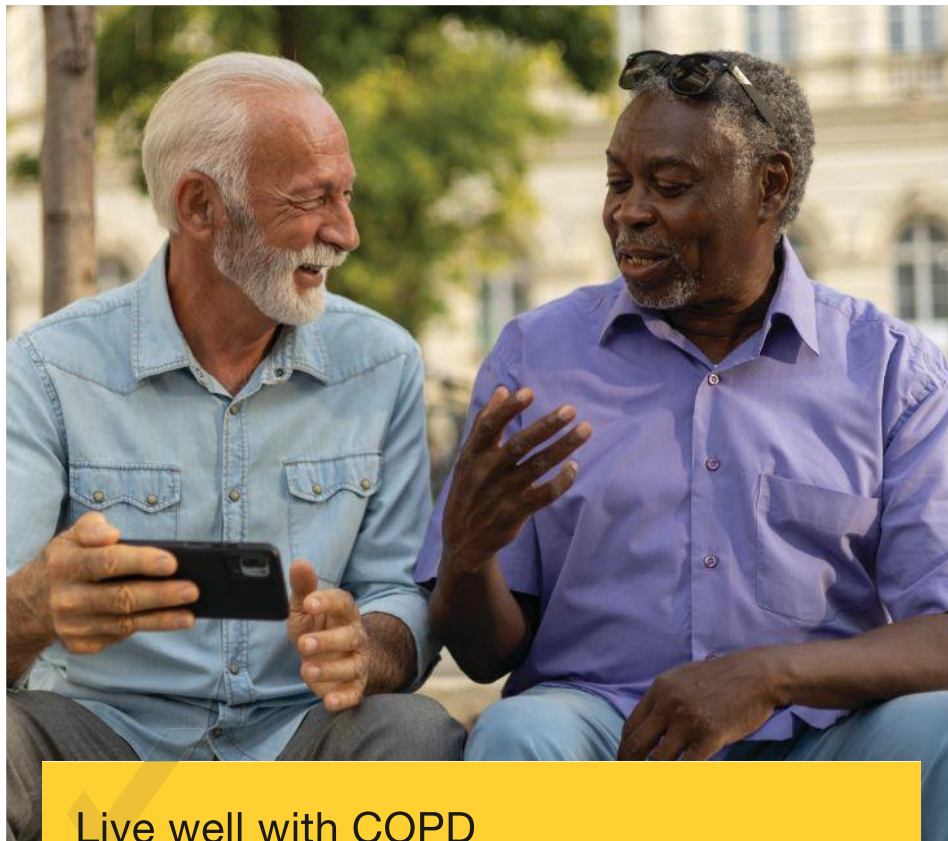
People with COPD are at an increased risk for flare-ups. Common warning signs of a flare-up include:

- Breathlessness
- Increased coughing
- Change in sputum color

Don't wait until you feel overheated or parched. Take steps to stay cool on hot days.

- Drink lots of water, even if you don't feel thirsty. Check with your doctor to see if your fluid intake is restricted.
- Wear loose clothing made of lightweight, light-colored fabric.
- Keep the windows closed and air-conditioning on at home and in your car.
- Plan outings to air-conditioned public places. You can read at the library, visit a museum, or watch a movie at the theater.

Call your doctor right away if symptoms of a flare-up keep getting worse.



Live well with COPD

Many people see improvement in their symptoms with medication, breathing techniques, and exercise. To watch a video on COPD, click [here](#).



Take the right dose...the right way

The right time to start thinking about the correct use of prescription medicines is when you get the prescription. Here's a checklist of questions to ask your doctor:

- What's the name of the medicine?
- How often should I take it, at what dosage, and when?
- For how long should I take it?
- What side effects should I expect? What should I do if they occur?
- What foods, drinks, or other medications should I avoid while taking the medicine?
- What should I do if I forget a dose?

As a team, you and your doctor can make sure your medicines are doing what they're supposed to — helping you stay healthy and well.

Do you want medication sent to your home at no additional cost? Learn more about **PillPack**.

Gained a few pounds? Weight loss still helps your health

Maintaining a healthy weight isn't always easy. So, if you've managed to lose a few pounds, congratulations!

But if you're having a hard time keeping those pounds off, take heart: According to a recent study, even if you regain some weight, you can still reap health benefits.

Staying at a healthy weight is important to your health. If you're carrying extra pounds, even a modest weight loss of 5 to 10% of your total body weight is likely to yield health benefits, such as improvements in blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugars.

But it can be difficult to maintain weight loss. After you lose weight, your metabolism may slow down. Hormonal changes can make you feel hungry more often. Or maybe you find that your diet or exercise plan is too hard to follow.

To overcome these challenges, focus on healthy habits instead of the number on your scale. Try to:

- **Eat a variety of nutritious foods.** Emphasize options with lots of nutrients per serving — fresh or frozen fruits and veggies, whole grains, beans and lentils, and seafood. Protein is a good choice. It helps you preserve muscle mass.



- **Keep moving.** Sneak in some extra activity. For example, take walks in the morning and after a meal. If it's too hot or humid, do an activity inside at a senior, recreation, or fitness center. You can walk on a treadmill or take a spin on a stationary bicycle.
- **Snooze more.** Not getting enough sleep can increase your appetite and make you too tired to exercise.

Are you using MyChart?

MyChart is a free online portal that helps you manage your health information. You can use the portal to make an appointment, ask for a refill, check test results, and send a message to your doctor's office. To sign up for MyChart, click [here](#).



Have you scheduled an annual visit with your doctor? You can earn a reward for going to your annual Medicare PCP visit. To register for rewards, click [here](#).



Have you filled out a health risk assessment (HRA)?



Once your HRA is in our system, we will create a plan to maintain and/or improve your health. This plan will help you stay on track for cancer screenings, diabetes checkups, and important vaccinations.

You can also earn a reward for completing your HRA. To register for rewards, click [here](#). For more information about HRAs, call our Customer Service Team at **866.986.0356 (TTY: 711)**.

Improve Your WellBeing



Lung screening guidelines

Are you or a loved one a current or ex-smoker? If so, talk with your provider about lung cancer screening. The American Cancer Society recommends a low-dose CT scan once a year if you're between ages 50 and 80 and have a smoking history of 20 pack-years or higher. (That's about 1 pack of 20 cigarettes a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years.) To reach the NY State Smokers Quit Line, call **866.697.8487**. For smoking cessation programs and resources, click [here](#).

How to curb food cravings

A lot of times, feeling anxious, bored, or tired is the real reason we reach for a snack. Try to find nonfood options in those moments. For example, you could call a friend or go for a quick walk. It might surprise you how much better you feel!



Is your blood pressure too high?

It's never too late to start making changes that help your blood pressure. Healthy lifestyle habits can both prevent high blood pressure and bring high numbers down.

You don't have to change everything at once.

Take things one step at a time with this four-part plan:

- 1. Schedule a check-in.** Make an appointment with your doctor for next month.
- 2. Focus on fitness.** The goal is to hit 150 minutes of activity per week. If you're on track, great! If not, add a few more minutes of movement each day until you reach that total.
- 3. Dial in your diet.** Add a fruit or vegetable to every meal. Try fruit in your cereal, spinach on your sandwich, and chopped broccoli in your pasta.
- 4. Attend your appointment.** If your blood pressure readings are high, make a plan with your provider to lower them. This might include blood pressure medicine, in addition to healthy habits, to protect your heart and brain for the long haul.



Are you due for a colorectal cancer screening?

Caught early, colon and rectal cancers are highly treatable. People who are ages 45 to 75 years old should get a yearly stool-based test OR stool- and DNA-based test every three years OR flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years OR colonoscopy every 10 years. Your doctor may test you more often based on your health history. You can also earn a reward for getting a colon cancer screening. To register for rewards, click [here](#).

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Llame al 866.986.0356 (TTY: 711).

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