

THE KEY TO THE GOOD LIFE IS A GREAT PLAN

# health **TALK**

FALL 2009



### ON THE MOVE?

To report a change of address or of your personal information, please call the Medicaid Helpline toll-free at 1-888-692-6116.

### LOSE YOUR CARD?

To replace your Medicaid Benefit Card, call the Medicaid Info line toll-free at 1-877-472-8411.

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## AmeriChoice<sup>®</sup> by UnitedHealthcare

¡VOLTEE PARA ESPAÑOL!

### PREVENTION

## SCHOOLdays

### IS IT TIME FOR A CHECKUP?

Whether your child started school for the very first time this fall or is planning to graduate this spring, fall is the perfect time for your child to have a **checkup**. Checkups are a good opportunity for the doctor to talk to you and your child about these important topics:

- healthy eating and normal body mass index (BMI)
- sports safety and the importance of 60 minutes of daily exercise
- safety, including bicycle and pedestrian safety and importance of seat belts
- sexually transmitted diseases and contraception
- school performance and other stress factors including peer pressure
- the risks of tobacco, alcohol and drugs
- depression
- daily family communication and praise for good behavior
- limits on TV, electronic games and Internet use



Your child might have questions that the doctor can help with. The doctor can also counsel your child about personal or family problems.

**HEALTH ON TIME** Remember to ask how often your child should visit his or her physician. And don't forget to include a visit to the dentist to discuss fluoride, proper brushing of teeth and cavity prevention.

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get tested

LIFE GOES ON WITH HIV

**HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.** It is spread through blood, semen and other body fluids.

HIV damages your immune system over time. It does this by killing the cells that help your body fight infection. People with HIV who no longer have enough of these disease-fighting cells get AIDS.

People with AIDS are at risk for getting certain diseases. Even everyday illnesses like the flu can be deadly. There is no cure for HIV, but drug therapy is helping infected people live longer, healthier lives.

This is why it is so important to get tested. People with HIV who take medicine for it can keep from getting AIDS for a long time. They can be careful about not spreading the virus.

**NEED TO KNOW** Send a text message with your zip code to “KNOWIT” (566948) to find out where you can get an HIV test. Or, see [www.hivtest.org](http://www.hivtest.org).

# OH baby!

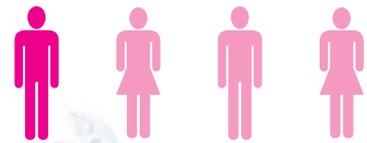
**Most pregnancies go well.** But serious complications can happen. That’s why it is so important to see a doctor or midwife for prenatal care.

## THREE COMMON COMPLICATIONS

PREECLAMPSIA	GESTATIONAL DIABETES	PRETERM LABOR
High blood pressure caused by pregnancy	Diabetes caused by pregnancy	Contractions start, your cervix opens or your water breaks
Usually after 20 weeks	Begins in the fifth or sixth month	Before 37 weeks
It can keep the baby from getting enough blood. This deprives the baby of oxygen and nutrients.	It can cause a very large baby, or low blood sugar or jaundice in the baby. It can also increase the mother’s risk of diabetes later in life.	Premature babies can have health problems. Mothers can get an infection if water breaks early.
High blood pressure, swelling in the hands, legs and feet that doesn’t go away, headaches, changes in vision	High blood sugar on a routine test	Leaking fluid, regular contractions, pelvic pressure
Delivery if the baby is big enough. Otherwise, bed rest and medicine. Sometimes, you might need to be in the hospital.	Exercise, diet, regular blood testing and sometimes medication or insulin	If the baby is 34 weeks along, it is often safe to deliver. If earlier, your doctor or midwife may give you drugs to slow labor. You might need to be in the hospital or home on bed rest.

**PREGNANT?** Start seeing a doctor or midwife as soon as you are pregnant. You should go monthly for the first six months. Then, go every two weeks for months seven and eight. For the last month, see your provider every week.

# HAPPY quit DAY



## MAKE IT A SMOKE-FREE CELEBRATION

**Are you one of the 43 million people in the U.S. who still smoke?**

The Great American Smokeout takes place on November 19 this year. Why not choose this date to quit?

If you’re ready to quit, mark the date on your calendar. Tell your friends and family about it. Ask them to help hold you to your decision.

Before your quit day arrives, talk to your doctor. Decide what kind of support, nicotine replacement and/or medications you will use. Combining methods can raise your chances of success.

When your quit day comes, get rid of all your cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays. Have substitutes for cigarettes handy. Try gum, hard candy, carrot sticks or even drinking straws.



