

health TALK

SPRING 2009

MAKE A LIST of all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines you take. Include vitamins, herbal supplements and ointments. Write down the name of the drug, the dose, when and how you take it and why you take it. Keep this list in a handy place. Share it with your pharmacist and any provider who treats you.

A PUBLICATION JUST FOR YOU FROM



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¡VOLTEE PARA ESPAÑOL!

▼ RELATIONSHIPS

DOMESTIC abuse

IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE

Domestic abuse is when one person in a relationship tries to control another. It can happen to anyone. It doesn't matter if you are young or old, male or female, rich or poor, black or white.

Abusers may physically hurt their victims. But they can also do other things to make you afraid. They may keep you from seeing friends or family or not let you have enough money.

You may be a victim of domestic abuse if your partner or caregiver:

- 1 hurts you with words or physical force.
- 2 uses sex to hurt you.
- 3 uses money to control you.

When times are tough, abuse gets worse. In 2008, calls to the National Domestic Violence Hotline increased 10 to 15 percent. To learn more about domestic violence, such as how to help a friend or keep a teenager safe, see www.loveisnotabuse.com.

i GET HELP If you are being abused, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline. The hotline is free and confidential. Call 800-799-7233 (TTY 800-787-3224). If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or your local police.

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▼ BABY BASICS

▶▶ YOUR BABY SHOULD HAVE NOTHING BUT BREAST MILK FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS.

best start

3 TIPS FOR BREASTFEEDING YOUR BABY

Breastfeeding can be a good experience for both you and your baby. Following these three tips can get breastfeeding off to a good start.

- 1 **NURSE EARLY AND OFTEN.** Try to breastfeed your baby within the first hour after birth. Newborns need to nurse at least every two hours, but not on a strict schedule. This tells your breasts to produce plenty of milk.
- 2 **BREASTFEED ON DEMAND.** Watch your baby for signs of hunger. Hungry babies may be more alert or active or put their hands by their mouths. Don't wait until the baby starts crying to feed.
- 3 **HAVE BABY OPEN WIDE.** Nurse with the nipple and the areola (the darker area around the nipple) in the baby's mouth.



FREE HELP Most moms can be successful with breastfeeding. Your local WIC office (www.fns.usda.gov/wic) or La Leche League chapter (www.llli.org) can provide free breastfeeding help and advice. The National Women's Health Information Center (www.4women.gov) has a free breastfeeding hotline at 800-994-9662.

