

THE KEY TO THE GOOD LIFE IS A GREAT PLAN

# health

# TALK

WINTER 2008



## did you know?

The medicine cabinet, despite its name, is not the best place to store drugs. The heat and steam in your bathroom can damage your medicine. Keep medicine in a dark, cool place, such as in a kitchen cabinet away from the stove.

A PUBLICATION JUST FOR YOU FROM

# AmeriChoice by UnitedHealthcare

¡VOLTEE PARA ESPAÑOL!

AmeriChoice by UnitedHealthcare  
P.O. Box 1037  
New York, NY 10268

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### ▼ ABOUT YOUR PLAN

HELLO!

My name is:

AmeriChoice  
by UnitedHealthcare

## A NEW name

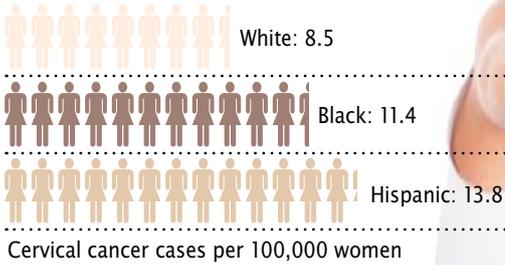
FOR THE NEW YEAR

Did you notice that there is a new look to this newsletter—and a new name of your health plan? We're now AmeriChoice by UnitedHealthcare.

Our new name is a combination of AmeriChoice and UnitedHealthcare. AmeriChoice is one of the oldest and largest companies serving the Medicaid, Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus programs in New York. Both UnitedHealthcare and AmeriChoice are part of UnitedHealth Group. UnitedHealth Group is one of the largest health and well-being companies in the country.

Together, we are able to offer you more doctors and other providers and more services. We are very excited about our new name. And we think you will be excited about how our two companies, now working as one, can help you stay as healthy as you can be. Welcome to AmeriChoice by UnitedHealthcare.

▼ PREVENTION



# a ONE-TWO punch

POWERFUL PREVENTION FOR CERVICAL CANCER

More than 11,000 women will find out they have cervical cancer this year. But here's the good news. There are two powerful tools for prevention and early detection.

CHECK IT OUT

Pap tests find cancer early, before there are any symptoms. You should start getting Pap tests at age 21, or three years after you start having sex, whichever comes first. You should get a Pap test at least every three years. If you have had an abnormal Pap test or are at high risk for cervical cancer, talk to your doctor about getting the test more often. Your doctor might also test you for HPV.

YOUR BEST SHOT

About 70 percent of cervical cancers are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is very common. You get it from unprotected sex. Now, there's a vaccine for HPV. Girls and women aged 9 to 26 should get it. It works best when given to girls well before they become sexually active.

**TAKE CHARGE** Talk to you doctor about getting cancer screenings. For more information, call the National Cancer Institute at 800-4 CANCER or visit [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

▼ CHRONIC CONDITIONS

## take action

HAVE A PLAN FOR ASTHMA TREATMENT

There's no cure for asthma, but proper care can help you live a normal life. If you have asthma, it's important to follow your doctor's orders.

Asthma care can seem complicated. There might be different pills and inhalers. You might use a peak flow meter to test your breathing. You might keep an asthma diary to help you find out what causes your asthma to get worse.

A written asthma action plan can help you simplify and understand your asthma care. The plan should tell you when to call your doctor and when you need emergency care. It should tell you what medicines to take and when to take them. It should help you know if you should stop what you are doing if you don't feel well.

**BREATHE EASY** If you have asthma, talk to your doctor about getting an asthma action plan. If you already have an asthma action plan, make sure it's up-to-date and that you are using it.

▼ SICK DAYS

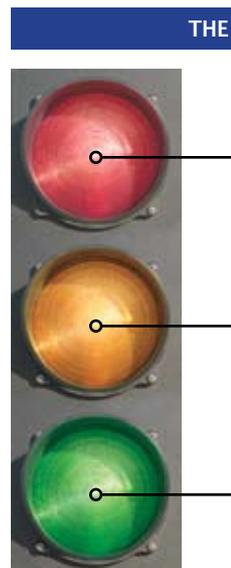
# SAY ahhhh

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS A SORE THROAT

Children often get sore throats. They can mean the beginning of a cold or virus. They usually go away on their own.

Sometimes, a sore throat can mean your child has strep throat. With strep throat, your child will likely have a fever. He or she might also have a stomachache, headache or red and white patches in the throat. If you think your child may have strep throat, take him or her to the doctor. The doctor will do a strep test.

Strep throat is caused by bacteria. It needs to be treated with antibiotics and is contagious until one day after your child starts taking medicine. If your child is prescribed antibiotics, it's important to finish the whole prescription, even after he or she feels better. Otherwise, some bacteria may be left and the infection can come back. Untreated or incompletely treated strep can cause serious health problems, like scarlet fever or blood infections.





**Children aged 5-15 are most likely to get strep throat.**

**LEARN MORE** Learn more about common childhood illnesses at [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org).



