

Our Neighborhood

The Magazine for NHP Members

Neighborhood
Health Plan

*Coverage within reach.
Care beyond expectations.*

SCREENING TESTS
FOR WOMEN

HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES
MADE SIMPLE!

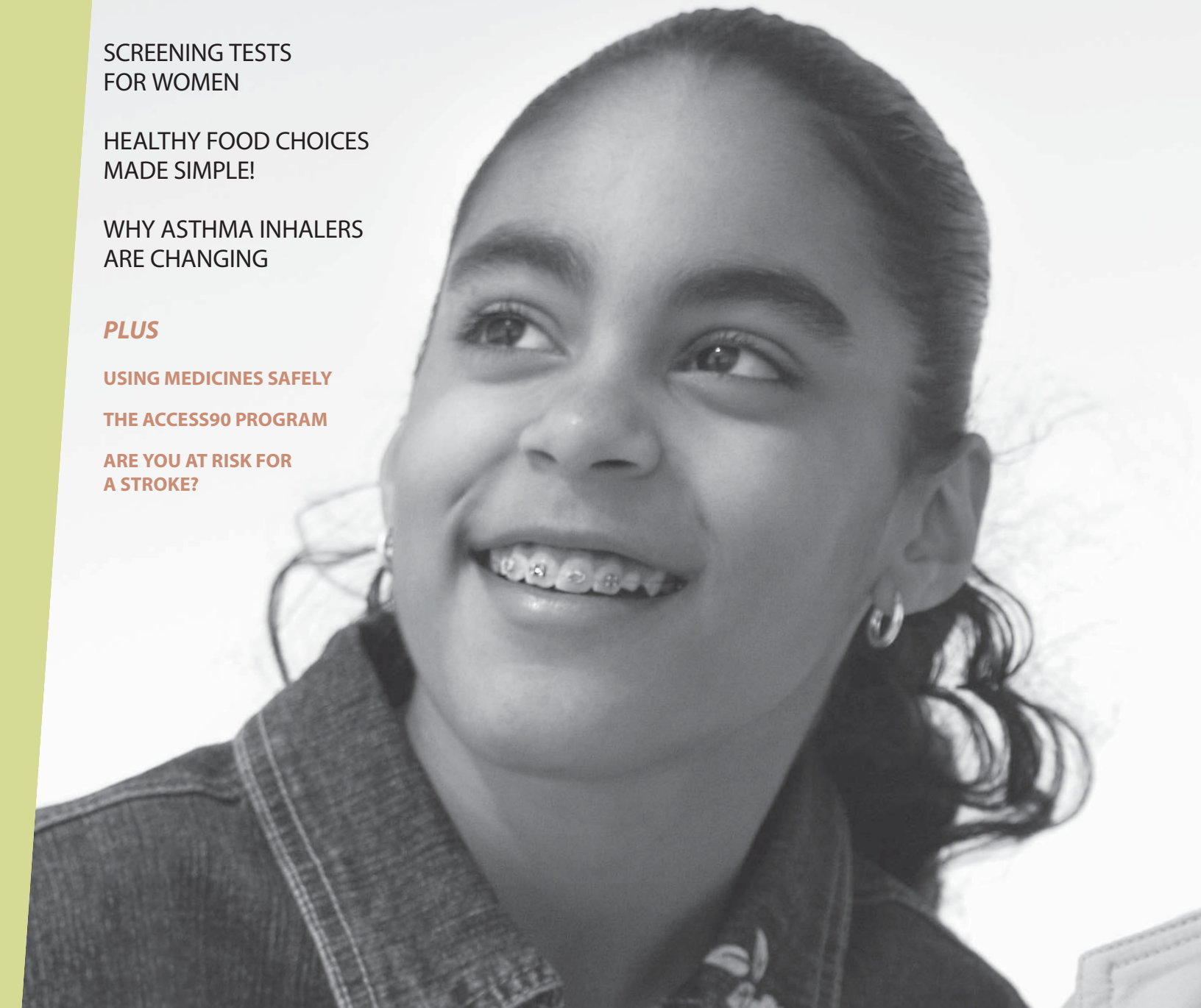
WHY ASTHMA INHALERS
ARE CHANGING

PLUS

USING MEDICINES SAFELY

THE ACCESS90 PROGRAM

ARE YOU AT RISK FOR
A STROKE?



Help Your Child Fight Tooth Decay



You play an important role in helping your child fight tooth decay. You can do this by choosing healthy foods, teaching your child how to keep teeth clean and visiting the dentist for regular check-ups.

