



# POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Health and Wellness Information for Members

Spring 2014



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## Stay on Your Own Two Feet

As we age, the chance that we will fall and hurt ourselves grows. Nearly 1 out of every 3 people over the age of 65 fall each year. A bad fall can break bones, cause head trauma and can even lead to death. After a fall, many people suffer a loss of freedom and some cannot care for themselves.

A fall can happen when you least expect it. People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) may be at a greater risk of falls due to the effects of the virus on the body. There are many ways to reduce the chance of a fall. You and your doctor can make a plan to prevent falls with a few simple guidelines.

### Strength and Balance

Strength training is not just for body builders. There are easy ways to improve your strength and balance to prevent an injury in a fall.

- **Stay active.** A daily walk can keep your legs strong. Movement that gets your heart rate up will help build muscle and keep your heart healthy. Try to take long steps when you walk.
- **Focus on your core.** The muscles around your stomach and lower back help keep you upright if you do slip. Talk to your doctor or nurse about the core building exercises that are safe for you.
- **Work on your balance.** Tai chi- a series of slow, graceful poses- can improve your balance. Yoga and water workouts are helpful and easy on your joints.
- **Wear sturdy shoes.** Good footwear goes a long way. Avoid flip-flops, high heels or shoes with slick soles.

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P.O. Box 46160  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Member Services  
Mon - Fri, 8:00am to 8:00pm  
Tel (800) 263-0067  
TTY/TDD: 711



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## Work With Your Healthcare Team

There are many things your healthcare team can do to reduce your risk of a fall injury. Your healthcare team will work with you to make a plan to prevent falls.

- **Review your medications.** Side effects of some meds may make you dizzy or drowsy. Review your meds with your doctor if you have side effects that increase your risk of falls.
- **Check your vision.** Have your vision checked on a routine basis. Good eyesight can protect you from slips and trips.
- **Get your ears checked.** Problems in your inner ear can affect your balance or make you feel dizzy.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Talk with your doctor, PA or RN Care Team Manager (RNCTM) if you need help to control how much you drink. Even a couple of drinks can put you at risk for a fall.

## Practice Home Safety

Most falls happen inside the home. You can create a safe home setting when you remove slip, trip and fall hazards. Your RNCTM can do a home visit to help you find any fall risks where you live.

- **Remove clutter.** Make sure that walkways and stairs are free of any loose items like shoes, clothes, papers or trash.
- **Secure wires.** Cords and wires can be moved under furniture or taped down to prevent trip hazards.
- **Have a well-lit home.** Good lighting inside and outside your home will improve your home safety.
- **Throw rugs are trip hazards.** Use non-slip rugs or secure throw rugs with double-sided tape.
- **Clean up spills right away.** Water or other liquids on the floor create a slip hazard. Clean up wet spills as soon as they happen. Move pet food and water bowls away from walkways.
- **Fall proof your shower.** Use non-slip strips or a rubber mat in your bathtub or shower to help prevent mishaps while you bathe.

Don't be one in three people who are hurt by falls. Protect yourself from fall injury with these simple steps. Get in touch with your healthcare team to create a plan to keep you on your own two feet.

Learn more:

**StopFalls.org:** [stopfalls.org/individuals-families/](http://stopfalls.org/individuals-families/)

**National Council on Aging:** [www.ncoa.org/improve-health/falls-prevention/](http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/falls-prevention/)

**Centers for Disease Control & Prevention:**

[www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/index.html)

## Share Your Views

Your voice counts! This spring you might get a survey about your Health Plan in the mail. The survey may ask about your health or what you think about your Health Plan. All of the answers are put together in a summary. We are not told the details of who said what. Your answers will be private.

Your feedback helps us improve the care and services we provide. One survey that goes out every year is:

- **Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS)**

This survey asks you how you feel about your doctors, nurses, health plan and drug program.

Please take the time to fill out the survey and send it back as soon as you can. Thank you!

