

POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Health and Wellness Information for Members

Winter 2019



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Stay Healthy This Holiday Season!

The holiday season is now upon us. It can be a time full of family, friends, and great memories. Whether you are celebrating here at home or traveling to a warm tropical island, don't let the cold and flu season put a damper on the festivities or throw a wrench on your long-awaited travel plans. Take these steps so that you can stay healthy.

1) Wash your hands, A LOT.

The secret to staying healthy during the holidays is to keep washing your hands. Wash them before and after a meal. Your hands touch a lot of surfaces that carry germs. When we touch our face, mouth, nose, and eyes, those germs can get you sick.

Travel Tip: The surfaces on a plane can harbor many germs. Washing your hands can prevent you from getting sick.

2) Get your shots

Flu season hits its peak during the holidays. Don't forget to get your flu shot (it's free with your health plan!)

Travel Tip: Make sure you're up-to-date with your vaccinations. Measles is an issue in the U.S. and around the world so it is a good idea to be up-to-date with your childhood vaccines to keep yourself and others from getting sick.



P.O. Box 46160, Los Angeles, CA 90046

Visit us 24/7 on the web
www.php-ga.org

Member Services
Mon - Fri, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm
(833) 267-6768
TTY: 711

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3) Stay hydrated

During the holidays, people are more dehydrated. While you do not have to chug gallons of water, be mindful of how much water you are taking in. Maintain normal or slightly above normal levels of hydration.

Travel Tip: The airplane has dehydrating conditions. The amount of water the flight attendants give out may not be enough. Bring an empty reusable water bottle and fill it up before you board so that you will have enough throughout your flight.



4) Keep stress levels as low as possible

It is a stressful time of year whether it is holiday-related or not. Stress is one of the main reasons people get sick around this time of year. Stress can put down your immune system which makes it harder to fight off colds and the flu. Stress can cause you to eat more fatty foods, meats, carbohydrates, and desserts. Instead, eat more fresh fruits and veggies. Keep everything in moderation.

Travel Tip: The less stressed you are before you get on a plane, the better chance you have to avoid a bug. Prepare as much the night or days before your trip so you don't have to rush. Remember to enjoy your trip!

These tips may be obvious but can help you keep peace of mind during a chaotic time. If you take away anything from this, it is to keep calm and **WASH YOUR HANDS!**

Pharmacy Update for Diabetic Members

If you are diabetic and use testing supplies we have news for you! We have partnered with Abbott Diabetes Care to provide you with the best products for your diabetes. Beginning January 1st 2020, the following blood glucose meters and test strips will be preferred on PHP formulary. **Our recommendations for your diabetic testing supplies:**

- FreeStyle Lite® meters
- FreeStyle Freedom Lite® meters
- Precision Xtra® meters
- FreeStyle Lite® test strips
- Precision Xtra® test strips
- Precision Xtra® Beta Ketone test strips

What do you need to do?

You can get a new FREE meter* by contacting Pharmacy Customer Service. You can also keep using the test strips with your current meter until your supplies run out. Your pharmacist will refill your test strips with strips that work with your new meter. When you no longer have any refills, ask your doctor for a new prescription for one of the products above.

For more information or help with prescription drug refills, make an exception request, find a network pharmacy, questions about the plan's transition policy, etc.

Call: Pharmacy Customer Service
(833) 267-6769, seven days a week,
24 hours a day. TTY 711



No Joke: Laughter Is Good for Your Health!

It's fun to share a good laugh! Did you know it can actually improve your health?

Laughter is strong medicine. It draws people together in ways that trigger healthy physical and emotional changes in the body. Laughter strengthens your immune system, boosts mood, diminishes pain, and

protects you from the damaging effects of stress. As children, we used to laugh hundreds of times a day, but as adults, life tends to be more serious and laughter more infrequent. But by seeking out more opportunities for humor and laughter, you can improve your emotional health, strengthen your relationships, find greater happiness—and even add years to your life.

