

# Be Well, Stay Well



SPRING/SUMMER 2015 VOL. 1  
EN ESPAÑOL AL DORSO

## Visit Your Provider for a Health Exam



It is important to have regular health exams with your provider. This can help you stay healthy. These exams can help find problems before they become serious. When you have a chronic condition like diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma or heart failure you should see your provider at least two times a year.

Talking with your provider is also very important. It is not always easy. It takes practice. When you talk with your provider, you develop a good relationship. This helps you work together to make decisions about your health.

### Talking with your provider means:

- Talk honestly and openly with your provider
- Talk about problems
- Ask questions when you do not understand something
- Tell your provider if you are worried about something

Your health care plan is the treatment you and your provider decide is best for you. It is important to follow your health care plan.

### That means:

- Follow the plan exactly how you and your provider discussed
- Take your medication exactly as directed by your provider
- Go to all your provider appointments
- Call your provider if you have questions or concerns
- Give the plan a chance to work
- Talk to your provider if the plan is hard to follow or not working

If you go to the emergency room or an urgent care center, you should always make an appointment to see your provider for follow up. For people with chronic conditions like diabetes, COPD, asthma or heart failure it is even more important. This can help prevent you from ending up in the hospital.

## Contact Us

**Neighborhood Member Services**  
Monday through Friday, 8:30AM to 5PM



ACCESS/Rlte Care,  
TRUST/Rhody Health Partners  
(RHP) and RHP Expansion  
**1-800-459-6019 (TTY 711)**

UNITY/Rhody Health Options  
**1-855-996-4774 (TTY 711)**

CHOICE, COMMUNITY, PARTNER,  
PLUS, PREMIER, SECURE,  
STANDARD and VALUE  
**1-855-321-9244 (TTY 711)**

Beacon Health Strategies (Behavioral  
health services) **1-800-215-0058**  
**(TTY 1-781-994-7660)**



Website [www.nhpri.org](http://www.nhpri.org)



ASTHMA



COPD



DIABETES



HEART FAILURE

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## Stop Using Tobacco

Tobacco is bad for your health. It hurts your body in lots of ways.

It is even more dangerous if you have a chronic condition. Some chronic conditions are asthma, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart disease.

### If you use tobacco and have a chronic condition you are at risk for:

- More complications of your chronic conditions
- More hospital stays
- Higher risk of death

The most important thing you can do for your health is quit using tobacco. If you quit it reduces the health risks caused by tobacco.

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island (Neighborhood) has a tobacco cessation program. This program is called **Quit for Life**. This program is for all members.

### The Quit for Life program provides:

- Counseling and support over the phone
- Education by mail
- Tips on ways to stay smoke free

Call Neighborhood's **Quit for Life** program at 1-401-459-6637 if you are interested in getting help to quit.



## Visit Your Local Farmers Market for Fresh Produce

Farmer's markets are an easy way to get fresh fruits and vegetables in your community. There are 55 farmers markets across Rhode Island. Some offer lessons on how to shop for and cook affordable fresh foods.

Farmer's markets accept the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and (WIC). At some farmer's markets you get bonus bucks when you use your SNAP card. Bonus bucks are market tokens. You get \$2 for every \$5 you spend.

For more information, visit [www.farmfresh.org/markets](http://www.farmfresh.org/markets).



## Taking Your Medication is Important

Your medication will not work if you do not take it. It will not work well if you do not take it correctly.

Not taking your medications as prescribed can cause your condition to become worse. It can also lead to more complications from your condition. These things may cause emergency room visits, hospital stays, and missed days of work or school.

**It is important to know about your medications.**

### Ask your provider:

- What is the name of the medication? Is there another name for the medication?
- What is the medication for?
- How is it going to help me?
- How should I take it?
- When should I take it?
- How long should I take it?
- What are the side effects? What should I do if they happen?
- How long does it take for this medication to work?
- How will I know it is working?
- What should I do when I miss a dose?

### These are things that can help you with taking your medication:

- Keep a written schedule for all your medications
- Check off each dose when you take it so you know you did not miss any
- Set daily routines to take your medication
- Put up reminders such as a note
- Use daily dosing containers
- Keep medications where you will notice them
- Refill your medications before you run out
- Take your medications with you if you travel or go away

Call your provider or your pharmacist if you have questions about your medications.



# Take Care of Your Heart

When someone has heart failure it means their heart is not pumping blood like it should. Heart failure is caused by added stress from certain health conditions that damage the heart or make it work too hard.

