



POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Health and Wellness Information for Members

Fall 2016



i In this Issue

- Alcohol Addiction
- Health Plan Message:
- Quit for Life
- Colon Cancer Screening
- Asthma
- Zika Virus
- You can also see the newsletter online
- Prevention Points
- Beware of Scams!!
- Think About Joining a Trial!
- Special Needs
- Message from Your Health Plan

Alcohol Addiction

Alcohol is an intoxicant and can depress the nervous system. It is a legal substance that is readily available and socially accepted. Some research has been done on the effects of alcohol on HIV patients. It's shown that an even moderate level is more harmful to them than among people who don't have the virus. Even those who are undetectable are at risk. One of the reasons alcohol and HIV have a bad link is because both produce a heightened state of inflammation. This can lead to many health issues, including heart problems.

You may have heard that regular to light drinking can be good for the heart. With heavy drinking, the benefits are outweighed by the risks, including:

Injuries. Drinking too much increases your chances of being injured or even killed. Alcohol is a factor in about 60% of fatal burns, drownings, and homicides; 50% of severe trauma injuries and sexual assaults; and 40% of fatal motor vehicle crashes, suicides, and fatal falls.

Health problems. People who drink deeply have a greater risk of health problem. This includes liver disease, heart disease, sleep disorders, depression, stroke, and bleeding from the stomach. Also, sexually transmitted infections from unsafe sex and several types of cancer. They may have problems managing diabetes, high blood pressure, and other conditions.

Birth defects. Drinking during pregnancy can cause brain damage and other serious problems in the baby. It's not known if alcohol is safe for a developing baby, so women who are pregnant or may become pregnant should not drink.



P.O. Box 46160, Los Angeles, CA 90046
 Visit us 24/7 on the web
 CA • positivehealthcare.net/california/php/
 FL • positivehealthcare.net/florida/php/
 Member Services
 Mon - Fri, 8:00am to 8:00pm
 California (800) 263-0067
 Florida (888) 456-4715
 TTY/TDD: 711



continued from page 1

Plan ahead to stay in control

As you change your drinking, it's normal to have urges or a craving for alcohol. The word "craving" refer to the thoughts or emotions that tempt you to drink. You can crave it even though you have at least some desire not to. You may feel a pull in two directions or sense a loss of control.

Luckily, urges to drink are short-lived, predictable, and controllable. With time and by practicing, you'll find that your urges to drink will lose strength. Then you will gain confidence in your ability to deal with urges that may still arise at times. If you are having a very hard time with urges after a few weeks, consult a doctor or therapist for support. In addition, some new, non-habit forming medications can reduce the desire to drink or lessen the rewarding effect of drinking so it is easier to stop.

Here are a few tips

- Pace yourself. Sip slowly. Keep an eye on the clock and limit yourself to one drink an hour.
- Use drink "spacers"— nonalcoholic drinks between alcoholic ones.
- Try drinks with a lower alcohol content like light beer.
- Eat before or while you're drinking. Alcohol is absorbed into your system more slowly if you have food in your stomach.
- Have a quick, convincing "no thanks" ready if offered a drink at times when you don't want one. Any hesitation allows for second thoughts.



Health Plan Message:

Nurse Advice Hotline

If you think you have a medical or psychiatric emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital. Do not attempt to access emergency care through the nurse advice hotline. If you have an urgent symptom or you want to speak with a nurse, please call the nurse advice hotline.

In addition to the nurse advice hotline, many of our facilities offer urgent visits for urgent medical needs.

It's a good idea to get familiar with urgent care locations near you, so you know where to go when you have an urgent health concern.

Urgent Care

A care need that isn't an emergency but can't wait for routine (non-urgent) visits. Examples include:

- minor injuries and cuts
- sore throats and earaches
- frequent or severe coughs
- frequent urination or burning when urinating



Quit for Life

You put your health at risk when you smoke or use tobacco. You are more likely to suffer from heart disease, lung disease or cancers. It can be a very hard habit to stop. Only about four in 100 people can quit without any help. The smoking rate is two to three times higher among adults who are HIV-positive. Quitting smoking can help people with HIV/AIDS have a better quality of life and fewer HIV-related symptoms.