**WHAT IS A PANDEMIC?**

It has nothing to do with how bad a virus is. It just means the virus has been reported in more than one region.

# The Flu and You

BE FREE FROM THE FLU THIS SEASON

The H1N1 flu virus spread around the world quickly. Because it is a new virus, most people do not have immunity. It is no more dangerous than the regular flu, but that could change. It's important to protect yourself, but not panic.

**WHAT IT IS**

**WHEN IT HAPPENS**

**WHY IT'S DANGEROUS**

**SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

**TREATMENT**



**FLU SHOTS**

It's always a good idea to get a flu shot each fall. The shot will protect you against common strains of the flu. Although last year's flu shot did not have the H1N1 virus in it, people who had the shot were less likely to get sick from H1N1. Flu shots are even more important for young children, older people and people with certain health conditions.

**HAND WASHING**

Washing your hands often is the best way to avoid the flu. Use regular bar or liquid soap and warm water. Wash the back of your hands, your fingers and your palms well. Lather up for 20 seconds. This is about the amount of time it takes to sing the ABCs. If you can't wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



**COMMON SENSE**

The flu comes on suddenly with a fever, sore throat and a cough. You may feel achy or have a sick stomach. If you get the flu, stay at home for seven days or until you are better, whichever is longer. Cough into a tissue or your elbow. If you have trouble breathing, see your doctor quickly.



**▶▶ SMOKING CAUSES 1 IN 5 DEATHS.**

Stick with your plan and keep busy. If you slip up, don't get discouraged. Just strengthen your resolve and go right back to your plan. You can do it.

**NO BUTTS** See [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) to find local resources to help you observe The Great American Smokeout. Or call 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669) to get help quitting.



**YOUR BEST SHOT** Flu shots are a covered benefit with your health plan. For reliable information about H1N1, see [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (TTY 888-232-6348).



## plans for the future

### MAKING YOUR HEALTH CARE WISHES KNOWN

**WHAT IS AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?** An advance directive tells your doctor what kind of care you would like to have if you become unable to make medical decisions. For example, it can be used if you are in a coma or if you can't communicate and have an illness that you are unlikely to recover from.

**WHAT IS A LIVING WILL?** A living will is one type of advance directive. It is a written, legal document that describes the kind of medical treatments or life-sustaining treatments you would want if you were seriously or terminally ill. A living will doesn't let you select someone to make decisions for you.

**WHAT IS A DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE?** A durable power of attorney for health care is another kind of advance directive. It states who you have chosen to make health care decisions for you. It becomes active any time you are unconscious or unable to make medical decisions.

**?** **QUESTIONS?** Need help creating your advance directive? Ask your doctor or call AmeriChoice Member Outreach at 1-800-455-2008.



## break<sub>THE</sub>cycle

### DO NOT BE A VICTIM OF INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE

**Intimate partner abuse is not only physical.** It can be emotional, verbal, financial or sexual abuse. This can cause long-lasting scars.

Knowing warning signs is the first step to breaking the cycle of abuse. There are many signs of an abusive relationship. The biggest sign is fear of your partner. Other signs include a partner that puts you down and tries to control you, making you feel hopeless and helpless. Some abusers make their victims have sex against their will. Pregnant women are more likely to be abused. If you are in an abusive relationship, you are not alone. Confidential help is available.

**💡 SPEAK UP** If you are being abused, let your doctor know. Or, call AmeriChoice domestic violence coordinator Lissa Grossman-Truhlar at 1-866-219-5159, x67860. Lissa is available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. The Domestic Violence Hotline is open 24 hours a day at 1-800-621-HOPE.

## this little piggy

### PREGNANCY, BREASTFEEDING AND SWINE FLU

**The H1N1 flu has been found to be more severe in pregnant women.** Are you pregnant or planning to be pregnant this fall or winter? Take the steps listed on page 3 to avoid the flu. A flu shot is essential for you. Plus, try to avoid crowded settings and close contact with sick people. Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.

If you recently had a baby, you probably know that breastfeeding is best for your baby. But did you



know that breastfed babies are less likely to get severe respiratory infections during a flu outbreak?

It's best if your baby gets most or all of his or her nutrition from breast milk. Don't supplement with formula unless your doctor tells you to. Your baby needs all the maternal antibodies he or she can get.

**📞 EXPECTING?** For a list of free or low-cost childbirth education resources in your area, call the Healthy First Steps program at 1-800-559-9071.

Healthy First Steps