Caring for the teeth should start as soon as baby teeth come in. It is important to start with baby teeth because if cavities develop and a baby tooth is lost before the grown-up tooth comes in, there may be problems with tooth spacing.

Help your child avoid getting cavities by choosing nutritious foods instead of sugary, sticky foods. To remove food from the teeth before a cavity can develop, teach your child to brush their teeth at least twice a day. A soft-bristled brush with a pea-sized amount of toothpaste is recommended. It is also a good idea to replace the toothbrush every six months.

Finally, take your child to the dentist for a check-up once every six months to make sure that any dental problems are spotted and taken care of early.

For Dental Health AVOID:

1. Putting your child to bed at night or during naps with a bottle containing milk or juice. This can lead to severe dental cavities.
2. Poor care of teeth. Ask your pediatrician or dentist how to care for your baby's mouth and child's teeth properly.
3. Diets high in sugar. Avoid giving your child candy, cookies, and sticky food between meals.
4. Diets without fluoride. Ask your child's dentist or doctor about supplements.

Did You Know?

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. It is five times more common than asthma. Not taking care of this disease results in cavities, pain, and infection, which can lead to serious problems. The one good fact about dental decay and oral disease is that they are highly preventable!

A New Way to Help Your Child Fight Tooth Decay: FLUORIDE VARNISH

As of October 1, 2008, MassHealth members may be able to have fluoride varnish put on their child's teeth by their doctor.

The service is mostly for children up to age three. Children up to age 21 can have it done if they do not have a dentist. The younger the child is when the varnish is applied, the better. It is usually done when the front teeth begin to show, around 6 months. Before October 1, 2008, this service was only done in a dentist's office.

Applying fluoride varnish is simple and painless. Big advantages are:

1. Varnish now comes in child-friendly flavors.
2. Doctors find it easy to use and fast to apply. Fluoride varnish can be swabbed directly on the teeth in less than three minutes.
3. Fluoride varnish is safe. Only a small amount is used and even less is swallowed.
4. It can be applied in the doctor's office.

Fluoride varnish provides an added benefit for children. It does not take the place of water or toothpaste.

If your child has not seen a dentist for this varnish, ask your doctor about fluoride varnish during your child's next visit. Your doctor may do an oral health risk check, give oral health advice and may refer your child to a dentist.

Note: Fluoride varnish can also be applied at your medical provider's office, clinic or other community-based setting by other properly trained medical professionals such as Physicians Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, and Independent Nurse Practitioners.

Health Plan News and Information
for NHP Members

Our Neighborhood

Fall | Winter 2008

The information presented is intended to educate members about their NHP membership and topics pertinent to their health. This publication is not a substitute for consultation with a qualified medical professional.

5

Access90 Program

Want to save time and money? The Access90 program allows you to get a 90-day supply of prescriptions you take on a regular basis.

7

Screening Tests for Women

There are many screening tests available to help women stay healthy. If your doctor recommends one of these tests, find out when to have the tests and how often to have them.

8

Healthy Food Choices Made Simple!

Helpful tools from NHP to help your child maintain a healthy weight.

plus

- Using Medicines Safely . . . page 4
- Are You at Risk for a Stroke? . . . page 6
- Sleep Apnea . . . page 9

EXPANDED HOURS FOR CUSTOMER CARE

As of October 1, 2008 Neighborhood Health Plan's Customer Care Center expanded business hours to start at 8:00 a.m. instead of 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.

The new, expanded schedule is:

8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Thursday

Neighborhood Health Plan
Customer Care Center 800-462-5449
(TTY 800-655-1761)

Using Medicines Safely

It is a good idea to make sure you know the correct way to take your medication before you take it, because mistakes could cause serious problems.

The two biggest mistakes people make are:

OVERUSE—when too much of a medicine is taken.

UNDERUSE—when too little of a medicine is taken. This can happen for several reasons:

- When a prescribed medicine is not taken when it should be.
- When the wrong medicine is taken
- When a dose is skipped or missed. This is a growing problem, especially with children.