## Live Healthy, Love Healthy

We have all kinds of close relationships – spouses, partners, friends and family. People trust and respect each other in a healthy connection. They try to make life better for their partner or loved one. You can work toward a healthy bond when you:

- Make big and small decisions as a team
- Listen with care when the other speaks
- Thank the person when they are helpful or kind
- Tell your partner what you like about him or her
- Show care and love: hold hands, sit closely, hug, smile
- Help each other

All relationships can have problems. How you handle these problems is the key to success. Building good relationships takes practice. You can take positive steps to try to solve troubles as they come up:

- Talk about the problem as soon as you are aware of it
- Listen to the other person's feelings
- Do not yell at or hurt the other person



### Learn to See the Signs of Abuse

Domestic violence is known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse, and intimate partner violence (IPV). Abuse happens when a partner, family member or caregiver hurts the person they care for. Abuse does not always leave a bruise or mark. It can be physical, verbal, and/or sexual. IPV is when abuse takes place between people who are dating, partnered or married. IPV happens to women, men and transgender men and women. It happens to people who are straight and gay. Abuse can take many forms. Signs of abuse are if someone:

- Tries to control the other person
- Shoves, pushes, hits or chokes
- Makes it hard for the other to see friends or family
- Makes the other person fear for their safety
- Says things that pressure the other person into sex
- Threatens to punish or do harm if they don't get their way
- Can be kind and thoughtful for a little while, but then act out for no good reason

### Stay Safe from Abuse

Abuse is harmful and widespread. IPV affects nearly 25% of women and 14% of men each year. Your safety is our main concern. If you think you are a victim of abuse, there are people who can help. Tell your doctor, RNCTM or a friend. You can also contact:

#### National Domestic Violence Hotline

(800) 799-7223 (1-800-799-SAFE)

TTY (800) 787-3224

[www.thehotline.org/](http://www.thehotline.org/)

#### Adult Protective Services

California: (877) 477-3646

[www.cdss.ca.gov/agedblindddisabled/PG1298.htm](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/agedblindddisabled/PG1298.htm)

## Safe Family Planning Answers

Many people think if you have HIV then it is not safe to try and get pregnant. There has been a lot of progress in recent years for PLWHA who want to start a family or have more children. There are also new options for Health Plan members who do not want to become pregnant.

### Condoms and Birth Control

Condoms are the best way to prevent the spread of HIV and other disease. Condoms plus a second form of birth control is the best method if you do not want to become pregnant. Your Health Plan will now cover the cost of birth control pills. It is best if you take the pills at the same time each day. Women should not take birth control pills if they:

- Smoke and are over 35 years old
- Have high blood pressure
- Had a stroke, heart attack or breast cancer

### Options for Safe Pregnancy

Women with HIV have more options now to reduce the risk they will pass the virus to their baby or their partner. Always talk to your doctor if you think you want to have a baby. There are many things to keep in mind. A woman needs to:

- Be in good health
- Take HIV meds
- Have an undetectable viral load
- Have a good social support system

Even with a low viral load, you can still infect your partner. Use condoms except on the days the woman is most fertile. There are test to show when you are most likely to get pregnant. Men with HIV can use a process called sperm washing to remove the sperm from the rest of the semen. Sperm themselves do not carry the virus and can be used to get a partner pregnant.

It is vital for pregnant women to see their doctors on a routine basis both before and after the birth. Routine pre-natal and post-natal care helps reduce the risk the baby will be born with HIV. Mothers with HIV should not breastfeed their babies since breast milk carries the virus.

For more information on safe family planning, visit **AIDS.gov**: [aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/staying-healthy-with-hiv-aids/friends-and-family/having-children/](http://aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/staying-healthy-with-hiv-aids/friends-and-family/having-children/)

## Do You Suffer from Nerve Damage?

Neuropathy [nur-ah-pa-thee] describes nerve damage to the outer nerves of the arms, hands, legs and feet. This nerve damage can make these parts of your body feel numb, tingle or burn. It is often very painful. As many as 1 in 3 PLWHA have some form of this disease.

Certain things put you at risk for nerve damage. HIV can have a direct effect on the nerves and cause damage. People with diabetes often suffer from neuropathy. Other risk factors include:

- Lack of vitamin B, mostly B12
- Alcohol abuse
- Infections or tumors
- Major surgery
- Some meds used to treat HIV and other infections

Nerve damage can be treated to reduce symptoms. Treatments for depression or seizures may help calm the pain from nerve damage. Tell your doctor if you have any numbness or pain in your feet and hands.





## Turn your Back on Tobacco

We have all heard the best thing you can do for your health is to quit smoking and tobacco use. The risk of heart disease for smokers is nearly 4 times as high as for non-smokers. That risk returns to normal in a few years when smokers give up the habit,

Most people who smoke want to quit. Many people have tried to quit in the past without success. It is common for someone to have 7 quit attempts before they see themselves as a non-smoker. It is very hard to quit on your own. It helps to have a plan and a support system in place.

