

# NEWS

## Health Net

- 2 Tips for your doctor visits
- 3 Get screened to stay healthy
- 4 When your baby is sick



## YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH IS OUR #1 PRIORITY

**Routine health screenings** are an important first step in identifying if you are at risk for chronic diseases. Turn to page 3 to learn more.

**M**aking sure your family stays healthy can sometimes be tough, and Health Net is here to help. In this issue of *Health Net News*, we have information about some of the most important ways you can take a primary role in securing your family's health through prevention, including:

- Health checkups you should have.
- How to select the best doctor for your needs and how to avoid medical mistakes.
- How an urgent care center might be your best and most cost-effective place to handle medical issues.
- Tips for moms and moms-to-be about how to keep baby healthy.

Make a list of your healthy priorities, stick to it and celebrate the rewards of good health in 2008.

# REGULAR DOCTOR VISITS

If you have questions about your recent diagnosis or treatment plan, **call the Decision Power<sup>SM</sup> phone number listed on your ID card** and talk to a Health Coach. They are available 24 hours a day to help you with your medical decisions.

**W**ho needs to see a doctor when they feel fine? Maybe you do. Regular preventive checkups and screenings may help discover medical problems before they become serious. Which screenings you may need depends in part on your age, lifestyle and gender. Here are some general recommendations for healthy adults:

- Have a complete eye exam at least once between the ages of 20 and 29 and at least twice between the ages of 30 and 39.
- Between the ages of 40 and 64, get a checkup every 2 to 4 years, and again every 1 to 2 years after age 65.
- Get your hearing checked at least once every 10 years up to age 50 and once every 3 years thereafter.
- Visit a dentist at least once every 6 months.
- Get your blood pressure checked at least once every 2 years.
- Beginning at age 20, have a fasting lipoprotein profile done once every 5 years.
- If you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, schedule a diabetes screening.
- Have regular colorectal screenings beginning at age 50.
- Check your skin monthly for unusual moles, and have a doctor examine your skin once a year.
- If you feel down or sad, or have little interest or pleasure in doing things, for two weeks straight, talk to your doctor about depression.

## 4 tips for your next doctor appointment

Health Net understands that you lead a busy life. To help you make the most of your next doctor's visit, we have several helpful tips:

- 1. Arrive early.** By arriving just 10 minutes ahead of your scheduled appointment, the office staff will have time to sign you in, obtain necessary information and copayments, and answer any questions before your consultation.
- 2. Be prepared.** Have your Health Net ID card ready so that the office staff can better answer your coverage questions. Don't forget to make a list of questions, new health problems, symptoms,

and concerns that you would like to discuss with your physician.

- 3. Share information.** Make a list of medications and their dosage information, the names and numbers of other physicians who treat you, and your health history.
- 4. Follow up.** Schedule follow-up appointments and lab tests immediately, when you are least likely to forget.

These tips should help ensure that you have quality time with your physician.



## Kids need well visits, too

### Birth to 24 months

- Visits scheduled within the first 2 weeks of birth and at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, and 18 months.
- Visits include a physical exam, a height and weight check, developmental assessment, and head circumference measurements.

### 2 to 6 years

- Visits should be scheduled at least every other year.
- Visits include a physical exam, height and weight check, developmental assessment, and blood pressure check.

### 12 to 18 years

- Visits should usually be scheduled every year, but at least every other year.
- Visits include a physical exam, and height and weight check; developmental assessment; blood pressure check; counseling about tobacco, alcohol, drug use, and sexual activity; and a Pap test for girls at age 18 or when sexually active.

# PRACTICE PREVENTION

## For men

- **Prostate cancer screening:** Your doctor can explain the pros and cons.

## For women

- **Reproductive health screenings:** Have a Pap (Papanicolaou) test and pelvic exam every 1 to 3 years until age 65. After age 65, discuss with your doctor when these screenings are necessary.
- **Breast health screenings:** Have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years beginning at age 40.