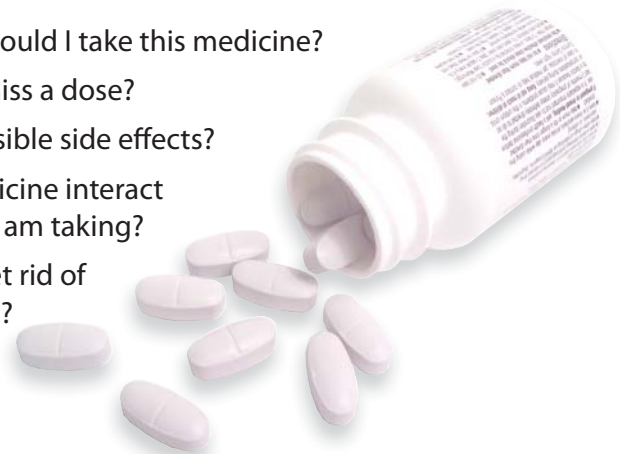
Anyone who gives medicine to children can be easily confused by different instructions for doses. Many medicines are given in different amounts based on a child's age, weight, and other medical conditions.

Adults aged 65 and older are more likely to make errors when taking their medicine. One reason is they are more likely to use more than one type of medicine. They may also have poor vision, hearing, and memory. Those problems can make handling medicines more difficult.

Questions to Ask:

The more information you have, the better able you will be to use your medicines correctly and protect your health. When filling a new prescription, ask your pharmacist the following questions:

- When and how should I take this medicine?
- What do I do if I miss a dose?
- Are there any possible side effects?
- How will this medicine interact with other drugs I am taking?
- How do I safely get rid of unused medicines?





Access90 Pharmacy Program

Access90 is an NHP program that helps save you time and money on medicines that you take all the time.

The Access90 program lets you order a 90-day supply of your medicine instead of a 30-day supply. You may pay less for a co-payment, depending on the type of medicine you are taking and the type of pharmacy coverage you have.

To start using the Access90 program, you need to ask your doctor for a 90-day prescription the next time you need a refill. Then, take the prescription to one of the Massachusetts pharmacies that accept the Access90 program.

For a complete and current listing of pharmacies participating in Access90, visit www.nhp.org and go to *Members, Your Pharmacy, Access90*.

If you are starting a new medicine, you need to get a 30-day prescription first to make sure the medicine is right for you. If you are staying on the medicine then you can ask your doctor for a 90-day supply.

How do I know if I have this coverage?

If your coverage includes pharmacy, your Member ID card has a MedMetrics logo printed on it.

For more information about this program, please call the Neighborhood Health Plan Customer Care Center at 800-462-5449 (TTY 800-655-1761).

Examples

of medications you might want to get a larger supply of include the prescription medicines used for:

- Allergies
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Birth control
- Prenatal vitamins

... and many others

See all medicines on the list by visiting the *Members* section on www.nhp.org.

Pharmacies that accept the Access90 Program

Eaton Apothecary

Louis & Clark Drug

Rite-Aid Pharmacy

Stop & Shop Pharmacy

Walgreens Pharmacy

Many independently owned pharmacies

Many community health center pharmacies

STROKE

Did You Know?

Stroke is the number one cause of adult disability and the third leading cause of death in the United States, yet many people don't know their risk? Stroke is sometimes called a "brain attack" because it affects the brain in much the same way a heart attack affects the heart. Every stroke is different and it can depend on the part of the brain involved, and the how long that area was without oxygen.

Are You at Risk?

Several things can increase your risk of stroke, and the more of these "risk factors" you have, the greater your chance of having a stroke. Take this quiz to see if you are at risk for stroke. Check all that applies to you. If you check two or more, please see your primary care Provider (PCP) to make a plan to lower your risk. For more information, visit the website of the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, at www.strokeassociation.org.



TAKE THIS QUIZ

Age

You are a man over 45 or a woman over 55 years old.

Family History

Your father or brother had a heart attack before age 55 or your mother or sister had one before age 65.

Medical History

- You have coronary artery disease, or you have had a heart attack.
- You have had a stroke.
- You have an abnormal heartbeat.

Physical Inactivity

You don't do at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week.

Excess Body Weight

You are 20 pounds or more overweight.

Tobacco Smoke

You smoke, or live or with people who smoke every day.

Total Cholesterol and HDL Cholesterol

- Your total cholesterol level is 240 mg/dl or higher.
- Your HDL ("good") cholesterol level is less than 40 mg/dL if you're a man or less than 50 mg/dL if you're a woman.
- You don't know your total cholesterol or HDL levels.

Blood Pressure

- Your Blood Pressure is 140/90 mm Hg or higher or you've been told that your blood pressure is too high.
- You don't know what your blood pressure is.

Diabetes

You have diabetes or take medicine to control your blood sugar.

Adapted from the American Stroke Association
www.StrokeAssociation.org/power



Screening Tests for Women

WHAT TESTS YOU NEED AND WHEN YOU NEED THEM

Screening tests can find disease early when it is easier to treat. Talk to your doctor about which tests apply to you and when and how often you should be tested.