Physical health benefits Laughter

- Boosts immunity
- Lowers stress hormones
- Decreases pain
- Relaxes your muscles
- Prevents heart disease

Mental health benefits

- Adds joy and zest to life
- Eases anxiety and tension
- Relieves stress
- Improves mood
- Strengthens resilience

Social benefits

- Strengthens relationships
- Attracts others to us
- Enhances teamwork
- Helps defuse conflict
- Promotes group bonding

How to bring more laughter into your life

Begin by setting aside special times to seek out humor and laughter, as you might with exercising, and build from there. Over time, you will want to have humor and laughter into the fabric of your life. Here are some ways to do that:

- Watch a funny movie, TV show, or YouTube video
- Invite friends or co-workers out to a comedy club
- Read the funny pages
- Seek out funny people
- Share a good joke or a funny story
- Check out your bookstore's humor section
- Host game night with friends
- Play with a pet
- Go to a "laughter yoga" class
- Goof around with children
- Do something silly
- Make time for fun activities (e.g. bowling, miniature golfing, karaoke)

The ability to laugh, play, and have fun not only makes life more enjoyable but also helps you solve problems, connect with others, and think more creatively. People who incorporate humor and play into their daily lives find that it renews them and all of their relationships. As laughter, humor, and play become integrated into your life, your creativity will flourish and new opportunities for laughing with friends, coworkers, acquaintances, and loved ones will occur to you daily. Laughter takes you to a higher place where you can view the world from a more relaxed, positive, and joyful perspective.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm>



You can also see the newsletter online @:

PHP Georgia: www.php-ga.org/for-members/newsletters/

Caregivers

Caring for an ill or elderly loved one requires a lot of physical, mental and emotional energy.

Don't lose sight of yourself through this. If you are a caregiver, prevent caregiver burnout by:

- **Planning ahead.**
 - Make a list of what needs to be done and do the most important things first
 - Create a schedule with those who can help and outside agencies/resources.
- **Learning to say YES.**
 - You do not have to be in this alone. Identify friends, relatives, and neighbors who are willing to help you. If others are offering to help, accept it.
- **Learning to say NO.**
 - Set limits and stick to them. It may be difficult to say no to a loved one, but setting boundaries prevent you from taking on more than you can handle.
- **Giving yourself a break**
 - Ask someone to watch your loved one for the day/weekend. Find time to relax a bit you become less resentful as a caregiver.

- **Prioritizing your health**

- Just because you are caring for the wellbeing of your loved one doesn't mean you can't prioritize your own health. Physical health is just as important as mental health. Make sure you're getting the help you need to stay healthy.

- **Learning about the disease/illness**

- Take a crash course on the disease/illness. Having a better understanding of what your loved one is going through can prevent resentment.

- **Joining a support group.**

- There is a lot to be gained from knowing that others are going through similar things. You can also learn about tips and tricks that can work in your life.

If you receive caregiving, show your appreciation by:

- **Expressing sincere gratitude**

- Your caregiver sacrifices a lot to make your day easier. Verbalize your thanks and appreciation. It can make a positive difference in their day. Write a thank-you card for your caregiver to show that they are valued.



- **Treating your caregiver to a special holiday meal or activity**

- If you are able to cook, make a special family favorite. If not, have a meal delivered to you or have a restaurant outing. This can be fun for both of you and gives your caregiver a break from cooking.

- **Prioritizing your caregiver's health**

- They often put their own health on the backburner. Encourage them to get checked up, even if it's for something small.

- **Figuring out what your caregiver can reasonably do.**

- If you don't discuss what they need to do, they will likely think they have to do everything. Talk to them about what you need and do not need from them. This can lead to caregiver burnout and depression.

- **Preserving the relationship you had before.**

- If your caregiver is your partner or another family member, try to keep parts of the relationship you had before. Don't let caregiving take over your lives.

- **Encouraging your caregiver to do things without you.**

- Caregivers suffer from "all or nothing" cultural conditioning, which means that they think they must make caregiving 100% time commitment or else they're falling short on the job. Convince your caregiver of how important it is for them to take time for themselves.

- **Listening to them.**

- Sometimes they will have hard days. Instead of pushing advice and inspiring stories on them, just be present and listen.

