

NEWS

Health Net

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PUT YOUR HEALTH IN THE STARTING POSITION

Preventive care guidelines, including recommended immunizations and screenings, can be found on our website.

Summer is winding down, and many are thinking about going back to school. Maybe the holidays have even crossed your mind. We've got great information in this issue to help you face the rest of the year in the best possible health.

You'll find important news about preventive care and treatment with articles on flu shots and an immunization and screening schedule for your whole family. Essential information about diabetes tells you what steps you can take to prevent or reduce the risk of this chronic illness. Also learn how you can create a Personal Health Record online, as well as make and print your own emergency information card.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health, which is why we've included articles on depression. Learn how to recognize the symptoms and how you can get help or help others who may be experiencing depression.

Health Net hopes you can relax, enjoy the end of summer and be ready to face the rest of the year in good health!



CREATE YOUR OWN PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD

Create a wallet-size health record summary card with vital information, such as any allergies, blood type and emergency contacts. Access your Personal Health Record and select *Create My Health Record Summary Card*.

Your Personal Health Record (PHR) is an online feature that lets you create a secure database for your medical history, including medications; past surgeries; immunizations; and health conditions, such as allergies.

It's especially helpful to have this information before seeing a doctor or specialist. You can quickly access it, print it out and take it with you to share with your doctor, or simply use it as a reference when filling out health forms.

You can create a PHR through the *It's Your Life*SM – *Wellsite* at www.healthnet.com. If you've completed the Health Risk Questionnaire, some of your information will automatically populate your PHR.

With your new PHR, you can easily:

- Enter and update information from doctors, insurance companies, hospitals, labs, or pharmacies into one secure location, *My Health Record*.
- Prepare a previsit questionnaire that you can fax or share with your doctor at your next visit.
- Identify potentially harmful interactions between your medications, herbs, vitamins, and allergies.
- Receive drug interaction alerts and immunization reminders in the *My Message Center* section of the *It's Your Life* – *Wellsite*.

Your PHR is the easiest way to have your health history at your fingertips.

HEALTHIER WITH SHOTS

Skinned knees and coughs are part of growing up. But there are some things that do not have to be a part of childhood – dangerous diseases. Some diseases can cause lifelong injuries or death. Shots can protect your child from many diseases, such as:

- **Hepatitis B.** This disease harms the liver. Children with hepatitis B could get liver disease in the future.
- **Chickenpox.** You might not think this disease is so serious. But some children with chickenpox become so sick they have to be hospitalized.
- **Polio.** This illness can leave children paralyzed and unable to walk.
- **Mumps.** Mumps can cause deafness.

Shots are generally safe. But like any medicine, they can have side effects. Those side effects are almost always mild.

- Your child might run a fever for a short time.
- The area where the shot was given may swell or be red at first.
- Your child may cry.

Children get most of their shots as babies and toddlers. But they also need some when they're older. Your child may get sick if he or she doesn't have the shots at the right times. If your child misses shots, he or she may need catch-up vaccines. Ask your doctor what shots your child needs and when.

Is it a cold or the flu?

Knowing the differences between a cold and the flu can help you feel better sooner. A cold typically includes a burning feeling in the nose or throat. A runny nose and sneezing usually come next, along with feeling tired and unwell. Usually a cold does not include a fever.

Fever and more serious symptoms may indicate that you have the flu. The flu is usually more serious than a cold. It can lead to pneumonia and is especially dangerous for people 65 and older, those with a chronic disease, pregnant women, and small children.

You should get medical help if symptoms get worse; you feel nauseated; or if you have a high fever, chills, chest pain, or coughing with thick, yellow-green mucus.

Your doctor may prescribe antiviral medicines if you have the flu, but many cold and flu symptoms can be treated at home. Be sure to choose the right over-the-counter medicine.

- nasal decongestant for a stuffy nose
- cough suppressant for coughing
- expectorant for chest congestion
- antihistamine for a runny nose
- pain reliever for fever, headaches, and minor aches and pains

Do you need a flu shot?

A yearly shot helps nearly everyone reduce the chance of getting the flu.

Shots are especially important for:

- People age 50 and older.
- Employees and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities.
- Adults, and children 6 months old and older, with chronic heart or lung conditions such as asthma, metabolic diseases such as diabetes, or with chronic kidney disease or a weakened immune system.
- Women who will be pregnant during the flu season.
- All children between 6 months and 5 years old.
- Children and teenagers 6 months to 18 years old on long-term aspirin therapy.
- Anyone with a condition that makes it hard to breathe or swallow, such as spinal cord injuries or seizure disorders.