- **OBESITY** – Have your body mass index (BMI) done to screen for obesity. (BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight.)
- **BREAST CANCER** – Have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years starting at age 40.
- **CERVICAL CANCER** – Have a Pap smear every 1 to 3 years if you have ever been sexually active or are between the ages of 21 and 65.
- **HIGH CHOLESTEROL** – Have your cholesterol checked regularly starting at age 45.
- **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE** – Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher.
- **COLORECTAL CANCER** – Have a test for colorectal cancer starting at age 50. Your doctor can help you decide which test is right for you. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need to be screened earlier.
- **DIABETES** – Have a test for diabetes if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- **DEPRESSION** – Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. If you have felt “down,” sad, or hopeless over the last 2 weeks or have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things, you may be depressed. Talk to your doctor about being screened for depression.
- **OSTEOPOROSIS** (Thinning of the Bones) – Have a bone density test beginning at age 65 to screen for osteoporosis.
- **CHLAMYDIA AND OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS** – Have a test for Chlamydia if you are 25 or younger and sexually active. If you are older, talk to your doctor about being tested. Also ask whether you should be tested for other sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV.

US Department of Health and Human Services: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthywom.htm

MassHealth
Members:

MOVING?

LET NHP AND MASSHEALTH KNOW.

It's as easy as making two phone calls.

If Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP) and MassHealth do not know where you live, you could miss receiving useful and important information about your health care benefits. To make sure that your address is up to date, just make two phone calls:

1. **The NHP Customer Care Center at 800-462-5449 to update your information.**
2. **MassHealth at 888-665-9993 to update your information.**
(TTY: 888-665-9997 for people with partial or total hearing loss)

In fact, it is a good idea to tell NHP and MassHealth about any changes to your information including name, address, telephone number, marital status, and family size or birth of a child.

So, make those two phone calls. It's easy to keep your health information up to date.

Healthy Food Choices Made Simple!

Many parents are surprised to learn that their child is “overweight” or “obese” from their child’s doctor during a check-up. Parents may think their child has a little extra “baby fat” that will go away as they grow. Why should they worry?

While it is true that some chubby kids will slim down as they grow, most won’t. Overweight kids become overweight adults with all of the health risks. And, the more overweight the child, the less likely that they will shed the extra weight without a lot of work.

Should Children Diet?

Does your child need to go on a diet if he/she is overweight or obese? While obese adults may need to go on a diet, this is not what most children’s doctors recommend. Kids are still growing. Many mildly overweight kids can develop a normal weight by not gaining more weight for a period of time. This allows their bodies to use their extra weight for growth.

Kids get overweight by eating more calories than their body uses. The extra calories are stored as body fat. Your child’s doctor can help you find the right way for your family to safely reduce fat and maintain a healthy weight. The doctor may suggest that your overweight child should:

- make healthier food choices
- become more physically active on a daily basis
- reduce the time spent at a computer or watching TV
- get more sleep

Healthier Food Choices

NHP offers tools to help children make healthier food choices. The DVD *Thumbs Up for Healthy Food Choices* is for kids. It explains common sources of extra calories, such as sugary drinks and fast foods. The DVD allows your child to learn about these topics in a friendly and fun style.

The *Thumbs Up for Healthy Food Choices* booklet uses a thumbs-up symbol for healthier food choices and a thumbs-down for poor choices. It can help you and your children choose healthier foods. Kids really enjoy going through the book and finding out whether the foods they are eating get a thumbs up or a thumbs down!

The *Thumbs Up* materials are free. You can request a copy of the booklet and DVD by calling the NHP Customer Care Center at 800-462-5449 (TTY: 800-655-1761).



People with diabetes can live active, healthy lives.

People with diabetes can work with their doctor/nurse to gain control of the disease and limit complications. Do you need help managing your diabetes? Through NHP’s Diabetes Management Program, you can have your own Diabetes Care Manager.

Your Care Manager will work with your doctors to be sure you are getting the care you need. They can help you to understand and take care of your diabetes.

If you would like more information or learn how you may receive specialized services through our Diabetes Management Program, call NHP’s Customer Care Center at 800-462-5449 (TTY: 800-655-1761) and ask to speak with a Diabetes Care Manager.

The use of this program is up to you. It is open to you while you are a member of Neighborhood Health Plan.

SLEEP APNEA

More than 12 million people in this country are known to suffer from a common sleep disorder called sleep apnea.

