BOOK REVIEW:

Are You Happy?
A new book explores causes of happiness
PAGE 9

Conquer Kids’ Fear of Needles
How to prepare tots for shots
PAGE 5

Treating ADHD
Is it time for an appointment?
PAGE 7
How Smoke Affects Sinuses

Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of chronic sinus conditions among nonsmokers, according to a new study. If your sinuses are constantly inflamed—with symptoms such as a runny nose, congestion, coughing, and difficulty breathing—even minimal exposure to secondhand smoke could be the culprit.

Canadian researchers tracked the secondhand smoke exposure of 600 nonsmokers over a five-year period, linking it to approximately 40 percent of chronic sinus problems. Breathing cigarette smoke in private social settings such as parties almost tripled the risk for nonsmokers.

Kick the Habit

One of the surest ways to better health is to stop smoking. Your doctor can help by prescribing tools to help you quit for good.

Nicotine replacement products are one option. Available over the counter as patches, gums, and lozenges, these products can also be prescribed as inhalers or nasal sprays. Studies have shown that tapering down the amount of addictive nicotine a smoker uses, in order to relieve withdrawal symptoms, is an effective method of quitting smoking. These products contain roughly one-half to one-third of the nicotine in most cigarettes, and they release nicotine into your bloodstream much more slowly than smoking does.

Your doctor may also recommend prescription medications that do not contain nicotine. The prescription antidepressant bupropion (Zyban) helps fight the urge to smoke, while the prescription drug varenicline (Chantix) mimics the way nicotine acts in the brain, diminishing withdrawal symptoms and reducing nicotine’s effect if you resume smoking.

Each of these options has pros, cons, and side effects. Some are more effective together, such as taking bupropion while using a nicotine replacement product. Talk to your doctor about the best options for you.

Canoe Safety

Our story about canoe paddling (Summer 2010) earned a lot of attention—but not for the reason intended. Many of you expressed concern that the photo portrayed boaters who were not wearing their personal flotation devices (PFDs), although the safety equipment was visible in the canoe.

The Coast Guard points out that nine of 10 drownings occur in lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers—within a few feet of help. To prevent such accidents, they recommend that everyone wears a PFD while aboard a boat of any size.

In New York, children under 12 are required to wear a PFD at all times in a small, open vessel such as a kayak or canoe. The same law applies to adults between Nov. 1 and May 1. The rest of the year, adults are not required to wear a PFD, but must have one handy.

As your health plan, we want you to be safe. Always wear a PFD while enjoying the waterways.
Rake Away

Keeping your yard clear of leaves is a never-ending fall task. It’s also a great workout for your core and upper body when you practice proper posture and stretch before you get started.

- Switch sides to balance the workout and avoid straining any one part of your arms, legs, or back.
- Don’t over-twist your body or throw the rake over your shoulder, which can lead to injury.
- When bagging leaves, squat to lift heavy loads and use your legs, not your back. Keep your back straight, not rounded.
- Take a wide stance with your feet and keep your spine straight.
- Turn your whole body when you rake.

Flu Fighters

It’s not too early to schedule your annual flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends getting vaccinated each September (or as soon as the annual vaccine is available) because outbreaks can occur as early as October.

This is especially important if you are among—or in contact with—the people who are more likely to suffer serious complications. These include pregnant women, health care workers, people with certain chronic medical conditions, and those who live in nursing homes. In addition, children between ages 6 months and 5 years are susceptible to serious complications because their immune systems haven’t developed fully, as are people age 50 and older, who have reduced cough and gag reflexes that make them more likely to develop pneumonia after getting the flu.

6 Things That Set CDPHP® Apart

Health plans are not all “created equal.” Here are just a few of the things that make CDPHP® special:

1. Unlike large national insurers, CDPHP does not exist to make money for shareholders. We are focused on helping members receive the medical services they need to thrive and be healthy.

2. We were founded by, and continue to be directed by, local doctors. More than half of our board members are physicians who maintain active medical practices in the community.

3. We have strong hometown roots. When you call CDPHP, you speak with a staff member in Albany, N.Y., not someone in another part of the world.

