

THE KEY TO THE GOOD LIFE IS A GREAT PLAN

health TALK

SPRING 2009



POST NO BILLS You cannot be billed for covered services if a provider accepts your Medicaid or FHPPlus card and agrees to bill AmeriChoice or Medicaid. You won't have to pay for care except for certain co-payments required for FHPPlus members. However, you will have to pay for services you get that are not covered by your plan. Before getting these services, both you and the provider must agree that you will pay for them yourself.

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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.

AmeriChoice by UnitedHealthcare
P.O. Box 1037
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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

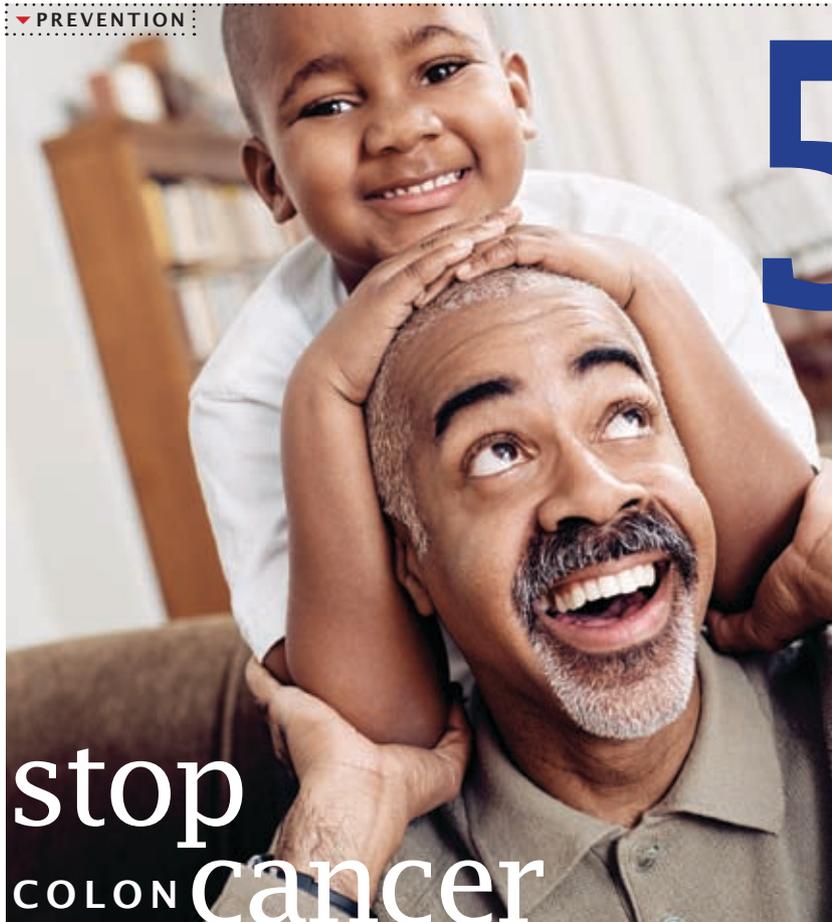
CONTROL your BLOOD sugar

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.



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.

▼ MENTAL HEALTH



the teenage blues

IS IT NORMAL TEENAGE DRAMA OR DEPRESSION?

Teenage depression is serious. It's not just bad moods or sadness. It can lead to problems at home and school, drug abuse, criminal behavior or even suicide. Fortunately, depression can be treated. How do you know if your teen is depressed? Look for:

- hopelessness
- frequent crying
- changes in grades
- too much sleeping
- angry outbursts
- avoiding friends and family
- changes in eating
- talking about death and dying

Girls are twice as likely as boys to be depressed. Major life events such as a death, a move to a new area or even a breakup with a girlfriend or boyfriend can bring on depression. And challenges that are hard for adults to face can be harder for a teen.

 **WHAT YOU CAN DO?** If your teen shows these signs, talk with him or her. Make an appointment with his or her PCP, or call United Behavioral Health at 888-481-9413 to get help.

▼ HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



childhood obesity

YOU CAN PREVENT IT WITH GOOD HABITS

The number of overweight children has increased in recent years. Most children are overweight because of unhealthy eating habits and too little physical activity. Obese children and adolescents are at risk for health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes.

PREVENT IT!

- **ENCOURAGE HEALTHY EATING HABITS:** Serve fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, lean meats, chicken and fish. Limit sodas and drink more water.
- **HELP CHILDREN STAY ACTIVE:** Give them at least one hour of physical activity a day.
- **LIMIT SCREEN TIME:** Allow television, video games or computer use no more than two hours a day.

▼ DENTAL CARE



BRIGHT smiles

EARLY DENTAL CARE IS IMPORTANT

Poor oral health can be a problem for your child.

It is important for your child to visit a dentist by age one. A dental visit includes an exam, cleaning and fluoride treatment.

About 40 to 50 percent of children under the age of 5 will have tooth decay. Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. It's the number one health problem for Head Start children. Tooth decay can cause severe pain and weight loss. It can make your child feel bad about him or her self. More than 51 million hours of school are missed every year because of dental problems.

Take your child to see your AmeriChoice dentist. You can reduce your child's chance of having these problems. Preventive dental care for children will help them be happier and healthier.

 **NEED A DENTIST?** If you need help finding an AmeriChoice dentist or making an appointment, call Member Outreach at 800-455-2008.

▼ BABY BASICS



healthy first steps

Healthy First Steps is a free case management program. It helps pregnant members who are considered high-risk with their pregnancies. Doctors refer high-risk members to the program. A nurse then calls the members to find out what kind of help they might need.

 **PREGNANT?** For more information on Healthy First Steps, call the HFS Hotline at 800-559-9071. The hotline can also give you a list of free or low-cost childbirth education options in your area.

Healthy First Steps