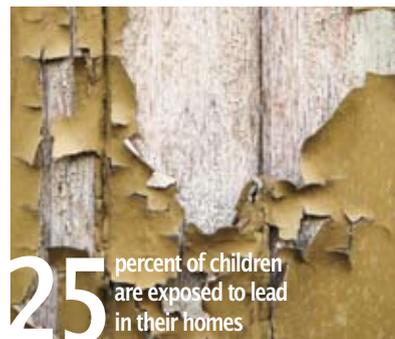
# Get the Lead Out

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CHILD SAFE FROM LEAD POISONING

More than 4 million toys were recalled in 2007 due to concerns about lead. Even small amounts of lead can be dangerous to young children. Because babies and toddlers often put their hands and toys in their mouths, they can swallow lead. The good news is that lead poisoning can be prevented.

## WHERE DOES LEAD COME FROM?

**ANSWER** Most of the lead children are exposed to comes from paint. When old paint with lead in it flakes or wears away, it is dangerous. The dust or chips can get on children's hands, and then into their mouths. Other common sources of lead are soil near busy streets or old lead plumbing pipes. Painted toys, ceramics or other products made outside the U.S. can also have lead.



**25** percent of children are exposed to lead in their homes



**310,000** kids are found to have high lead levels each year

## WHAT IS LEAD POISONING?

**ANSWER** Lead can be swallowed or inhaled. When lead gets into the body, it can end up in the blood, bones or organs. Usually, there are no symptoms of lead poisoning. If it is severe, a child may be tired a lot or have stomachaches, headaches or muscle pains. Over time, lead poisoning can lead to lower intelligence, slow growth, learning disabilities and other problems.

## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT LEAD POISONING?

**ANSWER** If you live in a home built before 1970, ask your local health department to test your walls and water for lead. Dust with a wet cloth. Let water run until it becomes very cold before you use it for cooking or drinking. Help your child develop good hand-washing habits at an early age. Have your child tested for lead at 1 and 2 years of age or when your doctor recommends.



**80** percent of children who have high levels of lead are on Medicaid

## THREE ZONE ASTHMA PLAN

Your doctor can give you directions for exactly what each zone means for you.

**RED = STOP**  
Your symptoms are bad.  
Get medical help right away.

**YELLOW = CAREFUL**  
You are having some symptoms.  
Use your quick-relief medication.

**GREEN = GO**  
You're feeling OK. Keep using your preventive medication.

▼ PRESCRIPTION DRUGS



## safety first

### 5 TIPS FOR MEDICATION SAFETY

- 1 **KNOW YOUR DRUGS** Ask about their names and possible side effects. Know why you need to take them. Ask how to take them, how much to take and how often to take them. Never take more or less of a drug without talking to your doctor.
- 2 **AVOID INTERACTIONS** Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other drugs or supplements you are taking. Fill all your prescriptions at the same pharmacy. Or, go to a chain store that can see your records from any of its stores.
- 3 **DON'T STOP** You may feel better before the medicine is gone. But keep taking it for as long as your doctor tells you to. With some drugs, you must finish the entire prescription for it to work.
- 4 **HEED ALL WARNINGS** Ask your doctor about any foods, beverages or activities you should avoid while taking a drug.
- 5 **WATCH OUT FOR SIDE EFFECTS** Many medicines have side effects. If you feel side effects, talk with your doctor.



**IT'S LISTED** AmeriChoice uses a formulary.

This is a list of covered prescription drugs.

Using generic or formulary drugs saves money.

Find out if your medicine is on the formulary.

Call 800-493-4647 or see [www.americhoice.com](http://www.americhoice.com).

▼ ABOUT YOUR PLAN

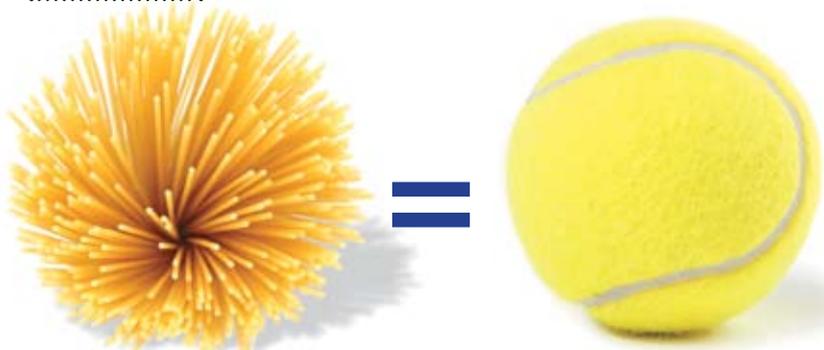
You and your doctor are in charge of your treatment.



## you have options

If you are sick, it's important for you to make a smart decision about your treatment. AmeriChoice wants your doctor to tell you about all treatment options that are right for you, even if they are not covered benefits. Your doctor cannot withhold information or treatments from you just because AmeriChoice does not pay for them. You are allowed to choose the best treatment for you.

▼ NUTRITION



## PORTION distortion

### ARE YOUR EYES BIGGER THAN YOUR STOMACH?

How much you eat is just as important as the foods you eat. It can be difficult to serve the right portions without measuring. Here are some helpful comparisons:

- Three ounces of meat is the size of a deck of cards.
- One cup of pasta is the size of a tennis ball.
- One half of a medium bagel is the size of a hockey puck.
- An ounce and a half of cheese is the size of three dominoes.
- Two tablespoons of peanut butter are the size of a ping pong ball.
- A small baked potato is the size of a computer mouse.



**EAT WELL** Learn more about how to eat healthfully. Create a food pyramid just for your age, size and activity level at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).