4. CDPHP is a good corporate citizen, supporting dozens of local programs that benefit families and promote health, wellness, and fitness. Learn more by clicking on the “Community” link at the top of our home page at www.cdphp.com.

5. Our members like us. An overview of our most recent member satisfaction scores can be found on page 13 of this newsletter.

6. We treat our employees right. For two years in a row we were named one of the top 15 large companies to work for in New York by the New York State Society for Human Resource Management and Best Companies Group.
The Downside of Acid Reduction

Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) can be helpful in treating acid reflux, but doctors are starting to learn that these drugs may be harmful for those using them for an extended period of time.

Stomach acid serves a purpose. If you use drugs to suppress stomach acidity indefinitely, the following may result:

- A higher risk of osteoporosis, due to decreased absorption of calcium
- Increased incidence of certain types of diarrhea
- Greater risk of pneumonia
- Absorption changes for other medications

If you have been on a PPI for longer than six weeks, speak with your doctor about alternatives. It may be appropriate to try using these medications on an as-needed basis. That way, your body can occasionally benefit from the good effects of stomach acidity.

HELP STOP FRAUD

CDPHP has a hot line to make it easy for you to report suspected health care fraud and abuse. If you want to report suspected fraud or abuse, please call (518) 641-3228 or 1-800-280-6885. All calls are held in strict confidence.

How e-Health Helps You

CDPHP and HIXNY use technology to link you with your providers.

Whenever you seek care, the doctor treating you needs access to information about your medical history, allergies, prescriptions, specialist visits, and lab results. Healthcare Information Xchange of New York—a local not-for-profit consortium known as HIXNY (“hix-knee”)—is working to make it easier for your doctors to get such data in a secure online environment.

CDPHP and other area health care organizations are cooperating with HIXNY, a regional health information organization (RHIO), to promote the electronic exchange of medical information.

The goal is to improve patient care and lower health care costs. With HIXNY, your doctors will be able to spend less time tracking down information and more time caring for you. Electronic medical records can help eliminate the need for duplicate testing. Improved patient safety is also possible, with reduced risk for drug interactions and medical errors.

The programs HIXNY offers include:

- **HIXNY Health Information Exchange (HIE)** enables authorized health care providers to contribute, access, and share your medical information with other authorized providers in an online environment, with your written consent. The next time you visit your doctor, you may be asked to sign a consent form to make this possible.
- **HIXNY e-RX** is a safe, cost-effective e-prescribing tool. Without paper prescriptions to handle or misplace, the management of prescriptions will be easier for you and your doctors. You’ll spend less time waiting at the pharmacy, too.
- **Coming soon!** Watch for news of HIXNY’s Personal Health Record (PHR), a computer-based medical file that you can manage, helping to ensure that your medical team has access to data that is accurate and up to date.

Visit [www.hixny.org](http://www.hixny.org) or call HIXNY at (518) 357-3689 if you have questions.

Generics Encouraged

Generic drugs are just as safe and effective as brand names, and they cost a lot less. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration requires generic drugs to have the same active ingredients in the same amounts as their brand-name counterparts. Generic drugs must also be bioequivalent to brand-name drugs, meaning that the drug has to perform the same way in the body.

If you are currently taking a brand-name drug, or if your doctor suggests a new prescription, ask if there is a generic alternative. The switch could save you hundreds of dollars a year.
Kids Can Be Brave

Show kids that shots are a normal part of a healthy life.

Getting shots is as much a part of early childhood as learning to count. And like learning to count, there’s a specific order—and timeline—that health experts recommend for vaccinations. You can find a recommended immunization schedule at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

Getting all of the vaccinations—and many are administered in a series—by age 2 means your child is protected from 14 diseases, including mumps, chickenpox, tetanus, and hepatitis. As a parent, though, you may want to know how to prepare your toddler for the shots themselves.

Make It Better

Your baby won’t remember any of the early visits when vaccinations are most frequent, occurring at ages 2 months, 4 months, and 6 months. And once the immediate shot is over, he or she will take a cue from you about whether the event is worrisome. That’s why, especially if you’re breastfeeding, it often helps to nurse right after an appointment, which will calm the baby. In all likelihood, you can nurse right at the doctor’s office.

