

# POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Health and Wellness Information for Members

Fall 2020



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## This Season a Flu Vaccine is More Important than Ever!

Flu season is approaching! Getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever during 2020-2021. It helps to protect yourself, your family and your community from flu. A flu vaccine this season can also help reduce the burden on our healthcare systems responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This can also save medical resources for care of COVID-19 patients. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing the spread of respiratory illnesses, like flu, this fall and winter is more important than ever.

### Will a flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19?

Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, however flu vaccination has many other important benefits. Flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization and death. Getting a flu vaccine this fall will be more important than ever, not only to reduce your risk from flu but also to help conserve health care resources.

A flu shot is the best way to prevent seasonal flu, but healthy habits can also help stop the spread of germs and prevent the flu.

- 1. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
- 2. Stay home when you are sick.**
- 3. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.**
- 4. Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer when there is no soap and water available.**
- 5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- 6. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.**

Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or health care provider about your personal risks and benefits of the flu shot this season.

*\*While more is learned every day, there is still a lot that is unknown about COVID-19 and the virus that causes it.*



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Visit us 24/7 on the web

[www.php-ga.org](http://www.php-ga.org)

Member Services

Mon - Fri, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm

(833) 267-6768

TTY: 711

## The impacts of COVID-19 on Mental Health



Pandemics can be stressful! The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated. The past months may have been lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

### **Stress during a pandemic can sometimes cause the following:**

- Fear about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Worry about your financial situation, job, or loss of support services you rely on
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances.

### **Healthy ways to cope with stress**

- Know what to do if you are sick and are concerned about COVID-19. Contact a health professional before you start any self-treatment for COVID-19.
- Know where and how to get treatment and other support services and resources, including counseling or therapy (in person or through telehealth services).
- Take care of your emotional health. Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

- Take care of your body.
- Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid excessive alcohol and drug use.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations. While social distancing measures are in place, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

### Take care of your mental health

Mental health is an important part of overall health and wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It may also affect how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices during an emergency.

People with pre-existing mental health conditions or substance use disorders may be more vulnerable. Mental health conditions (such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia) affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood or behavior in a way that influences their ability to relate to others and function each day. These conditions may be situational (short-term) or long-lasting (chronic). People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. If you think you have new or worse symptoms, call your healthcare provider.

### Get help when you need it:

Seeking help is a sign of strength — not a weakness. And it is important to remember that treatment is effective. People who get appropriate care can recover from mental illness and addiction and lead full, rewarding lives.

**Your mental health benefits are now provided by Magellan Health. To find a mental health provider near you, visit [www.positivehealthcare.net/provider-find](http://www.positivehealthcare.net/provider-find)**

## Virtual Five Wishes

### Advance Directives

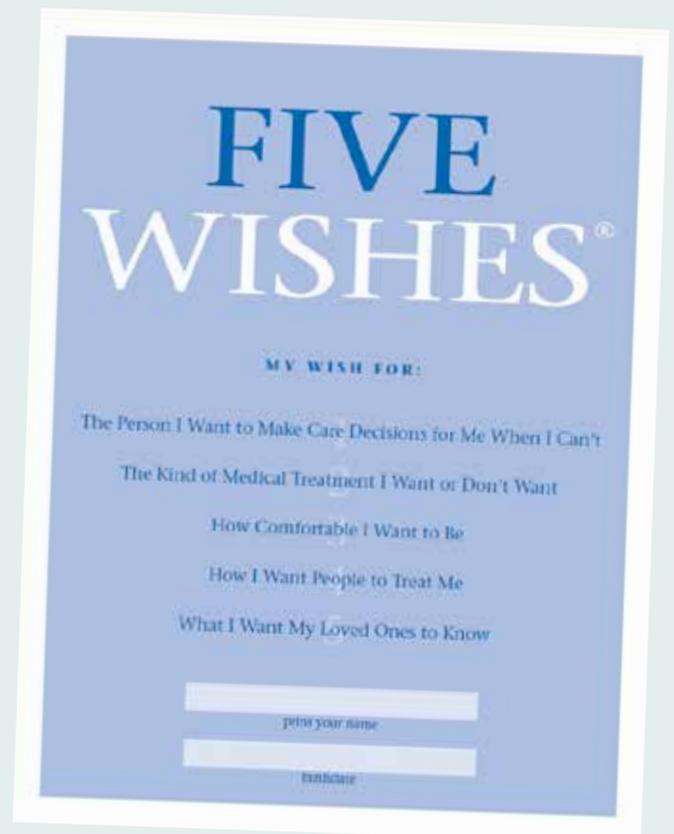
You have the right to direct your own care with Five Wishes –Advanced Directives

It is not easy to think about what will happen at the end of your life. The topic of death and dying is hard to face and harder to talk about with your loved ones. It helps when you have taken the time to make a plan.

