



# Things to know about diabetes

If you have diabetes, controlling your blood sugar is very important. When your blood sugar is under control, you are less likely to have problems with your eyes, circulation, heart and kidneys.

Diabetes is a disease that affects your pancreas (an organ in your body) that produces a hormone called insulin. Insulin helps the sugar from food get into your body's cells. When you have diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin or can't use the insulin it does make. Blood sugar levels that are not normal can damage your nerves and blood vessels.

Health Partners recommends the following tests for diabetics. Talk to your doctor about scheduling these tests:

■ **Dilated eye exam.** This is different from a regular eye exam. Your eye doctor will use drops so he or she can see into your eyes better. You should have this test done every year.

■ **Blood sugar testing.** Your sugar levels (in your blood or urine) should be checked regularly.

■ **Glycosylated hemoglobin (Hb A<sub>1c</sub>) blood test.** This test checks how well your blood sugar is staying under control. You should have this test done at least every six months, or more frequently if directed by your doctor.

■ **Lipid profile.** This test checks your good and bad cholesterol. You should have this done every year.

■ **Microalbumuria (this is a protein in your urine).** This test checks for kidney disease. You should have this



done every year.

To stay healthy, it is important to see your doctor regularly, check your sugar regularly, take your medicine, eat a healthy diet and get regular exercise.

Health Partners covers diabetes education classes for our members to help you learn how to manage your diabetes. Talk to your doctor to learn more information.

## Take special care of yourself

When sugar levels are too high, it can cause damage to your eyes, teeth and feet. That's why these parts of your body need special care, according to the American Diabetes Association.

### Eyes

Get a dilated eye exam every year. You should see your doctor if:

- Your vision gets blurry.
- You see double.
- Your eyes hurt.
- You see spots.

### Teeth and gums

- Have your teeth cleaned and checked every six months.
- Brush your teeth twice a day with a soft brush.
- Floss every day.
- See your dentist if you notice any problems with your teeth, gums or mouth.

### Feet

- Wash and dry your feet every day. Use lotion to keep your feet from drying out.
- Check every day for sores, blisters, calluses or swelling. Don't try to treat calluses at home. Talk to your doctor.
- Remove your shoes and socks at every visit to your doctor so your doctor can check your feet. Your doctor may recommend that you see a foot doctor to have your toenails cut.
- Check your shoes inside and out for sharp objects before you put them on. Pebbles, nails or even a torn shoe lining could cause problems.
- Remember to see your doctor if you have cuts on your feet or any sores that do not heal right away.

## Baby Partners: Do all you can for a healthy pregnancy

Prenatal care is the health care you need to make sure you have a healthy pregnancy.

Prenatal care should begin as soon as you find out you are pregnant.

If you think you are pregnant, call your doctor right away. After your visit, Health Partners will enroll you into our Baby Partners program.

After you are enrolled, you will get a phone call from Health Partners asking you about your health needs. You will be told about how important it is to get prenatal care and postpartum care (care after you have your baby).

Baby Partners can also help you with referrals to support services, home visits and access to behavioral health care services.

When you are pregnant, it is important to see your doctor regularly. Health Partners recommends the following visits:

- One visit a month up to your seventh month of pregnancy.
- Two visits a month from your seventh month up to your ninth month of pregnancy.
- One visit a week in your ninth month of pregnancy until you deliver your baby.
- One checkup visit with your doctor (this is called a postpartum visit) three to six weeks after you have your baby.
- One well-child visit to the doctor for your baby two weeks after birth.

For more information on Baby Partners, call **(215) 991-4281**.

# Service, benefits and respect for all members

At Health Partners we are committed to protecting the privacy of your personal and confidential information. At the heart of our business is the dedication to provide you with service, benefits and respect.

Therefore, we have put in place privacy practices to protect all of the information that we receive and maintain about you. This includes protecting your personal health information and demographic information, such as your name, address, Social Security number and date of birth, to name just a few.

That is why every year we require all of our full- and part-time employees, vendors and providers to sign a confidentiality statement that prohibits them from sharing the information that they have seen about you. We also require our providers and vendors, such as our dental, pharmacy and vision vendors, to sign contracts with Health Partners saying that they will use your personal information only for the purpose of providing your care.

Health Partners makes sure that all of our providers and vendors have tools in place to guard against unauthorized sharing of your confidential information.

There are some instances where Health Partners will be required or permitted by law or regulation to share your personal information. In these cases, Health Partners will share your personal information only to the extent necessary to provide the coordination and delivery of your health care needs.

At Health Partners we also have strict security policies to ensure the safety of your information. We do not allow unauthorized people to have access to your personal information.

Again, Health Partners is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. If you have any questions about this notice, please contact our Member Relations department at **(215) 849-9600** or toll free at **1-800-553-0784**.



# Member satisfaction survey

## Consumer Assessment of Health Plan Services (CAHPS)

In the spring of 2001, Health Partners completed its yearly member satisfaction survey. The survey lets us know if our members (adults and children) are pleased with the care and service they get from Health Partners. Survey questions are sent to some adult members and to parents or guardians of child members.

We are pleased that members gave Health Partners a very high rating as a health plan. Overall, members are satisfied with the care and service they get from Health Partners and our providers.

The survey results show that Health Partners members are very satisfied with the following areas:

- They can find providers they are happy with.
- They are satisfied that they can get the care they need.
- They can get help and advice from their doctors.



- They can get a referral to see a specialist.
- They are happy that they can get help when they call Member Relations.

Health Partners is working on some survey responses that show that members are not happy about some things. Some of the things that we are working on are:

- The people working in doctors' offices need to be as helpful and polite as you think they should be.

- You need to be able to find the information you need about Health Partners in the handbooks, pamphlets and brochures that Health Partners gives you.

Health Partners will see how we can improve in these areas.

If you have suggestions or questions about the member satisfaction survey, you may call Health Partners Member Relations at (215) 849-9600 or 1-800-553-0784.



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Information in HEALTH PARTNERS TALK comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

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Service. Benefits. *Respect.*

## PARTNERS

*in health*

### Health Partners and KYW3 TV

Health Partners has teamed up with KYW3 TV as a Partner in Health!

You might have already seen these special segments about health topics. They are being shown on channel 3 and cover important health issues like asthma, diabetes, lead screening, diet, exercise and much more.

Keep your eyes on channel 3 to learn more!