Up to age 24 months, your child will still be visiting the doctor every three to six months for shots. Offering a small treat, such as a favorite snack or a new, small toy, after the shot serves as a good distraction.

Once your child is old enough to understand what’s going on, though, shots get a little trickier. Some kids benefit from knowing exactly where they’re going and what will be done; others are better off if they don’t anticipate the shot. In all cases, if you are averse to needles, put up a brave front so your child doesn’t mimic your negative reaction.

Stay calm. Hold your child on your lap so he or she will be more comfortable—and less likely to move around. Distract your child from the shot by singing a song, telling a story, or guiding his or her gaze away from the doctor and the needle. Once the shot is over, give praise for being brave.

Your doctor will review signs to look for in case of an allergic reaction to any of the shots. But generally speaking, the worst is over.

USE FIND-A-DOC TO RESEARCH OUR NETWORK

As a participant in a CDPhN self-insured plan, you may need to use in-network physicians and specialists for your care to be covered. Even if your group has the option of using out-of-network physicians, in most cases you will save money by using those who participate in the CDPhN network.

To avoid receiving a surprise medical bill, always check whether a provider is in the CDPhN network before going for care. That’s where Find-A-Doc comes in!

To get details on the CDPhN network, go to www.cdphp.com and click “Find-A-Doc” in the lower right-hand corner of the page.

Then follow the three easy steps to narrow down your search.

No Internet? Call member services at the number on your ID card to request a provider directory or learn more about the CDPhN network.
Consider making one appointment each year to have breast cancer and cervical cancer screenings, as well as testing for sexual transmitted diseases (such as chlamydia) if you’re at risk. Choose your birthday or another memorable date to make sure you don’t skip a year’s visit.

The appointment and the tests performed help make sure you remain healthy. Early detection of these diseases provides your best chance to combat them.

**Breast Cancer**

Gender, age, and a close family member’s diagnosis put you at greater risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting a mammogram to check breast cancer—which is the most common cancer in American women—every year or two starting at age 40, talk to your doctor about your health history to determine when and how often you should be screened.

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast that can reveal lumps or other abnormalities. Tumors found during screenings can often be more successfully treated because they have not spread beyond the breast.

**Cervical Cancer**

Cervical cancer is the most preventable cancer in women, according to the CDC. An annual Pap test detects abnormal cells on the surface of the cervix that could be precancerous. At the same time, a test for human papillomavirus may find the virus that triggers the cells’ abnormality. Finding abnormal cells and treating them in the early stages has significantly decreased the incidence of cervical cancer. The CDC says six out of 10 cervical cancers are in women who have never had a Pap test or have not had one in the past five years. The Pap test is painless—the doctor uses a swab to take sample cells from your cervix—and takes just a few minutes.

**STDs**

Regular testing for sexually transmitted diseases can also prevent future health issues. This is especially important because some common STDs such as chlamydia and gonorrhea have no symptoms. The CDC says up to 40 percent of women with these two diseases develop pelvic inflammatory disease, which can lead to infertility or pregnancy complications. A urine test can determine whether you have either disease.

Since early detection is critical and the tests are painless and quick, preventing these serious diseases is as easy as making an appointment with your doctor.

---

**Have You Had Your Annual?**

For women, this yearly visit plays a critical role in your health.
Treating ADHD

The new school year brings new classes and new books, but what may be overlooked is a new attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medication. Remember, regular office visits are important. Your child’s doctor will want to adjust your child’s treatment to make sure it is effective, with minimal side effects.

Being out of the classroom may minimize your child’s ADHD behavior. Once back in school, you may find that the hiatus from organized activities has masked the need to adjust dosages. Summer’s flexible hours may also have made it easier to overlook side effects from ADHD drugs, such as sleeping or eating poorly.

Once school begins, these issues may come up again. Be sure to ask your doctor about newly introduced ADHD medications and new dosage formats.

Mammogram Campaign Wraps Up Fifth Year

For five years in a row, CDPHP has partnered with Bellevue Woman’s Care Center and Price Chopper on a mobile mammography campaign to serve the area’s urban and rural communities.

