

Fall 2026

Health letter



When you see this symbol, visit metroplusrewards.org to see how you can earn member rewards.

5 ways to boost your mood this fall

As autumn arrives, the days get shorter. For some people, this can affect mood and energy.

Less sunlight may play a role. Some people notice they feel more tired or sad during the fall and winter.

You don't have to wait until spring to feel better. Try these five simple steps:

1. Get sunlight.

Go outside during the day or sit by a bright window.

2. Move more.

Take a short walk or do another activity you enjoy. Physical activity can help you feel better.

3. Sleep enough.

Aim for seven to nine hours each night. Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day can help.

4. Stay connected.

Make plans with family and friends. It can help you feel supported.

5. Eat well.

Get plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Search for a [new recipe](#).

It's normal to feel down when the seasons change. But if you feel sad, empty, or hopeless for two weeks or more, talk with your doctor. You may have [depression](#). Treatment can help.



Support is available

Call Member Services at **800.303.9626**. You can also call, text, or chat with trained counselors at **NYC 988**. It's free and confidential.

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)**.

Make time for a flu shot

Flu season comes around every year. It can bring sniffles, fever, and more.

A yearly flu shot can help you stay healthy. It decreases your chance of missing school, work, and holiday fun. You are also less likely to end up in the hospital.

Everyone over 6 months old

should get a flu shot each year, even if they're healthy. This is extra important for:

- Children
- Older adults
- People with chronic conditions

These groups are more likely to get very sick if they get the flu.



Don't wait!



Try to get your flu shot by late October. You can get one at your doctor's office or a local pharmacy. You can also earn a **member reward** for getting a flu shot. While you're there, ask about the pneumococcal vaccine. It is mostly recommended for children under 5 years old and adults over 50 years old, but other people may need it, too.

Colds and flu don't need antibiotics

You're sniffing, coughing, and your throat burns. So, you call the doctor. You hope to get **antibiotics** to make you feel better.

But the doctor tells you that you have a cold or the flu. That means you're sick because of germs called viruses.

Antibiotics only work against bacteria. Taking them for a virus won't:

- Cure you
- Help you feel better
- Get you back to work or school faster

If you take these drugs when you don't need them, bacteria can grow stronger. This may lead to infections that antibiotics can't fight.

Plus, you might have side effects, such as rashes and nausea.

Instead, to feel better when you have a cold or the flu:

- Stay home
- Rest
- Drink plenty of fluids

Talk with your doctor if you have questions or are very sick.

Save antibiotics for illnesses caused by bacteria, such as:

- Strep throat
- Whooping cough
- Urinary tract infections

Please fill out our survey. Did you get the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey? Let us know how well MetroPlusHealth and your doctors are meeting your needs.

Screening can help prevent colorectal cancer

Polyps don't get much attention. But they're a big part of the colorectal cancer story. These growths can form in the colon or rectum, and some turn into cancer.

Colorectal cancer screening gives doctors a chance to step in early. Tests can find polyps before they become cancer. They can also help catch colorectal cancer before symptoms show up.

Here are the screening options:

- **Stool tests:** Timing depends on the type of test
- **CT colonography:** Every 5 years
- **Flexible sigmoidoscopy:** Every 5 to 10 years
- **Colonoscopy:** Every 10 years

Most people should start screening at age 45. Talk with your doctor about when to start and which test may be right for you.



Schedule your screening



Due for a colorectal cancer screening?
Schedule your appointment today.
Find out how you can earn a
member reward for getting your screening.

Why we ask for information on race and ethnicity

MetroPlusHealth may ask members about their 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.

Get help with everyday needs

Social Care Networks

(SCNs) help members find local support for housing, food, child care, jobs, and transportation.



Find answers about your care

MetroPlusHealth has Clinical Practice Guidelines to help you learn about your care. The guides explain how common health problems are treated. **Check out the guidelines.**

You can quit smoking. Get started today with **smoking-cessation programs and resources**. For free nicotine patches and lozenges, call **866.NY.QUITS (866.697.8487)**.

It's time for your yearly mammogram



Finding breast cancer early can make it easier to treat.

Some people with breast cancer have signs, such as a lump. But many don't.

So, to find cancer sooner, doctors recommend tests called **mammograms**. A mammogram can help find breast cancer early, before you notice changes.

For women at average risk, health experts recommend a mammogram:

- Every year from ages 40 to 44, if you choose

- Every year from ages 45 to 54
- Every year, or every other year, from ages 55 and older

If you have a family history of breast cancer or other risk factors, ask your doctor how often you should get a mammogram.

Find out how to earn a **member reward** for getting your mammogram.

Need a ride to an appointment? Call MetroPlusHealth Customer Service at **800.303.9626**.

Connect to care from anywhere

Need care without an office visit? MetroPlusHealth offers telehealth options through ExpressCare, Marble, Ophelia, and Brave. **Learn more about telehealth.**

Help protect your child from cancer

Some cancers can be prevented. The **HPV vaccine** helps protect against a virus that can cause cancer later in life. It works best when children get it between ages 9 and 12. If your child is older, it's not too late. Talk with your child's doctor about the HPV vaccine. It may prevent up to 90% of cancers caused by HPV.



Wake up to a happy back

A good night's sleep starts with good support. A firm mattress can help keep your back comfortable. If you sleep on your side, bend your knees and place a pillow between them for better support. If you sleep on your back, place a pillow under your knees. If you sleep on your stomach, put a pillow under your hips.