



HEALTH *Partners* TALK

Published for members of Health Partners

Two screenings women need

Pap tests

A Pap test is a screening for cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is one of the most common cancers that women 21 and older can get. Many women have cervical cancer for years before they have symptoms.

Health Partners recommends that women 21 to 64 years of age have a Pap test for three years in a row. If the results of these tests are normal for three years in a row, then you can start getting the test once every three years. This can help your doctor find cervical cancer even before you have any symptoms. If it is detected early, it is much easier to treat.

If you have questions about

cervical cancer screenings, please talk to your PCP or OB/GYN.

Mammograms

A mammogram is a test to screen for breast cancer. A mammogram takes an x-ray of your breast. Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in women 40 years of age and older.

Many women have breast cancer for years before they develop symptoms or find a lump in their breast. Health Partners recommends that women 40 years of age and older have a mammogram every year.



When breast cancer is detected early, it is more easily and effectively treated.

If you have questions about breast cancer screenings, please talk to your doctor. Your doctor's telephone number can be found on your Health Partners ID card. If you need help contacting your doctor, call our Member Relations department at 1-800-553-0784 or (215) 849-9600.



Emergency care

Health Partners wants you to get the care you need if you have an emergency medical condition. If you have a true emergency, Health Partners will cover any care you receive at the hospital.

What is an emergency?

An emergency is a sudden medical condition where you have severe pain or other symptoms, and your caretakers believe that you cannot wait to get an appointment with your PCP because it could place your health (or that of an unborn child) in serious jeopardy, or could cause further harm by waiting to see your PCP.

Here are some examples of emergency situations:

- Severe chest pains
- Poisoning
- Breathing trouble
- Blackout
- Drug overdose
- Heavy bleeding
- Serious cuts or burns
- Choking

■ Sudden inability to move or talk

What is not an emergency?

Sometimes we may think something is an emergency when it is not. Things like diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, colds, pinkeye, stomachaches, earaches and rashes do not usually mean that it is an emergency. If you have any of these symptoms, call your doctor. Health Partners makes sure that your PCP is available around the clock for urgent calls and can give you advice about what to do.

How do I get emergency care?

If you have a real emergency:

- Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.
- After you get emergency care, call your PCP as soon as possible. Have someone else call for you if you can't call yourself. Your PCP needs to know to make sure that you get the care you need.
- After the emergency care is over, call your PCP about follow-up

care. Do not go back to the emergency room for follow-up care unless your doctor tells you to.

What should I do if I have an emergency and I am out of town?

If you have an emergency and you are outside of the Health Partners service area, you should get medical care from the nearest hospital or health care provider. After you have been treated for your emergency, call your PCP within 48 hours or as soon as you can to plan for follow-up care.

Your PCP does what the emergency room doesn't

If you feel sick but you do not have a true emergency, call your PCP for medical care and advice.

- Your PCP is available to you 24 hours a day, every day. A call to your PCP could save you a trip to the emergency room!
- Your PCP can give you follow-up care that an emergency room doctor can't.
- Your PCP can make sure that you and your children are being scheduled for screenings and baby shots even when you come in for sick visits. An emergency room doctor will only give you tests that are related to your emergency room visit.
- Your PCP knows your medical history and can manage your care to make you feel better and stay healthy.

Take time to read your preventive health guidelines!

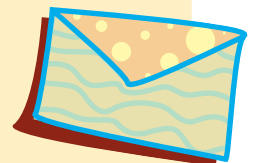
You've already received in the mail a copy of the Health Partners Preventive Health Guidelines for members. These are very important. They tell you how often you should see your doctor, what tests you should have to screen for serious

diseases, what shots your children need and much more. They contain information that will help you and your family stay healthy.

Talk to your doctor about these guidelines and what preventive care you and your family need. If you

have questions about these guidelines, call Member Relations at **(215) 849-9600** or **1-800-553-0784**.

Remember to see your doctor every year for a checkup!



Covering new services

New advances in medicine can help us stay healthy. But some new treatments, drugs or equipment are considered experimental. Here's how we make a decision about covering such services:

1. We receive a doctor's request for a service that is experimental.
2. We ask the doctor to give us a letter that clearly describes the service and the member's medical need for it.
3. We contact the national Technology Evaluation Center (TEC) to get information about the service. If TEC does not have information about the service, we contact medical experts directly to get information.
4. One of our medical directors reviews the information from TEC (or medical experts). Based on this information, the medical director makes a decision about whether the service should be covered.

These steps help ensure that a new service is both safe and helpful before we approve it.

Chlamydia

You can have it without knowing

Chlamydia (kla-MID-ee-uh) is the most common sexually transmitted bacterial infection in the United States. It's passed from person to person during sex.

Who gets it?

Anyone who has sex can get chlamydia. Most people who catch it are between the ages of 15 and 29 years old.

What can chlamydia do to me?

Chlamydia can cause serious, long-lasting health problems, such as PID (pelvic inflammatory disease), ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy that starts outside the womb) and serious stomach pain. It can also make you infertile (unable to have a baby). If you do get pregnant, chlamydia can be passed on to your baby, causing eye problems and pneumonia.

How do I know if I have it?

You can have chlamydia for a long time without having symptoms. Sometimes it is only found when a woman has trouble getting pregnant. Your Health Partners doctor can use



a simple test to check for the bacteria (germs) that cause chlamydia.

What if I have chlamydia?

Your doctor can give you pills (antibiotics) to treat chlamydia. But it is important to treat it early to avoid the other health problems that chlamydia can cause. Your Health Partners doctor will give you this care at no cost.

Your privacy matters



At Health Partners, we protect the medical and other personal information we have about our members.

In fact, we have a confidentiality policy that all employees must

sign. This includes all of our full-time, part-time and temporary employees, as well as our participating providers and vendors who provide services to us. They all must agree to protect the privacy of member information.

Health Partners makes sure this policy is strictly enforced. It's very important to us, because we value you as a member and respect your right to privacy.

Is it a cold or the flu?

You're sick and you're wondering: Is this a cold or the flu?

Some signs of a cold are:

- Cough.
- Sore throat.
- Stuffy nose.
- Sneezing.

Children with a cold also can get a fever.

The most common signs of the flu are:

- High fever.
- Body aches.
- Headache.
- Fatigue.

There is no cure for a cold or the flu.

Many people think antibiotics help, but they only attack certain bacteria. Viruses cause colds and the flu, so antibiotics do not work on them.

Staying well

Colds and flu can spread when a sick person coughs or sneezes. You can lower your chances of getting a cold if you wash your hands often. Also, avoid people who are sick, if you can.

Getting a flu shot each year can help prevent the flu. Fall is the best time of year for a flu shot.

Feeling better

If you catch a cold or get the flu, there are things you can do to get better faster.

Rest and drink lots of water. Over-the-counter



medicines can help relieve symptoms. But do not give aspirin to a child or teenager. Aspirin can cause a more serious illness.

If you have a cold or the flu and get a really bad cough or notice you are feeling worse, you should see your doctor.

Sources: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; U.S. Food and Drug Administration



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Service. Benefits. Respect.

About flu shots



A flu shot can help you stay well. And for some people it can be a lifesaver.

The flu, or influenza, is spread through the air when people sneeze or cough. It causes fever, chills, dry cough, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat and muscle aches.

Many people die each year from flu complications.

Who needs one? The flu shot can help keep almost anyone from getting the flu.

But some people especially need it, including:

- People 50 or older.
- People, including children, who have chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease.
- Health care workers or others who could give the flu to people who are at risk if they get the flu.

Ask your doctor if a flu shot is right for you.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention