

# Health letter



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

## Don't forget your flu and COVID-19 shots

Have you had your 2024 flu and COVID-19 shots yet? Winter brings cooler weather, holidays, and — unfortunately — a rise in both flu and COVID-19 cases. The good news is that it's not too late to get your shots.

Vaccines are the best protection against both diseases. If you do get sick, the shot may make your symptoms less severe.

Getting a flu shot is also a good way to protect your loved ones. If you don't get the flu, you can't spread it to others.

Flu shots are recommended for most people ages 6 months and older. This includes pregnant women. Talk with your doctor to be sure you're getting the shots you need.

### Take steps to prevent flu

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If water isn't available, use hand sanitizer.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Also, try to stay away from people who are sick.



### Earn a \$10 reward

You can earn a \$10 reward for getting your flu shot. To register for rewards, click [here](#). If you are looking for a flu vaccination site, click [here](#).



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. Need help making an appointment? Call the Member Services Department at **800.303.9626 (TTY: 711)**.

# Immunization checklist for kids

Immunizations help protect your child from serious or even deadly diseases. This can keep them healthy for school and social activities. Plus, many schools and childcare centers need up-to-date immunizations.

Vaccinations are based on your child's age. Your child's doctor can make sure they get the right shots at the right time. The doctor can also change the vaccination schedule to meet your child's needs. This could be because of health conditions, risk factors, or catching up on any missed doses.



## Schedule a well-child visit



Stay on track with your child's shots and other care. You can also get a reward for completing a well-child visit. To register for rewards, click [here](#).

<b>Birth</b>
• HepB
<b>1 Month</b>
• HepB (at 1–2 months)
<b>2 Months</b>
• RV • DTaP • Hib • PCV15, PCV20 • IPV
<b>4 Months</b>
• RV • DTaP • Hib • PCV15, PCV20 • IPV
<b>6 Months</b>
• HepB (at 6–18 months) • DTaP
• RV (if third dose needed) • PCV15, PCV20
• Hib (if third dose needed) • IPV (at 6–18 months)
• Influenza (second dose 4 weeks later, if needed)
<b>12 Months</b>
• Hib (booster at 12–15 months)
• PCV15, PCV20 (at 12–15 months)
• MMR (at 12–15 months)
• VAR (at 12–15 months)
• HepA (at 12–23 months; 2 doses 6 months apart)
<b>15 Months</b>
• DTaP (at 15–18 months)
<b>18 Months</b>
• Influenza (second dose 4 weeks later, if needed)
<b>2–3 Years</b>
• Influenza (yearly, 1 to 2 doses)
<b>4–6 Years</b>
• DTaP • IPV • MMR • VAR
• Influenza (yearly, 1 to 2 doses)
<b>7–10 Years</b>
• Influenza (yearly, 1 to 2 doses)
<b>11–12 Years</b>
• Influenza (yearly) • Tdap
• HPV • MenACWY
<b>13–15 Years</b>
• Influenza (yearly)
<b>16 Years</b>
• Influenza (yearly)
• MenACWY (second dose)
<b>17–20 Years</b>
• Influenza (yearly)
<b>21 Years</b>
• Influenza (yearly)
• Tdap or Td (depending on prior Tdap)

**Stop smoking for good.** MetroPlusHealth offers information on how to quit smoking. To learn more, click [here](#). You can also call the New York State Quitline at **800.697.8487**.

# Why prenatal and postpartum care matters



Taking good care of your baby starts with taking good care of yourself. And seeing your doctor for regular checkups — before and after your baby is born — can help you do that. Prenatal and postpartum care helps keep you and your baby healthy.

## Before your baby is born

When you are pregnant, your body will go through many changes as your baby grows. Prenatal care provides support during this time, even if you've had a baby before.

Your first prenatal visit is often the longest. During this visit, your doctor will:

- Do a physical exam, including a Pap test
- Check your blood pressure and weight
- Ask about your overall health
- Talk with you about tests

## Schedule a postpartum visit

See your doctor after you have a baby. You can earn a \$20 reward for completing your postpartum visit. To register for rewards, click [here](#).



Vaccines should be part of your prenatal care. When you're pregnant, vaccines help protect you and your baby. During the third trimester of pregnancy, you will need a Tdap vaccine. This will help protect you and your baby against pertussis (whooping cough).

Your doctor may also recommend vaccinations for flu, COVID-19, RSV, and hepatitis. Learn more about vaccines at [cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy).

## After your baby is born

A few weeks after giving birth, you will have a postpartum visit. At this checkup, your doctor will do an exam and ask you about things like:

- Your sleep
- Exercise
- Mental health
- Birth control

Some people feel sad after giving birth. This is normal. If you still feel sad after two weeks, see your doctor right away. You may have a condition called **postpartum depression**. There's no shame in having postpartum depression. There are many treatments available. Talk with your doctor for help.

**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.*

# Get the facts about holiday splurges

The holidays are a time to be with those you love. You gather together, tell stories, laugh, and, unfortunately for a lot of people, eat unhealthy foods.

You may have some questions about eating healthy this time of year. Get your answers here.

**Q: How can I cut down on fat while I'm cooking holiday foods?**

**A:** Try to cut the fat in recipes or you can substitute low-fat ingredients.

**Q: But how can I reduce fat in my recipes?**

- A:** Try the following methods:
- Cut the amount of butter or oil in half and substitute with unsweetened applesauce.
  - Use a nonstick spray instead of butter to grease pans.

- Avoid frying or deep-frying food. Try baking or grilling.

**Q: What are some low-fat substitutions I can make?**

**A:** Here are some examples:

- Low-fat yogurt instead of mayonnaise or sour cream
- Baby carrots and other raw vegetables instead of chips
- Salsa or Greek yogurt instead of cream-based dips

**Q: What about when I'm just eating and not cooking? How can I avoid high-fat splurges then?**

**A:** Before you leave for a holiday party, have a healthy snack. This will help ensure you're not too hungry when you arrive. At the party, try to control your portions. Choose a smaller plate. And stop eating when you feel full.



## Make a healthy dessert

Ready to bake for the holidays? To get a recipe for Chocolate Peppermint Meringue Cookies, click [here](#).



## Support services in the community

We want to help you have a healthier, happier life. Whether you need help with groceries, medical care, or transportation, [FindHelp.org](#) is here to assist you.

Local services are available to help with the following:

- Childcare
- Disability
- Domestic violence
- Groceries
- Health literacy
- Housing
- Immigrants/asylum seekers
- Legal assistance
- Medical costs
- Mental health
- Pregnancy
- Smoking cessation
- Transportation
- Utility bills

Need help? Go to [FindHelp.org](#) and enter your ZIP code.

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Editor: Kathryn Soman

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