## Conditions that may lead to heart disease:

- Coronary artery disease
- History of heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Abnormal heart valves
- Heart muscle disease
- Heart defects you are born with, congenital heart disease
- Severe lung disease
- Diabetes
- Sleep apnea

Damage to the heart that has developed over time can cause heart failure. This cannot be cured but it can be treated. It is important to do what your provider tells you to take care of your heart failure.

## To help treat heart failure:

- Follow your provider's advice
- Weigh yourself daily
- Monitor your fluid intake
- Eat a low salt, low fat diet
- Exercise

- Avoid or limit alcohol and caffeine
- Quit smoking
- Manage stress
- Get adequate sleep
- Try to avoid the flu and pneumonia by getting vaccinated
- Take medications as prescribed
- Join a support group

It is important to watch out for symptoms of heart failure and report any changes to your provider.

## Call your provider if you notice a change in any of these symptoms:

- Swelling in feet, ankles, legs and/or abdomen
- Shortness of breath, especially when laying down
- Sudden increase in weight
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Increased heart rate
- Confusion or impaired thinking
- Lack of appetite or nausea



# Get Rest to Save Your Energy

When you have a chronic condition like heart failure or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), it can make you feel tired or weak.

## To help save your energy and feel better:

- Schedule rest periods during the day. Do not wait until you are exhausted
- Alternate rest periods with periods of being active
- Decide which activities are important. Plan these activities for a time of day you feel best
- Skip activities that are not important
- Do not rush
- Avoid activities when it is too warm or too cold
- Avoid stress and practice relaxation
- Ask for help when you need to
- Learn to control your breathing

Talk with your provider about other ideas to save your energy.

If you need help understanding this information in your language, please call us at **1-401-459-6009** and ask for Member Services.

Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta información en su idioma, llámenos al **1-401-459-6009** y solicite contactar con el servicio de atención al cliente.

Si vous avez besoin d'aide pour comprendre ces informations dans votre langue, appelez-nous au **1-401-459-6009** et demandez le Service aux membres.

Se necessita de ajuda para compreender esta informações no seu idioma, por favor telefone para **1-401-459-6009** e solicite o Serviço de Apoio ao Cliente.

Чтобы получить информацию на родном языке, обратитесь в отдел по работе с клиентами (Member Services) по телефону **1-401-459-6009**.

បរិស្ថានអ្នកអនុវត្តការងារនេះ ខ្ញុំយល់ថា អ្នកចង់ ឮ ភាសាខ្មែរ ជាភាសាម្តាយរបស់លោកអ្នកសូមទូរស័ព្ទមកយើងខ្ញុំតាមលេខ **1-401-459-6009** ហើយសាកសួរផ្នែកសេវាកម្មសមាជិក (Member Services).

ຖ້າທ່ານຕ້ອງການຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອເພື່ອໃຫ້ເຂົ້າໃຈຂໍ້ມູນນີ້ ເປັນພາສາຂອງທ່ານ, ກະລຸນາໂທຫາພວກເຮົາທີ່ໝາຍເລກ **1-401-459-6009** ແລະໃຫ້ຖາມຫາໜ່ວຍປະສານສະມາຊິກ.

Nếu cần được giúp đỡ để hiểu thông tin này bằng ngôn ngữ của quý vị, xin gọi cho chúng tôi theo số **1-401-459-6009** và yêu cầu được nói chuyện với Dịch Vụ Hội Viên.



## Tests and Exams for Diabetes Care

It is very important to keep your blood sugar in good control. There are many health problems that can happen when diabetes is not kept in good control:

- High blood pressure
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Nerve damage and pain
- Loss of vision
- Kidney problems
- Infections
- Poor blood flow to feet
- Skin sores that are difficult to heal
- Gum disease
- Loss of teeth

There are important tests and exams you need to have when you have diabetes. These tests can help your provider find problems early. When problems are found early they are easier to treat.



### These are the tests and exams you should have:

- Appointment with your primary or diabetes provider (at least every 6 months)
- Weight (every office visit)
- Blood pressure (every office visit)
- Foot exam to check skin condition, blood circulation and nerves (every office visit)
- A1c blood test to measures blood sugar average during the last 3 to 4 months (every 3 to 6 months)
- Cholesterol blood test to measure triglycerides and good and bad cholesterol (once a year)
- Urine test to check how your kidneys are working (once a year)
- Dilated eye exam, when drops are placed in your eyes to check the blood vessels (once a year)
- Exam of gums and teeth (every 6 months)



## Prevent Diabetes Complications

It is important to take care of your diabetes. This can help prevent serious diabetes complications.