Five Wishes is an advance directive or living will. An advance directive lets you plan your healthcare choices ahead of time. Your doctor and loved ones will know your choices if you are too sick to make them yourself. They will know just what types of treatment you want and how you wish to be cared for. A living will lets you have more power and control over what happens to you when you are very sick.

We will be holding a virtual Five Wishes Class in November. This will help you complete this process and answer any questions about advance directives.

For more info call: 323-436-5027



## Opportunistic Infections (OIs)

### Opportunistic infections (OIs) Key Points

- OIs are infections that occur more often or are more severe in people with weakened immune systems. People with weakened immune systems include people living with HIV/AIDS.
- HIV damages the immune system. A weakened immune system makes it harder for the body to fight off HIV-related OIs.
- HIV-related OIs include **pneumonia, Salmonella infection, candidiasis (thrush), toxoplasmosis, Herpes simplex virus (HSV) infection, and tuberculosis (TB)**.
- For people with HIV, the best protection against OIs is to take HIV medicines every day. HIV medicines prevent HIV from damaging the immune system. Because HIV medicines are now widely used in the United States, fewer people with HIV get OIs.

### Are OIs common in people with HIV?

OIs are less common in the United States now, but are still a problem for many people with HIV. Some people with HIV get OIs for the following reasons:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2016, about 14% of people with HIV in the United States did not know that they had HIV. An OI may be the first sign that they have HIV.
- Some people who know they have HIV aren't getting treatment with HIV medicines. Without HIV treatment, they are more likely to get an OI.

### What can people with HIV do to prevent getting an OI?

For people with HIV, the best protection against OIs is to take HIV medicines every day.

People living with HIV can also take the following steps to reduce their risk of getting an OI.



### Avoid contact with the germs that can cause OIs.

The germs that can cause OIs can spread in the feces of people and animals. To prevent OIs, don't touch animal feces. If you come in contact with feces, wash your hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water.

Ask your health care provider about other ways to avoid the germs that can cause OIs.

### Be careful about what you eat and drink.

Food and water can be contaminated with OI-causing germs. To be safe, don't eat or drink the following foods:

- Raw or undercooked eggs, for example, in some mayonnaises or cookie dough
- Raw or undercooked poultry, meat, and seafood
- Unpasteurized dairy products and fruit juices
- Raw seed sprouts, such as alfalfa sprouts or mung bean sprouts

### Travel safely.

If you are visiting a foreign country, avoid eating food and drinking water that could make you sick.

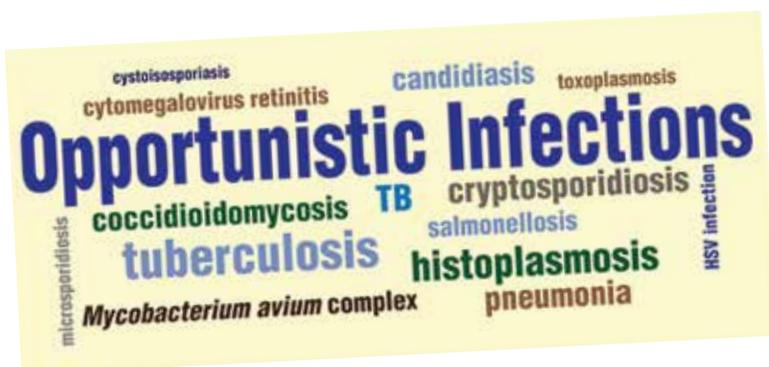
### Get vaccinated.

Talk to your health care provider about which vaccines you should receive.

### Can OIs be treated?

There are many medicines to treat HIV-related OIs, including antiviral, antibiotic, and antifungal drugs. The type of medicine used depends on the OI.

Once an OI is successfully treated, a person may continue to use the same medicine or an additional medicine to prevent the OI from coming back.