Not everyone should have a flu shot. Your doctor will be able to determine whether you should have one. You shouldn't get the shot if you're allergic to chicken eggs or have had serious reactions to flu shots in the past.



Use your Health Net benefits to learn more about immunizations and recommended schedules through Decision PowerSM and the *It's Your Life*SM – Wellsite.

DEPRESSION: MORE THAN JUST

Learn more about depression by going to www.healthnet.com.

Click on the *It's Your Life – Wellsite*, select *Get Decision Support*, then *Health Information*, and then *Health Crossroads Web Modules*.

Life has many ups and downs. And sometimes those “downs” can be life-changing events that can, at the very least, make us feel incredibly sad or discouraged.

Many times these intense feelings do not last for very long. But when sadness or despair are constant companions, it might be more than a fleeting case of the blues – it could be depression.

Clinical depression is a serious illness that affects some 20 million Americans each year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). It can linger for weeks, months or even years if not treated, and it can prevent a person from living a normal life.

Symptoms of depression

Depression can happen to anyone, and there may be many reasons for it, including biological or emotional factors.

The tendency toward depression seems to run in families. Any stressful event can trigger episodes of depression.

Even the holidays, which are a joyful time for some, can be a source of depression for others because of stress, fatigue or separation from family.

With depression, you might feel sad, anxious or “empty” most of the time and no longer enjoy things the way you used to. Other signs may include:

More help

Additional Health Net online resources are available through our partnership with MHN, a comprehensive mental and behavioral health services company.



THE 'BLUES'

- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness.
- Loss of energy or feeling fatigued.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Changes in appetite or weight.
- Feeling restless or irritable.
- Having thoughts of death or suicide.

Finding your way back

Many people don't seek help for depression. That's unfortunate because about 80 percent of people who do seek help get better with the right treatment, reports the NIMH.

Common treatments include antidepressant medicines and therapy. You may need to take antidepressant medicines for several weeks before you feel the full benefits.

Therapy involves sessions with a therapist or counselor who can help you understand and resolve problems.

For milder depression, therapy may be the only treatment needed, according to the American Psychiatric Association. When depression is more severe, a combination of medicine and therapy is often necessary.

Remember, effective help is available if depression is a problem for you or someone you love.

How to help yourself feel better

Treatment is the first line of defense against depression.

- **Stay engaged.** Keep physically and mentally active.
- **Don't take on more than you can handle.** Set priorities.
- **Avoid major decisions** until your depression improves.
- **Be around others.** If you don't have a good support system, try to build one. Find places to go where you will meet more people.
- **Let family and friends help you.**

Sources: Norman Abeles, Ph.D., American Psychological Association; National Foundation for Depressive Illness; National Institute of Mental Health



Staying healthy is a team effort

You do your part for your health: eat right, exercise.

But sometimes you need a little more. Health Net is available anytime on the Internet.

Log on for reliable information about the health topics that concern you most.

Health Net – a *better decision*.SM

Go to www.healthnet.com and choose the *It's Your Life*SM – Wellsite.



DARK DAYS

Some signs of postpartum depression

Call a Health Coach
(at the number
on your ID card)
or your doctor
right away if you
ever feel that you
or someone you
care about **may
be experiencing
depression.**

Many new moms have mood swings. One minute they're happy, and the next they feel like crying.

These feelings are normal. They're called the "baby blues." And they tend to ease up within 10 days or so after giving birth.

But sometimes there's a more serious problem. It's an illness called postpartum depression (PPD). It causes worse symptoms than the "baby blues." And it tends to last longer.

Women with PPD may:

- Feel hopeless, worthless or guilty.
- Lack energy.
- Feel unable to cope.
- Cry and feel like they can't stop.
- Be unable to think clearly or make decisions.
- Have problems with appetite and sleeping.
- Have no interest in their baby.
- Feel like life isn't worth living.
- Think about harming themselves or their baby.

If you or someone you know has signs of PPD, ask a doctor for help. Treatment is available and can help you feel better.

Keep diabetes on the run

Imagine all the people living in bustling New York City. Now double that number. Then add everyone living in Dallas and Detroit. That's an estimate of how many people in the United States have diabetes.

Health experts estimate that more than 18 million people are coping with this serious, lifelong disease, and they expect that number to grow in coming years.