### Diabetes complications can be:

- Heart attacks or strokes
- High blood pressure
- Kidney disease or kidney damage
- Skin problems
- Eye problems
- Foot problems
- Nerve problems

There are things you can do to help prevent diabetes complications. There are specific tests you need to have. You also need to see your provider more often than someone who does not have diabetes.

The most important thing is to talk to your provider about how to manage your diabetes. It is also important to do the things that you and your provider decided are best for you.

Talk with your provider about the best way to take care of your diabetes.



## A Sick Day Plan Can Help Control Your Diabetes

Being sick can make your blood sugar go very high. This can cause problems that may put you in a coma. The best way to prevent major problems is to have a sick day plan. Your primary care or diabetes provider can help you make a sick day plan.

A diabetes sick day plan should include:

- How often to measure your blood sugar
- How often to measure your urine ketones
- What medications to take
- How to eat
- When to call your provider
- Your provider's phone number



## Track Your Symptoms When You Have Asthma or COPD

It is important to keep track of how you are feeling when you have asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). It is also important to track when you are using your rescue medications and how they are working.

Write this information down and take it to your appointment with your provider. Things you should keep track of:

- How you feel each day
- If your day-to-day symptoms are getting worse
- What triggers are making your symptoms worse
- What helped your symptoms
- How often you use your medication or inhalers
- If you feel your medications are working
- Changes in your breathing, cough or mucus
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Waking up at night due to your symptoms

It is important for your provider to know about your symptoms and use of medications.

### Controller medications:

- Use every day, even if you feel good or do not have symptoms
- Used to decrease the inflammation and mucus production. These things make your asthma or COPD symptoms worse
- You may not feel anything right away after taking these

### Rescue medications:

- Also called quick-relief medications
- Help relieve COPD or asthma symptoms when they flare up
- Use when needed; helps stop a flare-up
- You can feel them working after you use them

This information will help your provider know if they need to make changes to your medication or your treatment plan.



## Have Your Lungs Tested to Improve Treatment

Pulmonary function tests (PFTs) are a group of breathing tests that measure how well your lungs are working. They are also called lung function tests.

### PFTs help your provider:

- Find out if you have certain lung conditions
- See if your condition is getting better or worse
- See how well your treatment is working

PFTs do not hurt. Some of the tests may make you tired if you have a lung problem.

A peak flow meter is another kind of test to measure how well your lungs are working. Your provider may recommend you use a peak flow meter at home to help track your symptoms. A peak flow meter can give you time to adjust your medication or take other steps before your symptoms get worse.

Ask your provider when to have these tests.



# What is Your Risk for Cardiac or Heart Disease?

Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the United States according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There are some things you can do to help prevent heart disease.



## Stop using tobacco

- Whether you smoke or chew tobacco you should stop
- Avoid other people's tobacco smoke

## Lower your blood pressure

- Keep a healthy weight
- Be active
- Eat less salt
- Do not drink too much alcohol
- Lower your stress
- Take medications as directed by your provider

## Lower your cholesterol

- Eat a healthy heart diet which includes fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Be active
- Take medication as directed by your provider

## Lose weight

- Eat healthy foods
- Get exercise

## Control your diabetes

- Keep good control of your diabetes
- Have your blood pressure tested
- Have your cholesterol tested
- Have your Hemoglobin A1C tested
- Take medication as directed by your provider
- Follow a diabetic diet

Anyone with a chronic condition like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes and heart failure should see their provider at least twice a year. Ask your provider about your risk of heart disease and what you can do to stay well. Heart disease is a major complication of diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, people with diabetes have a higher than average risk of having a heart attack or stroke.



## Be Well, Stay Well



### About this Newsletter

You are receiving this mailing because you or your child appears to be under treatment for one of the following:

- Asthma
- COPD
- Diabetes
- Heart failure

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island (Neighborhood) has disease management programs for our members who have these diagnoses. Our goal is to help you better control your health.

As part of these programs, you will receive this newsletter with information to help you stay well. You also have access to health coaches who are nurses. They can work with you over the phone to teach you ways to help manage your health. These programs are voluntary.

### Please call Neighborhood Member Services if you:

- Would like to work with a health coach
- Have questions about the disease management programs
- Have questions about the information in this newsletter
- Do not have any of these conditions
- Do not want to be in a disease management program

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island sends information to help our members learn about their health care. Please work with your providers to decide the treatment that is right for you and your family.

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