## September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Prostate Cancer is the most common cancer in men after skin cancer. About 1 in 9 males are diagnosed with prostate cancer. Over 31 million men in the United States have this type of cancer. Learn more about the risk factors, importance of early detection and prevention of prostate cancer:

**Risk.** There are factors that can increase your chances of developing prostate cancer.

- **Being a male 50 and older.** Prostate cancer is most often found in men older than 65
- **African American.** Prostate cancer is mostly found in African-American, Caribbean, and men of African ancestry at a younger age
- **Geography.** Prostate cancer is common in North America, northwestern Europe, Australia, and on Caribbean islands
- **Family history.** Prostate cancer or Lynch syndrome suggest cancer may be inherited
- **Existing Conditions.** Prostatitis and inflammation of the prostate
- **Eating a lot of dairy and red meat products.** Diets with a lot of milk, eggs, cheese, steak, and burgers
- **Weight.** Being overweight or obese



**Getting Tested.** Early detection of prostate cancer can be easier to treat. Get tested now:

- If you are a male 50 and older
- If you are African-American or Caribbean with African ancestry
- If you are at high risk (for example, if you have family history of prostate cancer)

**Talk to your Doctor.** There are screening tests to detect prostate cancer at an early stage, so you should talk to your doctor about:

- Your risk of developing prostate cancer
- When/if you should get tested
- What kind of test and how often you should get tested

**Prevention.** To decrease your chances of developing prostate cancer

- Talk to your doctor
- Exercise regularly
- Eat healthy (fruits, vegetables, natural grains)
- Reduce your consumption of dairy, red meats, sweetened beverages, and highly processed foods

### Symptoms.

- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Weak or interrupted flow of urine
- Difficulty starting urination
- Trouble emptying bladder completely
- Painful or burning sensation while urinating
- Blood in urine or semen
- Frequent and sudden urge to urinate, especially at night
- Pain in lower back or pelvis region

**Treatment.** Upon being diagnosed with prostate cancer a care team will inform you of your treatment options such as observation, surgery, or a vast range of therapies.

## What is Heart Disease?

Cardiovascular or heart disease is the leading cause of deaths in the World, affecting more than 84 million people from ages 15-70+. This disease is caused by damage to your heart or blood vessels due to a build-up of fat in your arteries. Heart disease is referred to as the silent killer, because it is often undetected until a person experiences a heart attack, heart failure, or arrhythmia. These experiences may cause numerous symptoms such as:

### Heart attack

- Chest pain
- Upper back/neck pain
- Heartburn
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Extreme fatigue

### Arrhythmia

- Fluttering feeling in chest

### Heart Failure

- Shortness of breath
- Weakness in limbs
- Fatigue

The risk factors that influence heart disease are consisted of high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, overweight/obese, unhealthy diet (processed food, red meat, and increased dairy consumption), physical inactivity, and excessive alcohol consumption.

### To prevent heart disease, it is best to:

- Quit smoking
- Exercise at least 30 minutes a day
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Reduce stress
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Practice good hygiene
- Control high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes

Heart disease, like most other health issues are easier to treat when it is detected early. If you have a family history of heart disease you should speak to your doctor about steps you can take to reduce your risk or possible testing. If you have symptoms of chest pain, shortness of breath, and fainting should seek emergency medical care.



## STD Rates on Rise

Sexually transmitted infections or diseases (STIs/STDs) continue to be on a rise! Infections such as syphilis and gonorrhea have exploded in recent years. More than 1.4 million cases of chlamydia were also reported in 2017.

That's the highest number of cases of any infection ever reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Most of the increases have been seen in young adults and in men-who-have-sex-with-men (MSM).

PHP/PHC encourages all sexually active individuals to get tested for STIs/STDs regularly and be treated. Talk to all your sex partners about testing. Use tools like condoms to prevent or reduce possible infections.

To find locations for free STI/STD and HIV screening, visit [www.freestdcheck.org](http://www.freestdcheck.org)



## 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

**You can also see the newsletter online @:**

PHP Georgia: [www.php-ga.org/for-members/newsletters/](http://www.php-ga.org/for-members/newsletters/)



## *A Message from Your Health Plan*

### **Your Contact Information**

PHP Georgia 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 8:00 am-8:00 pm • Georgia: (833) 267-6768

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

As part of PHP GA, 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 under Prescription Medications.

PHP GA: [www.php-ga.org/for-members/education](http://www.php-ga.org/for-members/education)

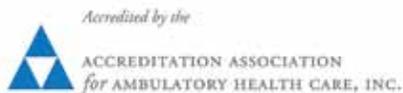
### **Compliance Hotline**

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

## **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.



**ATTENTION:** This information is available for free in other languages. Please contact our customer service number at (800) 263-0067, 8:00 am -8:00 pm, seven days a week. (TTY: 711)

**ATENCIÓN:** Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-800-263-0067, 8:00 am -8:00 pm, los siete días de la semana. (TTY: 711)

## *Questions?*

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

Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:30pm • (833) 267-6768

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

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

### **24 Hour Pharmacy Customer Service**

(833) 267-6769