▼ CHRONIC CONDITIONS

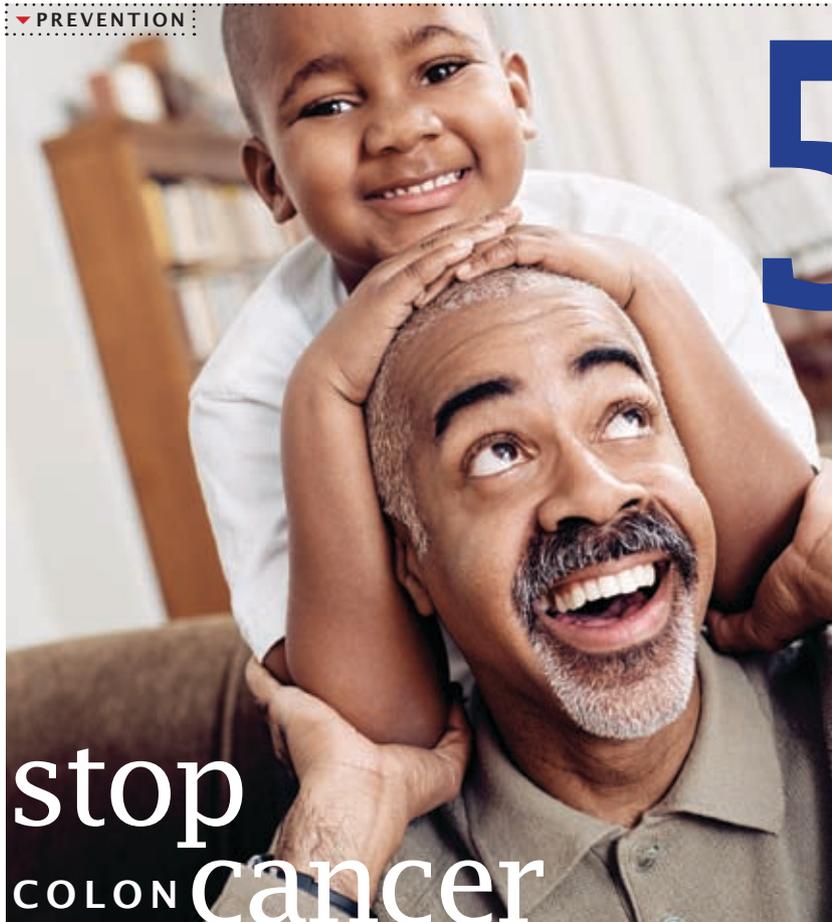
CONTROL your BLOOD sugar

WHY A1C TESTS ARE IMPORTANT

If you're diabetic, you know how important it is to check your blood sugar often. That little finger prick gives you a good idea about how well you are controlling your diabetes. But it only tells you about your blood sugar at that moment.

There is a test that your doctor does that gives a more complete picture. It's called A1c and it provides an average measurement of your glucose over a six- to 12-week period. It's important to keep your blood sugar controlled over the long term to prevent serious complications.

▼ PREVENTION



stop COLON Cancer

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. But it shouldn't be. That's because it can be cured if caught early. And it can actually be avoided with these tips.



LEARN MORE Learn about preventing colorectal cancer at www.cancer.gov.



For people without diabetes, a normal A1c result is between 4 percent and 6 percent. For people with diabetes, a good A1c result is under 7 percent. If your diabetes is not well-controlled, you should have an A1c test every three months. If you do have good control, two tests a year are recommended.



DIABETIC? Your health plan has programs to help people with diabetes and other chronic conditions. Call the toll-free number on your health plan ID card to learn about these programs.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING COLON CANCER



- 1 EAT SMART.** Get a lot of fiber. Enjoy fruits and vegetables daily. Cut back on fat and red meat.
- 2 DON'T SMOKE.** Believe it or not, the toxins you breathe end up in your colon.
- 3 KNOW YOUR FAMILY HISTORY.** If colon cancer runs in your family, tell your doctor.
- 4 LEAD A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.** Exercise and maintain a healthy weight.
- 5 GET A COLONOSCOPY.** This test can actually prevent cancer by removing polyps that can turn into cancer. Have your first one when you turn 50. Ask your doctor if you might need one sooner.

▶▶ **DIABETES IS THE 6TH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN THE U.S.**

Name that bug

CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COLD AND THE FLU?

Cold and flu season is not over yet. Both illnesses are very common. They are caused by viruses. You can reduce your chances of getting sick. Get a flu shot each fall. Wash your hands often. Don't share household items with someone who is sick. But if you do get sick this season, will you know which virus you have?



COMMON COLD

Colds usually begin gradually. They start two to three days after you are infected. They may start with a sore throat. Then you start sneezing and get a runny nose. Fevers are rare, especially in adults.

THE FLU

The flu comes on quickly, often within a few hours. You feel worse than you do with a cold. Flu symptoms include headache, muscle aches, a dry cough and chills. A fever is common. In about two to three days, these symptoms stop. Then you get a stuffy nose and sore throat.



TREATMENT

Because viruses cause colds and the flu, antibiotics won't help. Antibiotics kill bacteria. There are many over-the-counter medicines available to help you feel better. Generally, it's best to choose those that treat only the symptoms you have. For example, if you have a sore throat and runny nose, you don't need a medicine that also helps a cough.

And remember, over-the-counter drugs don't cure you. They just make you feel more comfortable. Only time, and your body's immune system, can beat a cold or flu.



i **WHEN IT'S WORSE** Sometimes, a cold or flu causes another infection. You might get an ear infection, bronchitis or other problem. If you still feel bad one week after a cold or two weeks after the flu starts, see your doctor.

