

Be Well, Stay Well



Don't Stop Getting Regular Health Care During COVID-19

Have you been getting regular health care during the last two years? Many people have not. Some people are afraid to get the health care they need because of COVID-19.

There is really no need to worry. Provider offices and hospitals all take steps to keep you safe at your appointments. Plus, getting vaccinated and wearing a mask will help protect you from COVID-19.

It may not sound like a big deal to wait to take care of your health, but it is. It puts your health at risk.

When you have chronic health conditions like diabetes, asthma, or heart disease and you do not get the care you need, your

condition can become worse. Getting regular health care can help keep your chronic condition under control.

If you are worried about going to your provider's office, you may be able to have an appointment over the phone or by video. Ask your provider if this is an option for you. Talk to your provider about how they are keeping you safe and how you can get your regular health care.

Contact Us


Neighborhood Member Services






 **ACCESS/Rlte Care, TRUST/Rhody Health Partners**
1-800-459-6019 (TTY 711)
Mon-Fri 8AM-6PM

Commercial Plans
1-855-321-9244 (TTY 711)
Mon-Fri 8AM-6PM

INTEGRITY/Medicare-Medicaid Plan
1-844-812-6896 (TTY 711)
Mon-Fri 8AM-8PM; 8AM-12PM on Sat

Behavioral Health Services
1-401-443-5997 (TTY 711)

 **Website:** www.nhpri.org

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|  Asthma |  Heart Failure |
|  COPD |  Coronary Artery Disease |
|  Diabetes | |

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COVID-19 Vaccines and Chronic Conditions

If you have one or more medical conditions, your risk of severe illness from COVID-19 is high. This risk becomes even higher if you are older and if your medical conditions are very serious.

Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may:

- Be hospitalized
- Need intensive care
- Require a ventilator to help them breathe
- Die

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 vaccines:

- Help prevent severe illness from COVID-19.
- Are safe and effective and can lower your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19.
- Are very effective at preventing hospitalization and death.
- Are safe and effective for people with other medical conditions.

Other things you can do to help prevent getting COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated and get a booster when it is recommended and available to you.
- Wear a mask in crowded places.
- Stay at least six feet apart from others.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands well with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available use hand sanitizer.

If you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your provider today. They can help answer your questions.



Check Your Blood Sugar When You Have Diabetes

Checking your blood sugar (blood glucose) is one of the most important things you can do to manage your type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Knowing your blood sugar levels helps you know if your diabetes is in good control.

You should also keep a list of your blood sugar levels that includes:

- The date and time that you tested your blood sugar.
- The result of the test.

Bring the list of your results to every provider appointment. It helps your provider better manage your condition and this helps stop you from having complications from diabetes.

Ask your provider if you should be testing your blood sugar and how often.



How to Reach Your Provider After Hours

The provider you see regularly for your medical care is called your Primary Care Provider or PCP. This provider should be the first person you call when you do not feel well or have a health question. You can reach your provider's office anytime.

You can call during the day, night, and on weekends and holidays. If you call when the office is closed, you may get an answering service. They will contact your provider. If your provider is not available, another provider will call you back to help with your concerns. If you are having a medical emergency, you should call 911.

Some emergencies can be:

- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain
- Bleeding that will not stop



Get Fresh Fruits and Vegetables at Your Local Farmers Market

Farmers markets are a great way to get fresh fruits and vegetables.

- There are over 40 farmers markets in Rhode Island.
- Some offer lessons on how to shop for and cook affordable fresh foods.
- Farmers markets accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and WIC.
- Some farmers markets give bonus bucks when you use your SNAP card.
- There are farmers markets happening all-year.

For more information, visit www.farmfresh.org/markets



Know When Your Asthma or COPD is Getting Worse

When you have asthma or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) there may be times when your condition gets worse. It is important to know when this is happening and what you need to do.

Signs that your asthma is getting worse:

- Symptoms become more severe.
- Symptoms happen more often.
- Symptoms prevent you from doing your daily activities.
- Using your quick-relief medication more often.
- Your medications do not work as well.
- You have gone to an emergency room or an urgent care center for an asthma attack.

Signs that your COPD is getting worse:

- Changes in your cough.
- Coughing up more mucus.
- Mucus is a different color.
- Increased shortness of breath.
- Swollen ankles.
- Feeling really tired.
- Having to sit up to sleep.
- Having to prop yourself up to sleep.
- Having headaches.
- Feeling dizzy in the morning.

Ask your provider what you should do if your symptoms get worse.



When You Have Diabetes, You Should Have a Sick Day Plan

Everyone gets sick no matter how careful they are. When you have diabetes and you get sick, it can be hard to manage your blood sugar levels. This is why you need to have a plan for when you get sick.

Having a sick day plan ahead of time will help you manage your diabetes and you will be less likely to have additional complications. Being prepared and knowing what to do if you get sick is very important.

A sick day plan should include reminders like:

- When to call your provider.
- How often to check your blood sugar.
- A list of foods and fluids to take while you are sick.
- How to adjust your insulin or other medications, if you need to.

Be sure to write your plan down so you will have it handy when you need it.

Talk to your provider and work together on the best plan for you. Be sure to ask about the kinds of over the counter medications you can take for things like a cold or the flu. Some of these medications can raise your blood sugar or affect your usual medications.



Weigh Yourself Every Day When You Have Heart Failure

People who have heart failure need to track their weight carefully. Weight gain can be one of the first signs that your heart failure is getting worse. Weight gain can mean your body is retaining fluid, which causes your heart to work harder.

You can retain fluid in any part of your body including:

- Ankles
- Lower legs
- Feet
- Waist or belly
- Fingers

Keeping track of your weight is easy:

- Make sure you weigh yourself on a flat, hard surface.
- Weigh yourself at the same time every day (morning is usually the best time).
- Keep a record of your weight and bring it to all of your provider visits.
- Tell your provider right away if you gain more than 2 or 3 pounds in one day.
- Tell your provider right away if you gain more than 5 pounds in one week.

Talk to your provider about the best way to monitor your weight.



Change is Hard, But Keep Trying

When you have a chronic condition, you may need to make changes to your lifestyle. These changes are important in helping you manage your condition.

Some changes may be:

- Eating a special diet.
- Taking medications.
- Testing blood sugars and writing down the results.
- Weighing yourself every day.
- Quitting smoking.

Even though these changes are good for you, it can still be really hard. It is also easy to get discouraged when you make changes and then do not see the results right away. Change is a process, which means it can take time.

But don't give up! You are trying and it is important to give yourself credit. Even small changes can make a difference. These small changes are a step in the right direction and will bring you closer to your goal.

Talk to your provider about the changes you can make that will help you manage your condition.