If you are due for a mammogram, consider using the Mobile Mammography van at one of its final stops this season. Screenings are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. as follows:

- Oct. 13—Price Chopper, 320 West Bridge Street, Catskill
- Oct. 28—Price Chopper, 141 Sanford Farms Plaza, Amsterdam

Dates and locations may change. For details or to make an appointment, call Bellevue Hospital at 1-888-423-3366.

To find a permanent CDPHP-participating mammography site near you, please use Find-A-Doc at www.cdphp.com.

Colorectal Cancer Screening Saves Lives

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the U.S. for both men and women. Getting regular screenings beginning at age 50 may save your life.

Colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum) occurs most often in people age 50 years or older. The risk increases with age. It usually starts with precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) in the colon or rectum. Screening tests can find polyps, so they can be removed before they turn into cancer.

People with polyps or colorectal cancer often experience no symptoms, but signs could include:

- Blood in or on the stool (bowel movement)
- Stomach pain or cramps that don’t go away
- Unexplained weight loss

Since symptoms may not be present, regular screenings are very important. Screening tests include fecal occult blood testing (FOBT), sigmoidoscopy, and colonoscopy. Your doctor will help you decide which tests are right for you.

If you have a close relative who has had colorectal polyps or cancer, you are at higher risk for this type of cancer. Inflammatory bowel disease and certain genetic syndromes may also raise your risk for this disease.

TAKING CARE OF MOM AND BABY

Women: Protect your health and your future child by taking full advantage of all covered prenatal and postnatal care.

Many members miss valuable doctor visits when they are pregnant. They feel there is no need for that many visits. But going to your doctor gives you the best chance of having a healthy baby.

Your doctor will want to see you every month for the first six months, then every two to three weeks for months seven and eight. During your ninth month, you should see your doctor every week.

If your doctor considers your pregnancy high risk, your visits will be even more frequent.

It is important to see your doctor during your pregnancy, and afterward, too. Please make sure you see your doctor three to eight weeks after the birth of your baby. This visit doesn’t take long and it lets your doctor know how you and your baby are doing.

If your doctor considers your pregnancy high risk, your visits will be even more frequent.

It is important to see your doctor during your pregnancy, and afterward, too. Please make sure you see your doctor three to eight weeks after the birth of your baby. This visit doesn’t take long and it lets your doctor know how you and your baby are doing.
When Good Backs Go Bad

You wrenched your back, and now you’re flat on the floor in pain. Sound familiar? About 80 percent of Americans will experience back pain at some point. Most back pain eventually resolves itself, although it can take as long as 30 days.

Rest and use over-the-counter pain medication, but visit your doctor if the pain is severe and home treatment isn’t working, if the pain is a result of a fall or injury, or if you feel any tingling or numbness.

Your doctor may suggest imaging tests to pinpoint the cause of the pain. Electromyography measures your nerves’ electrical impulses to determine if herniated disks or other bone problems may be restricting the nerves’ function. X-rays reveal whether a bone is broken or out of alignment, or whether you may have arthritis. Magnetic resonance imaging provides detailed images of bones, tissue, tendons, muscles, nerves, and ligaments.

To prevent injury, make sure you get regular, low-impact exercise to build muscle strength and flexibility. Maintain a healthy weight to reduce strain on your bones and joints. Practice proper posture while sitting and standing, and make sure to lift heavy objects with your legs, not your back.

How Do You Measure Up?

A little weight loss may improve all of your health numbers.

Carrying extra pounds means you’re at greater risk for a number of diseases and conditions that are leading causes of death in the U.S., including heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.

But how much do you need to lose to make a difference? The good news is that even a modest weight loss can positively affect your health. That’s worth keeping in mind while you work on losing weight the healthy way—through smart food choices, sensible portion control, and regular physical activity. Losing a manageable 1 to 2 pounds a week means reducing your caloric intake by about 500 to 1,000 calories a day.

Weight Loss Numbers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says dropping just 5 to 10 percent of your body weight can decrease your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugars. Among overweight people with high blood sugar, losing weight through diet and exercise cuts the risk of developing diabetes by 58 percent, says the National Institutes of Health.