Ask your doctor for more information about preventive screenings and checkups for you or your child, or visit [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com) and click *It's Your Life*<sup>SM</sup> – *Wellsite* then *Preventive Guidelines*. A regular dose of preventive checkups and screenings can help you stay healthy and avoid disease.

## Create a PHR

To create your Personal Health Record (PHR), go online to [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com), click *It's Your Life* – *Wellsite* then *Living Healthy*, and select *Health Record*. Don't delay! Log in as a member to our website and fill in your PHR today.







# INFANTS AND ILLNESSES

## *When to call the doctor*

Sometimes it can be hard to tell when your baby is sick. So how do you know if your baby is sick enough to need medical help? Some symptoms are clear signs to call the doctor. One of those signs is a fever.

### **You should call the doctor if your baby:**

- Is younger than 3 months and has a fever.
- Is older than 3 months and has a fever higher than 101 degrees.
- Has a fever and other symptoms such as trouble breathing, excessive drooling or extreme sleepiness or if he or she seems very ill.
- Has a fever with a seizure.

A sick baby may have other symptoms too. Some may not seem very serious. But in infants younger than

3 months old, even problems that seem small may need a doctor's care.

### **Call the doctor if your baby:**

- Has a cough.
- Won't eat.
- Is unusually cranky or sleepy.
- Isn't gaining weight.
- Has signs of a rash or infection.
- Doesn't seem to notice sounds.
- Vomits and has diarrhea or a fever.

Anytime you think your baby may be sick and you aren't sure whether it is serious, don't hesitate to call the doctor.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Medical Association

# URGENT CARE

## *A fast, cost-saving solution*

**A** sprained ankle, the bad cold that won't get better or a child's high fever; these are all examples of medical conditions that need immediate attention but may not require a trip to the emergency room (ER).

Each year millions of Americans visit the ER for nonemergencies that can be treated just as effectively at an urgent care center. Overuse of the emergency room is one of the main causes of longer wait times and higher health insurance costs.

There is a solution that's convenient, fast and may cost you less. When you have a medical condition that is not serious or life-threatening but does require immediate medical attention, rely on your primary care physician (PCP), your doctor or an urgent care center.

**Call your PCP or doctor, appropriate to your plan type, when you have an urgent medical need.** Your doctor reserves same-day and next-day appointments for urgent issues and is familiar with your medical history. Your doctor can refer you to an urgent care center as appropriate and follow up to make sure you get the care you need. If you are unable to reach your doctor after business hours, go directly to the urgent care center.

## Urgent care questions?

If you have any questions about urgent care or need to locate an urgent care center, go online to [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com), click *Doctor Search* and choose "other facility" from the provider type drop-down menu. Or call the Customer Contact Center at the number listed on your ID card.

Urgent care centers are open on weekends, have extended evening hours and no appointment is necessary. Wait times are typically shorter than in the ER. Depending on your health plan, your copayment may be less than a visit to the emergency room.

**Talk to your PCP or doctor about follow-up care.** Whether you initially saw your doctor or the urgent care center staff, you should consult with your doctor about any follow-up care.

**Call 9-1-1 or go straight to the emergency room if you have a medical emergency.** A medical emergency is any condition that threatens your life or long-term health, such as severe bleeding or burns, head injuries, heart attack or stroke, seizures, or severe pain.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Definition of emergency from your Evidence of Coverage:

"Emergency care is any otherwise covered service for an acute illness, a new injury or an unforeseen deterioration or complication of an existing illness, injury or condition already known to the person or, if a minor, to the minor's parent or guardian that a reasonable person with an average knowledge of health and medicine would seek if he or she was having serious symptoms and believed that without immediate treatment, any of the following would occur:

- His or her health would be put in serious danger (and in the case of a pregnant woman, would put the health of her unborn child in serious danger)
- His or her bodily functions, organs or parts would become seriously damaged
- His or her bodily organs or parts would seriously malfunction
- Emergency care also includes treatment of severe pain or active labor. Active labor means labor at the time that either of the following would occur:
  - There is inadequate time to effect safe transfer to another hospital prior to delivery; or
  - A transfer poses a threat to the health and safety of the Member or unborn child."