Non-Emergency Transportation

Our plans provide transportation to plan-approved locations. Plan approved locations are for medical, dental, vision, and pharmacy appointments. This service is available at \$0 co-payment. When this service is requested, members should be ready and at pick-up addresses given when the taxi arrives. This benefit helps to get you to your appointments on time and bring you home safely.

If you have any questions about transportation and we can help give you a ride contact Member Services at (800) 263-0067

PHP-Georgia Members qualify for 15 round trips to plan-approved locations every year.



Tips for Members

Nurse Advice Line Can Help You

Do you need medical advice fast? Have questions about your health? The Nurse Advice Hotline is for help Monday through Friday, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m., and all day weekends and holidays. Registered nurses will answer your health questions and help you take care of your family when your primary care provider's office is closed. Get tips on avoiding the flu, treating the common cold and so much more.

For help from a Registered Nurse when your primary care provider's office is closed, call: (866) 228-8714, Monday through Friday, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m., and all day weekends and holidays. TTY 711.



Colorectal Cancer Screening

No one wants to get a colonoscopy; but no one wants cancer either. Reduce your risk of colorectal cancer by screening starting age 50.

Colorectal cancer is a type of cancer that starts in your colon or your rectum. It starts out with polyps, or small clumps of cells that form in the colon or rectum. This can develop into cancer. Luckily it can be prevented and even treated if caught early during screening. With your health plan, a screening is covered for free. There are several types of colorectal screenings:

1. Colonoscopies
2. Sigmoidoscopies
3. Fecal occult blood tests (FOBT) or fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT).

The type of screening will be decided between you and your provider, however, a colonoscopy is the most effective and accurate form of colorectal cancer screening.



The best way to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer is to get a screening with your provider. Some ways to reduce your risks outside of a doctor's office are:

- a) Manage your diet:
 - Eat your fruits and veggies. They provide minerals and antioxidants that can fight cancer cells.
 - Limit red and processed meats. Too much fat in your diet can promote tumor growth.
- b) Be physically active and maintain a healthy weight.
- c) Limit your alcohol intake

Some warning signs to watch out for are:

- A family history of colorectal cancer or any cancer
- A personal history of polyps or inflammatory bowel disease
- Changes in bowel habits, like diarrhea, constipation, and narrowing of your stool
- A feeling that your bowel doesn't empty completely
- Rectal bleeding and/or blood in the stool
- Unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite
- Bloating, cramps or discomfort
- Nausea or vomiting

After the age of 75, screening is not necessary. You only need about two colonoscopies in your lifetime so do one as soon as you can. Prevention is better than cure!

MOST COMMON COLORECTAL SCREENINGS

| | 1. Colonoscopy | 2. Flexible Sigmoidoscopy | 3. Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)/ Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| What is it? | A flexible tube used to look at the colon and rectum | A flexible tube used to look at the colon and rectum | A stool sample is checked for blood caused by tumors or polyps |
| What does it look at? | Full Colon | Part of colon | Stool only |
| How often do you have to do one? | Every 10 years | Every 5-10 years | Every 2 years |
| How long does it take? | 30 min to 1 hour | 10-20 minutes | 3 days (one sample at home every day) |

The most accurate colorectal screening is a colonoscopy. Based on your plan, you may be eligible for our member incentive program when you schedule and complete a colonoscopy.

Chlamydia

GET TESTED TODAY!

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted disease (STD). It has the honor of being the number one bacterial STD in the U.S. today, with 4 million new cases every year.

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection of the penis, urethra, anus, vagina, cervix, or rarely, the throat or eye. People get it mostly through anal or vaginal sex, although oral sex is also a risk. People with chlamydia may have no symptoms or only mild ones, and can spread chlamydia without knowing they have an infection. If there are symptoms, they can include:

- pain or burning while urinating
- unusual discharge (milky, watery, yellowish, strong-smelling) from the penis or vagina
- swelling of the anus, testicles, or vagina
- bleeding between periods
- pain during vaginal sex

A full course of antibiotics (all the pills prescribed) will knock out chlamydia. Regular sex partners also need to get treatment, or they can pass chlamydia back to the treated partner.

To get tested go to freeSTDcheck.org for locations and information. The testing counselors can see you on a walk-in basis, so you can get tested when it's convenient for you, without an appointment.

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



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

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