### Quit for Life®

Quit for Life is a free program to help smokers kick the habit. This program gives you the support you need to turn your back on tobacco for good. Quit for Life helps you every step of the way with many tools:

- 8 weeks of free patches or gum
- One-on-one calls with a trained Quit Coach
- Your own packet of written materials with a Quit Guide
- Texts on your cell phone
- Website with e-learning tools, forums and access to a Web Coach®
- Access to a toll-free number to call for help 7 days a week

### The program is based on four points:

1. **Quit At Your Own Pace.** Quit on your own terms, but get the help you need, when you need it.
2. **Conquer Your Urges to Smoke.** Gain the skills you need to control cravings, urges and situations involving alcohol.
3. **Use Meds So They Really Work.** Learn how patches, gum, or meds can help you quit.
4. **Don't Just Quit, Become a Non-smoker.** Once you stop using tobacco, learn to never again have that "first" cigarette.

You can enroll for Quit for Life at no charge to you:

Call: 1-855-252-4871

Join online: [www.quitforlife.net/ahf](http://www.quitforlife.net/ahf)



## Basic Facts on Discharge Plans

Even when we take good care of our health, most of us will need to stay in a hospital at some point in our lives. A hospital stay often includes a number of things you must do to follow-up on your care at home. This could involve new medications, wound care, a special diet or things the doctor needs you to track.

When you check out of the hospital, a nurse will give you a discharge plan. This is a list of things the doctor needs you to know about your follow-up care. This plan helps make sure you will not need to go back

into the hospital. The discharge plan is your guide to a good recovery. Make sure to ask questions and have the doctor and nurse explain just what the discharge plan means for you.

Make sure that your doctor and RNCTM know when you had a hospital stay. They need to know the reason for the stay and what new meds you need to take. Always call your doctor's office, RNCTM or the Nurse Advice Line first if you think you need to go to the ER. The hospital is not always the best choice for some types of health issues.

## Our Promise to Provide Quality Care

Your health plan is accredited by Accreditation Association of Ambulatory Health Care (AAAH). This means the Plan meets a set of national standards for quality care and service. AAAHC's goal is to help us improve the quality of health care we provide. In 2014 we will renew our accreditation with a survey. You can share facts about your health plan with AAAHC either at the time of the survey or before it takes place in June. You can write or call AAAHC if you have questions or something to share.

### **Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, Inc.**

5250 Old Orchard Road, Suite 200  
Skokie, IL 60077  
Telephone 847-853-6060  
FAX 847-853-9028  
[www.aaahc.org](http://www.aaahc.org)

## Get to Know Your Healthcare Team

With all the changes to the healthcare system, it is good to know there are people you can count on to help you along the way. As a plan member, you have a team of people who are here to bring you the best care that is right for you. You, your doctor and your RNCTM are the core of your healthcare team.

Get to know your RNCTM, your social worker and your other care partners. They are here to support your care and improve your health. Contact your RNCTM if you have any questions or problems with the care you receive. He or she is your best resource to find the answers you need.

Call the Nurse Advice Line if you are not sure who your RNCTM is:

### **Contact Your RN Care Team Manager**

Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:30pm  
Tel: (800) 474-1434

### **After-Hours Nurse Advice Line & Urgent Calls**

Mon-Fri, 5:30pm-8:30am and  
24 hours on Weekends  
Tel: (800) 797-1717



## 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: (323) 913-1033





**Prevention is key to a healthy life. Be sure to:**

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## 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**

PHC CA 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 • (800) 263-0067 TTY/TTD: 711

### **Medication Therapy Management Program (MTMP)**

As part of PHC CA, 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 RNCTM 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.

California: [positivehealthcare.net/california/php/for-providers/consumer-safety/](http://positivehealthcare.net/california/php/for-providers/consumer-safety/)

### **Compliance Hotline**

Help us look out for Medi-Cal 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 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**

Tues, March 25, 2014 • Tues, May 27, 2014

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

***Food and drinks will be served.***

## *Questions?*

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Tel: (800) 474-1434

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Mon-Fri, 5:30pm-8:30am and 24 hours on Weekends

Tel: (800) 797-1717