# HEALTH QUESTIONS?

To talk to a  
Health Coach, call  
1-800-893-5597.

You can also get  
information online at  
[www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com).

Click on  
*It's Your Life –  
Wellsite* and then  
select *Get  
Decision Support*.

**H**ealth Net's Health Coaches are specially trained health care professionals, such as nurses, dietitians and respiratory therapists, and are available to answer your questions and help with any health issues. They can help with conditions such as:

- Chronic kidney disease.
- Depression.
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).
- High blood pressure (also known as hypertension).

## How Health Coaches can help

When you call Decision Power, a Health Coach can also:

- Help you understand your treatment options and answer questions.
- Explain lifestyle changes, such as eating the right foods or exercising, which may improve your condition.
- Help you keep track of and explain your medications.
- Support you in working with your doctor to reduce any side effects caused by your medications.
- Explain different types of tests you may be considering to help you choose the one that is right for you.

Health Coaches do not take the place of your doctor. Instead, they support your relationship with your doctor and prepare you to have productive discussions with him or her.

If you have questions about your health or need information and support, call a Health Coach today.

## Walking for exercise

Walking can be a workout. Here are four tips to get you on your way:

- 1** Stand tall. Keep your back straight and stomach flat. Point your toes straight ahead, and let your arms swing loosely at your sides.
- 2** Land on your heel and roll forward off the ball of your foot. If you walk only on the balls of your feet, you may get tired and sore.
- 3** Take long, easy strides. If you walk up hills, lean forward slightly.
- 4** Breathe deeply. Open your mouth to breathe if that is more comfortable.

Source: President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports





## Member discounts

Health Net offers our members discounts on a variety of health-related products and services, such as books, fitness club memberships, apparel/equipment, and weight-management programs. Log on to [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com), click on *It's Your Life – Wellsite* and then *Member Discounts*.

# SIZE UP YOUR HEALTH

## *What your waistline may be telling you*

There may be more to that “spare tire” around your middle than just a few extra pounds. That excess weight could be a sign of what some experts call *metabolic syndrome*, a cluster of potentially serious health conditions that can lead to diabetes, heart disease or stroke.

The root causes of metabolic syndrome are overweight/obesity, physical inactivity and genetic factors, reports the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

According to the NHLBI and the American Heart Association, a person likely has metabolic syndrome if he or she has three or more of the following:

**Abdominal obesity.** This is defined as having a waist greater than 40 inches in men and greater than 35 inches in women.

**Insulin resistance.** Normally the hormone insulin, which is made by the body, helps promote the transport and entry of glucose (blood sugar) into cells so that they can use it for energy.

With insulin resistance, the body has trouble responding to insulin, causing blood sugar levels to rise. The indicator of metabolic syndrome is a fasting blood sugar level of 100 mg/dL or higher.

**Abnormal cholesterol levels.** Lipids, a type of fat in the blood, are essential for normal body function. Among the criteria for the syndrome are:

- An HDL (high-density lipoprotein, or good cholesterol) level lower than 40 mg/dL for men and lower than 50 mg/dL for women.
- Triglycerides of 150 mg/dL or higher.

**Elevated blood pressure.** A blood pressure of 130/85 mm Hg or greater is considered a risk factor for metabolic syndrome.

Keep this in mind: Having just one component of the syndrome puts you at greater risk for having one or more of the others. And with each risk factor you have, your risk for diabetes, heart disease or stroke goes up.

If you think you may have or are at risk for metabolic syndrome, talk to your doctor.

For more information, visit [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com) and click on *It's Your Life – Wellsite*, and then select *Fitness LEAP*.



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If you have questions, please call the Customer Contact Center at the phone number listed on your ID card.



P.O. Box 9103  
Van Nuys, CA 91409-9103