To put it in perspective, if you weigh 200 pounds, 5 percent means only 10 pounds. As the CDC points out, 190 pounds may still be overweight for your frame, but the lower weight helps decrease the likelihood you’ll develop obesity-related chronic conditions and diseases.

If you already have asthma or diabetes, losing a modest amount of weight will help you better manage those conditions. According to one study, people with asthma who lost about 30 pounds over the course of a year improved their lung function and decreased the number of severe asthma episodes. People with type 2 diabetes who lost 10 to 15 pounds lowered their blood sugar and blood pressure, improved their cholesterol levels, reduced stress on their joints, and boosted their energy levels.

The trick is to manage your weight smartly. Choose an easy-to-maintain eating plan that emphasizes whole grains, fruits, and vegetables with limited amounts of salt, meat, and alcohol, and take part in physical activity that you genuinely enjoy.
What does it take to make employees happier?

The Politics of Happiness

If happiness doesn’t come with prosperity, is there a point to working long hours? If poor people aren’t any less happy than the rich, is there any reason to narrow the gap between the rich and poor? These are provocative questions that author Derek Bok, the former president of Harvard University, asks in his new book, *The Politics of Happiness*.

Study after study has shown that despite the United States’ rise in its standard of living, Americans are not necessarily happier. Research has also shown that despite the growing income gap in the U.S., those at the bottom level are not any less happy. This makes Bok question the wisdom of pursuing growth at any cost—particularly environmental—and of redistributing wealth to the poor, such as through income tax levels.

But there are areas where policy can demonstratively improve happiness. Losing one’s job is singled out as a particularly traumatic event, more so than divorce. Bok says policymakers can better cushion the shock of job loss by providing longer unemployment benefits and retraining assistance. And since losing sleep is another area that people say makes them unhappy, doing something simple like providing access to programs that can help fix sleep disorders can boost the population’s general happiness.

IS IT YOUR HEART?

A recent Mayo Clinic study has shown that patients who have noncardiac chest pain, or pain that is not heart-related, may benefit from more aggressive cardiac risk management or even from gastrointestinal consultations to deal with their health concerns.

Causes of noncardiac chest pain include gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), as well as esophageal hypersensitivity, panic attack, and musculoskeletal pain. However, patients with this type of chest pain experienced a substantial number of cardiac deaths, possibly because of risk factors for GERD and coronary artery disease, including obesity, diabetes, smoking, and sleep apnea. As a result, the study recommended that these patients be screened for cardiac risk factors as well, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Who’s at Risk?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently estimated that about 45 percent of American adults have at least one of the three main risk factors for heart attack and stroke—high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes—and that 15 percent aren’t even aware they’re at risk.

While the CDC statistical report does not attribute a cause, health experts say obesity directly leads to all three risk factors. Roughly one-third of American adults are overweight and one-third are obese, the CDC says.

To rein in weight, remember to eat right and exercise. Follow a diet that emphasizes whole grains, fruits, and vegetables over salty, processed foods. Limit intake of red meat in favor of fish and chicken, drink alcohol moderately, and watch portion size. Aim to get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity nearly every day of the week. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk to do errands, and find a friend to hike or bike with. Speak with your doctor about mapping out a sustainable eating and exercise plan.
Help for Those Who Need It Most

If you have complex medical conditions, or you are the caregiver for someone with a complex medical condition, you may benefit from the services offered through the CDPHP case management program.

Chronic illness can have a profound impact on your quality of life both emotionally and physically. Case management services are in place to help ease some of the stress you may be experiencing. Caring health care professionals offer disease-specific education, coordination of care, and support for caregivers, all free of charge.

A case manager will work with you to develop a self-management plan based on your personal preferences related to your health care goals, in conjunction with your doctor’s plan of care.

Most importantly, a case manager can help you to better understand how to manage your complex condition and to recognize when you need to call your doctor.

Each person’s plan is a little different. Together you, your case manager, and your doctor will make a detailed plan that meets your unique needs and preferences.

Case management is only a phone call away.
To talk with a case manager, call us today. We are registered nurses and social workers, dedicated to helping you understand your illness. We are available by phone at the CDPHP single source referral line: 1-888-94-CDPHP (23747).