Most people with diabetes have the type 2 form of the disease, which is more common among people who are older, overweight and physically inactive.

Certain ethnic groups – including Hispanics, African Americans and American Indians – are also more prone to the disease.

Could you have it?

Type 2 diabetes symptoms usually come on gradually and may include nausea, fatigue, frequent urination, excessive thirst, unexplained weight loss, blurred vision, and frequent infections.

Some people show no signs at all, but tests are available that can detect diabetes regardless of symptoms.

Take control

Controlling weight and staying active can cut your risk of developing diabetes, government health experts say. If you have diabetes, keeping blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol in line can help prevent or delay diabetes-related problems.

Managing diabetes typically involves:

- Controlling how much and when you eat.
- Exercising and increasing your overall physical activity.
- Keeping track of your glucose levels through home blood tests.
- In some cases, taking oral medication or insulin. About 40 percent of people with type 2 diabetes need insulin injections.

Diabetes doesn't have to control your life. Your doctor can provide more information to help you prevent, control and manage diabetes.



Learn more

Health Net has more information and tips about diabetes through our partnership with WebMD. Log on to the Health Net website at www.healthnet.com and visit the *It's Your Life*SM – *Wellsite* to find up-to-date information through the WebMD Condition Center.

If you have questions, please contact Health Net's Customer Contact Center at the phone number listed on your ID card.

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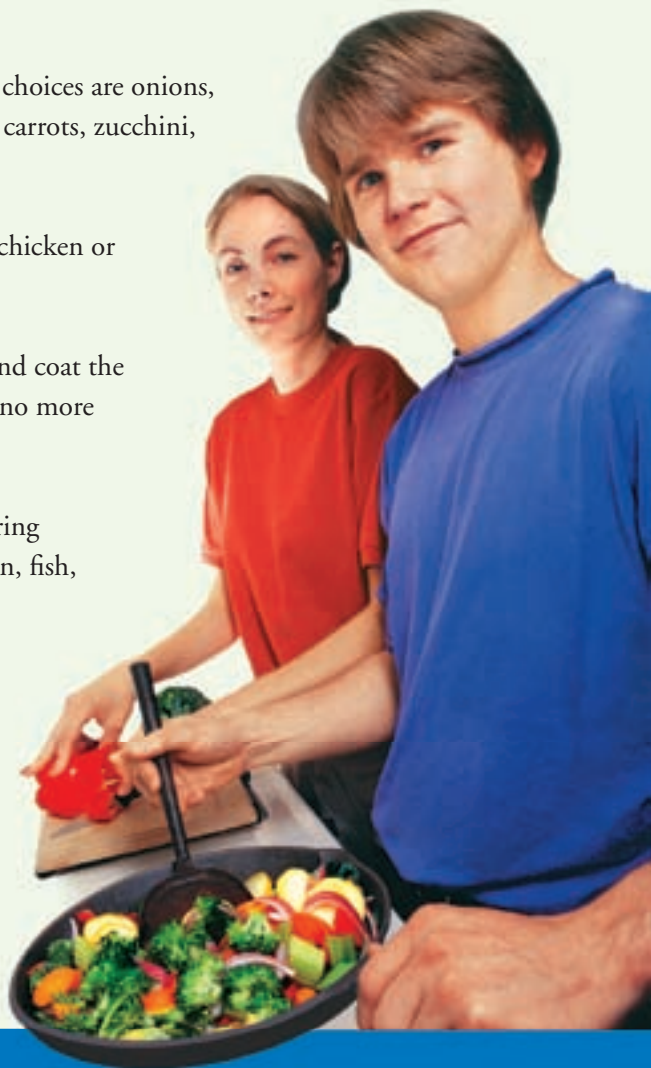
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TRY A STIR-FRY

Stir-frying is an easy way to cook healthy foods without a lot of fat. And it's quick.

- 1 First, chop some vegetables. Good choices are onions, peppers, broccoli, sugar snap peas, carrots, zucchini, and mushrooms.
- 2 Then thinly slice some lean meat, chicken or fish. Or cut up firm tofu.
- 3 Next, heat a heavy skillet or wok and coat the bottom with a little bit of oil. Use no more than 1 or 2 teaspoons.
- 4 Now it's time to add the food, stirring constantly. Start with meat, chicken, fish, or tofu. Cook until done.
- 5 Add the vegetables and cook until they are tender, but still crisp and bright in color.
- 6 Season with soy sauce or spices, serve over rice, and enjoy!



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