Health letter

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

Get checked for breast cancer

Breast cancer can feel scary and out of your control. But the sooner you find it, the better. Starting treatment early increases the chances you'll be cured. Plus, regular screenings can save your life.

You can get checked for breast cancer with a simple test called a mammogram.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that all women ages 40 to 74 get a mammogram every other year. If you're due for a mammogram, be sure to schedule it soon.

Some people might need more or different tests that could start at a younger age. This may happen if you have a family member with breast cancer or other **risk factors**.

Talk with your doctor for advice. Together, you can make a plan of care that works for you.

Earn a reward

You can earn a member reward for getting your mammogram. To register for member rewards, click **here**. Need a ride to an appointment? Call MetroPlusHealth Customer Service at **800.303.9626** for more information.

VISIT US AT 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)**.

Stay healthy — Get a flu shot

No one wants to stay home sick for days with the **flu**. But there's good news. If you and your family get flu shots:

- You're less likely to get the flu
- If you do, it won't be as bad
- You may not miss work or school

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot every year. Why so often? Each season, different flu viruses spread. Vaccines are designed to keep up with these differences.

Flu shots are especially important for:

- People with heart disease, asthma, or diabetes
- Pregnant people
- Older adults and young children

Ask your doctor if you should also get a pneumococcal vaccine. This can be based on your age or other health problems you have.

Get your flu shot this fall

You can earn a $10 member reward for getting a flu shot. To register for member rewards, click **here**.

What you should know about antibiotics

When you're sick, you may think that antibiotics are a quick fix. But they're not always the answer.

When they work, when they don't
Antibiotics can help stop infections that are caused by bacteria. This includes things like strep throat and urinary tract infections. But they don't work on viruses. That means they can't help with colds, the flu, or COVID-19.

How they can hurt
You should take antibiotics only when your doctor says you need them. Taking them too often or for the wrong reasons can:

- Cause side effects like upset stomach and diarrhea
- Make some health problems worse
- Prevent antibiotics from working as well in the future

Sometimes rest, cough drops, and fluids are enough to help you feel better. Talk with your doctor for advice.

Take the CAHPS survey. Watch your mail for the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey. Let us know how well MetroPlusHealth and your doctors are meeting your needs.

Time for a colorectal cancer check?

No one wants to think about colorectal cancer. But taking a few simple steps can help find and treat it early.

Most cases of **colorectal cancer** start from abnormal growths in the colon. Testing can help find and remove them before they turn into cancer. It can also find colon cancer early when it can be treated more easily.

Screening tests

Ask your doctor what test is right for you:
- A stool test done in your home. Using a kit, you take a sample and mail it to a lab.
- A **colonoscopy screening**. Doctors use a tube to find and remove growths at the same time.
- A virtual colonoscopy. This uses X-rays to view the colon from the outside.

Schedule a colorectal cancer screening

You can earn a reward for getting a colorectal cancer screening. To register for member rewards, click **here**.

Why we ask for information on race and ethnicity

As a member of MetroPlusHealth, you may be asked about your race and ethnicity. We want you to know that it is safe to answer, and we will keep your answers private. We use this data so we can give you better care and service. Here are some things we may do with your information:
- Send you mail about health benefits
- Send you messages in the language you prefer
- Match you with doctors who speak your language

HPV vaccine helps prevent cancer

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a common virus. It spreads easily through close skin contact. Most people get it at some point. HPV does not always cause symptoms. But some types can cause cancer, such as cervical and throat cancer.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends getting the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12. In some cases, it can be started at age 9.

ACIP also recommends the vaccine for everyone through age 26 if they did not get it when younger.

If you are ages 27 to 45, talk with your doctor to see if the HPV vaccine might be right for you.

You can quit smoking. To search for smoking-cessation programs and resources, click **here**. For free nicotine patches and lozenges, call **866.NY.QUITS (866.697.8487)**.

Feeling down?
You're not alone

Everyone feels sad sometimes. But if the feeling lasts longer than 2 weeks, it could be depression. Depression is common and treatable. You're not alone, and help is out there.

Here are some of the warning signs to watch for:
• Feeling sad or "empty"
• Being tired almost all the time
• Not enjoying things you used to
• Sleeping too much or too little
• Having trouble focusing
• Feeling hopeless or worthless

If you have one or more of these signs, reach out to your doctor. They may suggest:
• Therapy (talking with a mental health professional)
• Medication to help with mood

Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Life can feel better again with the right support. Your doctor will help you find a treatment that works for you. To learn more about mental health, click **here**.
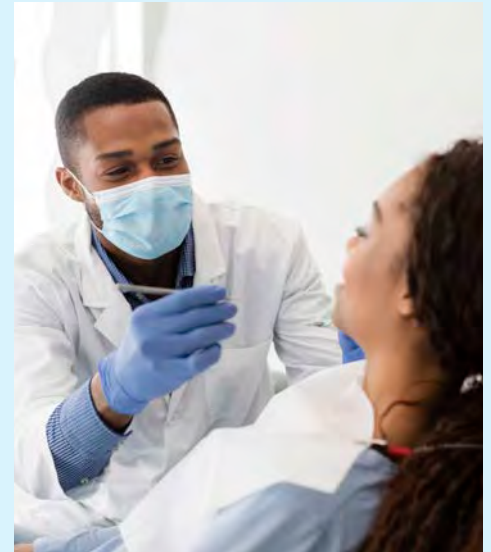
Don't miss out on your dental benefits!

Regular checkups and cleanings keep your teeth in great shape. They can also help prevent painful problems and high costs later.

MetroPlusHealth partners with DentaQuest to give you access to skilled dentists and quality care close to home.

Your benefits may include:
• Routine and preventative care
• Emergency care
• Diagnostic imaging
• Restorative work

Benefits vary by plan. For details, visit **metroplus.org/members/ health-information/dental-health**.

Make the most of your benefits — schedule your appointment today!

Click **here** to find a dentist.

Get help right away

If you are thinking about harming yourself or others, call or text **988** or **800.273.TALK (8255)**. You can also chat with counselors at Lifeline at **988Lifeline.org**. Lifeline is free and available 24/7.