Translation Services
Do you have trouble understanding your CDPHP benefits because you speak a language other than English? Our member services department can help. Call them at the number on your ID card.

Servicio de Traducción
¿Tiene problemas para entender sus beneficios de CDPHP porque su primer idioma no es el inglés? Nuestro departamento de servicios al miembro puede ayudarle. Lléame al número que aparece en su tarjeta de identificación. Organizarán un servicio de la traducción de idiomas para responder a las preguntas sobre ventajas de plan de la salud.

For the Record
Do you have a medical home? In other words, do you have a primary care physician (PCP) who keeps track of your medical history, conditions, treatments, and test results? It is the best way to be sure your care is well coordinated. It also helps eliminate duplication of procedures, and may even protect you from dangerous drug interactions.

Sometimes women think the only doctor they need to see is their OB/GYN. This is not true. It is important to continue visiting your PCP for preventive care.

While you are there, check to be sure that your PCP has received information from specialists who have treated you. All of these reports should be filed in your central medical record.

Physician Pay Incentives Not Used to Reduce Care
Managed care does not mean depriving our members of appropriate services. CDPHP has a resource coordination department to develop, review, approve, and implement programs designed to ensure that members have access to care when needed.

Our policy on resource coordination and care incentives is as follows:

- Resource coordination decision making is based only on appropriateness of medical care and service and the contractual relationship between the member and CDPHP.
- CDPHP does not compensate practitioners or other individuals conducting utilization review for denials of coverage or service.
- Practitioners, providers, and employees who make utilization-related decisions are made aware of the special concern about the risks of underutilization.
Image Kids Gently

Radiation safety experts urge cautious use of CT scans.

Computed tomography (CT or “CAT scan”) is a valuable medical tool for diagnosing a variety of conditions. Recently, however, evidence has led researchers to believe that radiation from CT scans can increase one’s future risk of cancer. This is particularly a problem for children, as they are still growing and will have a longer time to develop cancers.

How serious is this problem?
The diagnostic value of a CT usually far outweighs the slight long-term risks. If there is no clear reason to perform a CT, however, the potential harm may exceed the benefit. The radiation from a CT screen is much greater than from a conventional X-ray.

The population of the United States is second only to Japan in the use of CT exams per person per year. Approximately 7 million CT studies are performed in children every year in this country, with 33 percent of them done on children under age 10.

Are there alternatives to CT scans?
Yes. The options include:
- Ultrasound. This test is particularly valuable in children, since their smaller size and lesser body fat allows for high quality imaging. Images are obtained by sending pulses of sound through the skin.
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). An MRI is created by using magnets and radio waves, and does not expose patients to radiation. The main disadvantage of MRI is that the patient must be very still. Even small amounts of motion will ruin the image.

Are there ways to make CT scans safer?
Yes. If it is decided that a CT is the best test for your child, make sure that the imaging provider keeps radiation exposure as low as possible. It is appropriate to ask questions such as:
- How do their techniques for scanning children differ from those used for an adult?
- Does the facility have American College of Radiology accreditation?
- Is the CT technologist credentialed?

CDPHP is spreading the word
CDPHP supports “Image GentlySM”, an initiative of the Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging. Free member and physician information about the risks of pediatric CT scans can be downloaded from the Member Toolkit section of the Member Resources page at www.cdphp.com.

As a parent, you watch your child for any signs or symptoms of feeling ill. In most cases you know when your child is sick. But when a child’s lead level is elevated, there may be no signs or symptoms.

Lead is a poisonous metal that can cause learning, hearing, and behavioral problems. It can also harm your child’s brain, kidneys, and other organs. The damage can be done before you even know there is a problem.

There are many sources of lead, the most commonly known is paint in older homes. Other sources are some toys and children’s jewelry, certain workplaces and hobbies, firearms with lead bullets, and mini-blinds.

Because children continue to be at risk, New York state requires health care providers to test all children for lead with a blood lead test at age 1 and again at age 2. High lead levels can be treated. Talk to your child’s doctor about it.
Take Time to Safeguard Your Health

Many of us lead busy lives with little time left over for preventive care. Still, periodic health screenings and physicals play an important role. Expectant moms: As explained on page 7 of this newsletter, prenatal and postnatal care are critical for your health and your baby’s health.