People who smoke and have HIV/AIDS are more likely to get HIV-related infections, including:

- Thrush(a mouth infection, also called oral candidiasis)
- Hairy leukoplakia (white mouth sores)
- Bacterial pneumonia
- Pneumocystis pneumonia (a dangerous lung infection).

What is Quit for Life?

Want to quit smoking? We have a program called *Quit for Life*[®] that can help you stop. Many people who smoke want to quit, but they can't do it on their own. People who join *Quit for Life* are eight times more likely to quit than those who try on their own. A *Quit Coach*[®] will help you get ready to quit. He or she will support you through the process. Once you quit, the *Quit Coach* will help you stay tobacco-free. There is no cost to you.

The Quit for Life program includes many tools.

- Eight (8) weeks of free patches or gum
- One-on-one calls with a trained *Quit Coach*
- Your own packet of written materials including a *Quit Guide*
- Text messages from your *Quit Coach* on your cell phone
- Website with learning tools, forums and access to a *Web Coach*[®]
- A toll-free number to call for help 7 days a week

To sign up for the program:

Call: 1-866-784-8454

(1-866-QUIT-4-LIFE)

Join online: www.quitnow.net/ahf

Other questions about the program?

Member Services:

(888) 997-0979 (TTY 711),

Monday through Friday,

8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.



Colon Cancer Screening:

Colon cancer death rates has had large decreases over the past two decades. However, it remains the third-deadliest cancer in the United States for both men and women. Routine screening can prevent colon cancer or find it at an early, treatable stage. If it's found and treated early the 5-year survival rate is about 90%. Many more lives could be saved by understanding colon cancer risks, increasing screening rates and making lifestyle changes.

Colorectal cancer is cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum. Sometimes it is called colon cancer, for short.

What happens when you have colon cancer?

Most cases begin as polyps, which are small growths inside the colon. These polyps are very common, and most of them do not turn into cancer. Colon cancer usually grows very slowly. It usually takes years for the cancer to become large enough to cause symptoms. If the cancer is not removed it keeps growing. Eventually it will invade and destroy nearby tissues and then spread farther, first to nearby lymph nodes. From there it may spread to other parts of the body.

What are the symptoms?

Colon cancer in its early stages usually doesn't cause any symptoms. Symptoms occur later, when the cancer may be harder to treat. The most common symptoms include:

- Pain in the belly.
- Blood in your stool or very dark stools.
- A change in your bowel habits, such as more frequent stools or a feeling that your bowels are not emptying completely.
- Always feeling tired.



How can you prevent colon cancer?

Screening tests can find or prevent many cases of colon cancer. They look for a certain disease or condition before any symptoms appear.

Screening tests that may find colon cancer early include:

- Stool tests, such as the fecal occult blood test (iFOBT).
- Sigmoidoscopy, which lets your doctor look at the inside of the lower part of your colon using a lighted tube.
- Colonoscopy, which lets your doctor look at the inside of your entire colon using a thin, flexible tube.
- Computed tomographic colonography, which uses air to expand your colon so that it is easier to see on an X-ray.

If you are over the age of 50 and have not yet done one of these tests, talk to your provider about having a screening done.

Asthma:

Asthma is a common lung disease in which the lung's airways become inflamed or irritated. It causes difficulty breathing, chest tightness, coughing, or wheezing. Wheezing is a high-pitched sound heard while you're breathing. Many people with asthma are sensitive to allergens, such as pollen, animal dander, dust, or mold. Smoke, pollution and strong chemicals can also affect your airways.