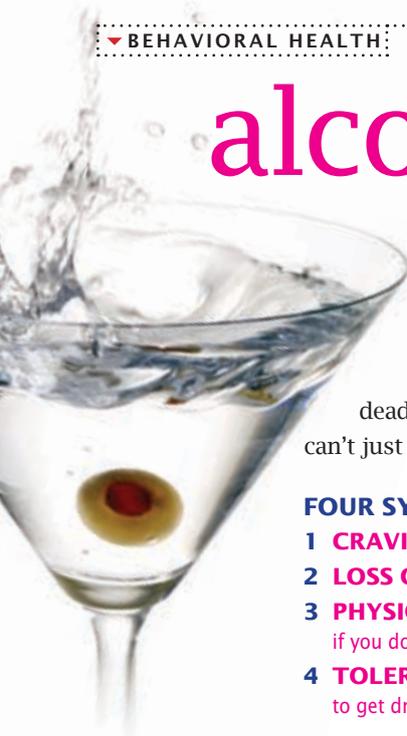
alcoholism

WHEN DRINKING IS A DISEASE

Alcoholism is a serious disease. An alcoholic is addicted to drinking. It can tear apart relationships. It can cause people to lose their jobs. And it can be deadly if not treated. People with alcoholism can't just stop. They need treatment and support.

FOUR SYMPTOMS OF ALCOHOLISM

- 1 **CRAVING:** You feel a strong need to drink.
- 2 **LOSS OF CONTROL:** You can't limit your drinking.
- 3 **PHYSICAL DEPENDENCE:** You feel sick if you don't have alcohol.
- 4 **TOLERANCE:** You need to drink more alcohol to get drunk.



GET HELP If you or someone you love suffers from alcoholism, get help. Medicaid Members call 888-872-4205 and CHIP Members call 888-561-1026 to learn where to get help. Or, find an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting near you in your local phone book.



▶▶ 3 OUT OF 10 GIRLS GET PREGNANT AT LEAST ONCE BEFORE AGE 20.

too young

8 TIPS FOR PREVENTING TEEN PREGNANCY

The teen birth rate has risen for the first time in 15 years. If you are a parent of a teenage boy or girl, it's important to talk to them about sex. Here are some tips from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy:

- 1 Be clear about your own sexual values.
- 2 Talk about sex with your kids early and often. Be specific.
- 3 Know where your kids are, what they are doing and who they are with.
- 4 Say no to early, frequent and steady dating.
- 5 Tell your kids to only date kids their own age.
- 6 Give your kids options for the future that are better than teen parenthood.
- 7 Tell your kids how important school is to you.
- 8 Build a strong, close relationship with your children from an early age.

LEARN MORE Read more about these tips at www.thenationalcampaign.org. A good Web site for teens is www.stayteen.org.

▶▶ ABOUT 35 PERCENT OF ER VISITS ARE NOT CONSIDERED URGENT.



is it an emergency?

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE TO GET THE RIGHT CARE AT THE RIGHT PLACE

Each year, there are nearly 120 million emergency room visits. Many of these visits are unnecessary. Do you know when to go to the emergency room and when not to go?

An emergency is an illness or injury that starts suddenly. It is very serious. If you don't get help right away, you could die or suffer other harm. Examples of emergencies include:

- signs of a heart attack or stroke.
- bleeding that won't stop, a broken bone or a bad burn.
- trouble breathing or loss of consciousness.
- you feel you might hurt yourself or others.
- signs that something is wrong with a pregnancy, like pain or bleeding.

In a true medical emergency, you should go right to the nearest hospital emergency room or call 911.

Sometimes you have an illness or injury that is not an emergency, but you do need to see a doctor soon. This is called urgent care. It's usually best to see your primary care provider (PCP) for urgent care. Your doctor should see you in the next day or two. Or, you might be told to go to an urgent care center or walk-in clinic.

? UNSURE? If you're not sure what to do, call your PCP. If you can't reach your PCP, call Customer Service. Medicaid Members call 800-213-5846 and CHIP Members call 877-238-8543.