Immunizations have enabled the U.S. to reduce the occurrence of many childhood illnesses that once robbed the lives and health of young children. Still, the risk is not zero! Keep your children’s guard up by having them fully immunized.

If you have a chronic disease, check in with your doctor regularly and follow his or her recommendations. Our records show that many members with diabetes are diligent about getting needed blood work, but annual diabetic eye exams continue to be an area for improvement.

CDPHN reports on the care its members receive each year via the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS), a report that can help you compare health plan performance. An excerpt of this year’s HEDIS appears below.
In the past, people thought that managing diabetes was mostly about controlling blood sugar.

Now, scientists know that good blood sugar control is just one piece of the puzzle. In fact, for the best possible health, people with diabetes need to control their blood sugar, their blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.

Doctors have ranked the impact that making certain changes can have on the health of people with type 2 diabetes. It turns out that the biggest improvement in health comes from controlling high blood pressure or quitting smoking. These two changes are tied for first place. The change that has the second biggest impact is controlling high cholesterol.

Controlling high blood pressure has a big impact because it plays a role in almost all the major complications of diabetes, which include heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and vision loss.

Here are some steps you can take to help lower high blood pressure:

- Take your medications as your doctor has prescribed,
- Lose weight if you are overweight,
- Be physically active,
- Limit salt in your daily diet (no more than 2,400 milligrams per day), and
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.

For more information and support, we encourage you to talk to a Health Coach Connection Health Coach, a service that is available to most CDPHN groups. Health Coaches are available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at no charge to you. They are specially trained health care professionals, such as nurses and dietitians, with access to the most up-to-date health information. Call 1-800-365-4180. They are waiting to answer your questions and support you in your medical decisions.

**Diabetes and Blood Pressure**

Every year, CDPHN randomly surveys its members to determine their level of satisfaction. As in past years, CDPHN received high marks on this survey. If you were among those chosen to participate, we thank you for the positive feedback.

CDPHN and other health plans use a standardized member satisfaction survey—known as the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®)—enabling consumers to use the results to compare health plans. The CAHPS survey includes questions on both the health plan and the quality of care members receive from their physicians.

The results at right indicate your satisfaction with services delivered in 2009.

**CAHPS® Survey Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HMO</th>
<th>PPO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction with . . . (usually + always)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Needed Care</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Care Quickly</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Well Doctors Communicate</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims Processing</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan Information on Costs</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Decision Making (definitely yes)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating of . . . (rated 8 to 10 on a scale of 0 to 10)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Health Care</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Doctor</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Plan</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CAHPS® is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).
Eat Right to Stay Healthy

USDA guidelines offer nutritional knowledge.

Did you know that the basics of a healthy diet are the same for people of all ages? The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are designed to promote health and reduce your risk for chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.

The USDA, American Heart Association, and American Diabetes Association recommend these strategies for healthy eating:

- Eat less than 30 percent of your calories from fat and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Reducing daily fat intake helps to clear cholesterol from your arteries and improves your body’s ability to control blood sugar.

- Aim for at least 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables every day. Eating vegetables helps lower blood pressure, improves cholesterol levels, strengthens the immune system, and reduces the risk of certain cancers.

- Increase your fiber intake by consuming at least six portions of beans, cereals, grains, pasta, brown rice, or whole-grain bread each day. Studies by Harvard University found that a high-fiber diet can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes by about 30 percent.

- Consume 3 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk or similar dairy products per day.

- Go easy on the salt shaker. You should consume no more than 2,300 milligrams, or about 1 teaspoon, of salt per day.

- Watch your calories. Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight is an important part of staying healthy. Try not to consume more calories than you burn. Extra weight increases blood pressure and cholesterol and encourages the risk of several types of cancer.

- Add variety to your diet. Eating a mix of foods from all food groups helps ensure you’re getting all the nutritional elements you need to stay healthy.

DIABETICS: Save Your Sight

If you have had a diagnosis of diabetes, please be sure to have a thorough eye checkup every year, even if you do not need new eyewear. These exams are covered.