Asthma affects people in different ways. Some people have asthma attacks only during allergy season, when they breathe in cold air, or when they exercise. Others have many bad attacks that send them to the doctor often. Even if you have few asthma attacks, you still need to treat your asthma. The swelling in your airways can lead to permanent changes in your airways and harm your lungs. Many people with asthma live active, full lives. Even though asthma is a lifelong disease, treatment can control it and keep you healthy.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of asthma can be mild or severe. You may have mild attacks now and then, or you may have severe symptoms every day. Or you may have something in between. How often you have symptoms can also change. When you have asthma, you may:

- Wheeze, making a loud or soft whistling noise when you breathe in and out.
- Cough a lot.
- Feel tightness in your chest.
- Feel short of breath.
- Have trouble sleeping because of coughing or having a hard time breathing.
- Quickly get tired during exercise.

Your symptoms may be worse at night. Severe asthma attacks can be life-threatening and need emergency treatment.

What causes asthma?

Experts don't know exactly what causes asthma. But there are some things we do know:

- Asthma runs in families.
- Asthma is much more common in people who have allergies, though not everyone with allergies gets asthma. And not everyone with asthma has allergies.
- Pollution may cause asthma or make it worse.

Do you have asthma?

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, make an appointment with your doctor, to find out if you have asthma.

- Do you cough at night often?
- Do your colds go to your chest?
- Do you wheeze frequently when you get a cold?
- Have you had bronchitis several times?
- Do you cough or wheeze after exercising?
- Do pollen, animal dander, cold air, or high pollution days make you cough or wheeze?
- Do you use an over-the-counter asthma inhaler or borrow a family member's prescription inhaler?



Zika Virus



- Zika virus disease is caused by a virus transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes.
- People with Zika virus disease usually have a mild fever, skin rash (exanthema) and conjunctivitis. These symptoms normally last 2-7 days.
- There is no specific treatment or vaccine currently available.
- The best form of prevention is protection against mosquito bites.
- The virus is known to circulate in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific.

Source: World Health Organization

What is the Zika Virus?

Zika virus is a flavivirus that spreads to people mainly through the bite of an infected mosquito. People can also get Zika through sex with an infected man. The virus can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus as well. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in known cases of sexual transmission, the men had Zika symptoms. Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital. Persons very rarely die of Zika virus. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected. When symptoms occur, they can include fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes, and they can last from a few days to about a week. Also, Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called microcephaly, as well as other severe fetal brain defects.

Prevent Risks

To reduce the risk of sexual transmission and potential pregnancy complications related to Zika virus infection, those living in or returning from areas where local transmission of Zika virus occurs should do the following:

- Adopt safer sexual practices (including using condoms) or consider abstinence for at least 6 months.
- Wait at least 8 weeks before trying to get pregnant if no symptoms of Zika virus infection appear.
- Wait 6 months if one or both members of the couple are symptomatic.

To protect yourself and your family, always wear mosquito repellent in areas where Zika is present. Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Stay and sleep in screened-in and air-conditioned rooms whenever possible.

Please contact your provider if you believe you have come in contact with the Zika virus.

You can also see the newsletter online @:

PHP Florida: <http://positivehealthcare.net/florida/php/for-members/newsletter/>

PHC Florida: <http://positivehealthcare.net/florida/phc/members/materials/newsletters/>

PHP California: <http://positivehealthcare.net/california/php/for-members/hw/>

PHC California: <http://positivehealthcare.net/california/phc/members/materials/newsletters/>



Prevention Points

At AIDS Healthcare Foundation, preventive care has always been an essential part of your health plan. Preventive services include immunizations and screenings to detect possible diseases and help you stay well. Prevention is about staying healthy and preventing or delaying disease.

Some key preventative screenings include:

- ✓ Blood pressure screening for all adults
- ✓ Cholesterol screening
- ✓ Colorectal cancer screening for adults over 50
- ✓ Type 2 diabetes screening for adults with high blood pressure
- ✓ Mammograms every one to two years for women over 40
- ✓ Cervical cancer screening for sexually active women
- ✓ Osteoporosis screening for women over 60, depending on risk factors
- ✓ Immunizations for children from birth to 18 years
- ✓ Obesity screening and counseling for children

Beware of Scams!!

Recently, AHF received reports of phone calls from an unknown caller posing as a pharmacy. The caller is requesting address and Social Security number information from our members. Please note that this caller is **not affiliated** with AHF or AHF Pharmacy. This type of phishing scam could lead to identity theft and/or government benefit theft. AHF urges that you never provide your Social Security number, bank account numbers, or other personal information by telephone or over the Internet. Only do this if you are extremely confident of the source to which you are providing the information. Please remain vigilant about protecting your personal information.

If you have questions about any communication—phone call, email, letter, or text—that claims to be from or have a connection to AHF or AHF Pharmacy, we recommend you contact Member Services at 1-800-263-0067.



Think About Joining a Trial!

New drug trials and treatment studies start all the time. These help create better treatment for all people living with HIV/AIDS. There are many types of clinical trials. One may be perfect for you. Your doctor may ask you to join a trial. Think about it!

For more info call:

California: (323) 913-1033

NorthPoint Healthcare Center,
Ft. Lauderdale, FL: (954) 772-2411

Kinder Healthcare Center,
Miami, FL: (786) 497-4000 ext. 232

Special Needs

We know many of our members have special needs that make it hard to communicate with their healthcare team or Health Plan. Tell the doctor, nurse care manager or other member of your health home team if English is the not language you speak. We can call an interpreter who speaks your language. If you are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have other special needs, we can arrange a service to help us communicate with you. For your health, it is vital that you and your doctor or healthcare team understand each other. This service is free to you.



A Message from Your Health Plan

Your Contact Information

PHP cares about you and your health. We need to know if you moved or got a new phone number. Please call Member Services to update your record any time you make a change.

Member Services

Monday-Friday 8:00am-8:00pm • California: (800) 263-0067
Florida: (888) 456-4715 TTY/TTD: 711

Medication Therapy Management Program (MTMP)

As part of PHP, you are enrolled in the MTMP. This Program helps people who take many prescribed meds. The Program lowers the chance of mistakes and reactions with your meds.

Your health care team will be in touch with you and your doctor. They will explain the drugs that you take. Your doctor will know of safety issues with your meds. Any other health issues will also be handled. Your RN Care Manager will contact you to make an action plan for your meds. An action plan with your nurse care manager will help with any problems you may have. The action plan will let you know just how and when to take your meds.

Drug Safety

Certain meds can be risky for older people. Find a list of high-risk meds and safe treatment options on our website.

PHP CA: positivehealthcare.net/california/php/for-providers/consumer-safety/

PHP FL: positivehealthcare.net/florida/php/for-providers/consumer-safety/

Compliance Hotline

Help us look out for Medicare fraud and abuse. For example, if your Explanation of Benefits lists charges that are wrong, call Member Services. Call our Compliance Hotline if you suspect possible fraud or abuse.

Compliance Hotline: (800) AIDS-HIV • (800) 243-7448

We want to hear from you!

The Client Advisory Committee is a great way to tell us what you think about your Health Plan! We welcome all health plan members and AHF Healthcare Center clients. You can share your questions, concerns and comments with our Health Plan leaders. We use your concerns to make your Plan better. Come to the next meeting to find out what your Health Plan can do for you!

California - Los Angeles

6255 W. Sunset Blvd, 21st Floor • To RSVP, call **Santiago at (800) 243-2101**

Florida - Broward, Monroe and Dade Counties

6405 N Federal Hwy, Suite 205, Fort Lauderdale 33316

To RSVP, call: **(954) 772-2411 option 3**

Food and drinks will be served.

Questions?

Contact Your RN Care Manager

Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:30pm • California: (800) 474-1434 • Florida: (800) 832-0778

Urgent After-Hours Nurse Advice Line

Mon-Fri, 5:30pm-8:30am and 24 hours on Weekends. Available 365 days a year.
California: (800) 797-1717 • Florida: (866) 228-8714

In Florida, contact Psychcare for Behavioral Health Needs

24 hours a day/7 days a week • (855) 765-9698