Eye exam benefits are different for those with diabetes because they are at risk for vision problems. Having high blood sugar can harm the tiny blood vessels in the eye. That leads to a problem called diabetic retinopathy, which is a major cause of blindness among adults in the United States.

Fortunately, damage to the eye can be slowed down if caught and treated in time. The best way to discover retinopathy is with a dilated eye exam. By dilating your pupil, the doctor can get a better view of the retina and other structures inside your eye.
Does Your Child Have Asthma?

Make an action plan for easier breathing—your child’s and your own.

If you have a child with asthma, you know the condition is unpredictable. One minute the asthma sufferer feels fine and the next minute he or she is struggling to breathe. That’s why your child needs an action plan, and the school nurse must have a copy of it on file.

An asthma action plan is a list of instructions that tells the school nurse:
- When your child should take his or her medications, and
- What to do if asthma symptoms flare up.

Most importantly, an asthma action plan can help your child get his or her breathing back to normal.

Each person’s asthma action plan is a little different. Together, you and your child’s doctor will make a detailed plan that works for your child. The first step is to work with the doctor to find a medication routine that keeps your child’s asthma symptoms under control. Then you’ll need to keep track of how your child’s lungs are working. This way, you can discuss with the doctor how to tackle different symptoms and situations.

The CDPHP Health Partner Program is here to help you.

To receive a new action plan form or get help on sticking to the plan, call us today. We are registered nurses dedicated to helping you manage your child’s asthma. We are available by phone, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, at no charge to you.

Call (518) 641-3440 or 1-866-863-0581. We are ready to help you.

ANTIBIOTICS DON’T WORK ON Colds AND Flu

Antibiotics are powerful medications, but they are losing their effectiveness because many people use them when they don’t need to.

With cold and flu season just around the corner, CDPHP would like to remind you that these common ailments are caused by viruses, and antibiotics cannot cure viruses.

Here are a few pointers on dealing with these illnesses:
- A cold is a viral illness and should not be treated with antibiotics, unless there is a bacterial complication. The symptoms usually last for several days, but the cough can persist longer.
- Acute bronchitis is generally caused by a virus and should resolve within several days, although the cough can persist.
- Having yellow or green mucus does not automatically mean that you have a bacterial infection. Treat your symptoms with rest, fluids, and over-the-counter remedies.
- Sore throats are commonly viral. If you have a high fever, swollen glands, or difficulty swallowing, your PCP can do a throat culture to be sure.
Say Hello to Jack
Get more for your money with this big orange Halloween treat.

Whether you’re planning on carving a jack-o’-lantern or turning a pumpkin into a sweet treat, here are safety and cooking tips for everyone’s favorite big orange buddy.

When carving a pumpkin, don’t pick the largest one you can find. That just means a thicker rind to cut through. Cut down around the stem at an angle so the top doesn’t fall in when you replace it. Scoop out the insides and cut the facial features.

Be safe when lighting the pumpkin. Place a small votive or tea candle inside the pumpkin, or better yet, a battery-powered pumpkin light or glow stick so there’s no open flame. The variety of pumpkin best suited for carving is not the best for making pies. Pie pumpkins are smaller and have sweeter, smoother flesh. To make pumpkin purée for pies, cut the pumpkin in half, scoop out the seeds (save them for roasting), and cook the pumpkin in a steamer, double-boiler, pressure cooker, or microwave until soft. Remove the rind and any excess water, and purée using a food processor.

Roasted Pumpkin Seed Selection

INGREDIENTS

2 c. raw whole pumpkin seeds, rinsed and patted dry
2 Tbsp. olive oil
One or more of the following:
1 Tbsp. sea salt
1 tsp. black pepper
½ tsp. cayenne pepper
½ tsp. salt + ¼ tsp garlic salt + 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. salt + ½ tsp ground cinnamon
4 Tbsp. white sugar + 1¼ tsp. salt + ½ tsp. pumpkin pie spice
1 Tbsp. oregano + 1 Tbsp. parmesan cheese
1 Tbsp. Tabasco sauce + ½ tsp. salt

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Spread the pumpkin seeds on a baking sheet. Drizzle with oil and sprinkle with seasoning. Toss lightly to coat. Bake 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lightly toasted.