In people who have sleep apnea, soft tissue in the back of the throat collapses, closing the airway. This causes breathing to stop for a very short time. This can happen as many as one hundred times during one night's sleep.

A long-running study suggests that having sleep apnea can lead to a higher risk of death unless it is treated. The study compared those with severe sleep apnea to those whose breathing while asleep was normal. Those with sleep apnea had a greater risk of death from any cause.

Help for sleep apnea depends on a person's history, and how severe the case. Talk to your doctor if you suspect you may have this sleep disorder. Visit www.sleepapnea.org for more information.

- Although the typical sleep apnea patient is overweight, male, and over the age of forty, sleep apnea affects both males and females of all ages and weights.
- The most common symptoms of sleep apnea are loud snoring and extreme daytime sleepiness.
- Some studies have shown that a family history of sleep apnea increases the risk of having it.
- Being overweight is a risk factor for sleep apnea, as is having a large neck. But, not all people with sleep apnea are obese.
- Sleep apnea may be more common among African-Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Mexicans.
- Smoking and alcohol use increase the risk of sleep apnea.

Stone KL, et al "Sleep disordered breathing and incident cardiovascular events in older men: the MrOS sleep study" APSS Meeting 2008; Abstract 885. 11 September 2008
<<http://www.sleepapnea.org/info/media/factsheet.html>>

Parent Consultant

If you have a child under age 19 with special health care needs such as developmental, behavioral/emotional health, medical or physical disabilities or learning difficulties, NHP has a program you may find useful. The Pediatric Care program helps parents manage a child's health care. This program also links families to special resources and other helpful programs.

The program can also provide a Parent Advisor. The Parent Advisor is the parent of a special needs child. They offer support and can connect you with other parents with the same concerns. They can inform you about support groups and other local resources, as well as the special education process. Call NHP at 800-462-5449 (TTY 800-655-1761) for more information.

What is a Leapfrog Hospital?

A Leapfrog Hospital is a hospital rated for quality and safety by The Leapfrog Group. Leapfrog Group has been rating hospitals since 2000. They survey:

- doctor and patient communication
- prevention of infection
- prevention of medication errors
- prevention of complications

A number of hospitals in NHP's network have taken the Leapfrog Survey. You can find out how a hospital in your area has scored on safety practices. Go to: www.leapfroggroup.org and then to the Quality Ratings.

YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)

NHP believes it is important to protect your personal health information.

Confidentiality

NHP takes seriously our obligation to protect your personal and health information. To help in maintaining your privacy, we have instituted the following practices:

- NHP employees do not discuss your personal information in public areas such as the cafeteria, on elevators or when out side of the office.
- Electronic information is kept secure through the use of passwords, automatic screen savers and limiting access to only those employees with a "need to know."
- Written information is kept secure by storing it in locked file cabinets, enforcing "clean-desk" practices and using secured shredding bins for its destruction.
- All employees, as part of their initial orientation, receive training on our confidentiality and privacy practices.
- All providers and other entities with whom we need to share information are required to sign agreements in which they agree to maintain confidentiality.
- NHP only collects information about you that we need to have in order to provide you with the services you have agreed to receive by enrolling in NHP or as otherwise required by law.

In accordance with state law, NHP takes special precautions to protect any information concerning mental health or substance abuse, HIV status, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy or termination of pregnancy.

This document describes how health information about you may be used and disclosed, and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully. Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP) provides health insurance coverage to you. Because you get health benefits from NHP, we have personal health information (PHI) about you. By law, NHP must protect the privacy of your health information.

This document explains:

- When NHP may use and share your health information.
- What your rights are regarding your health information.

NHP may use or share your health information:

- When the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services needs it to make sure your privacy is protected.
- When required by law or a law enforcement agency.
- For payment activities, such as checking if you are eligible for health benefits, and paying your healthcare Providers for services you get.
- To operate programs, such as evaluating the quality of healthcare services you get, and performing studies to reduce healthcare costs.
- With your healthcare Providers to coordinate your treatment and the services you get.
- With health-oversight agencies, such as the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and for oversight activities authorized by law, including fraud and abuse investigations.
- For research projects that meet privacy requirements, and help us evaluate or improve NHP programs.
- With government agencies that give you benefits or services.
- With plan sponsors of employer group health plans, but only if they agree to protect that information.
- To prevent or respond to an immediate and serious health or safety emergency.
- To remind you of appointments, benefits, treatment options or other health-related choices you have.

When State privacy law is stricter than Federal privacy law, NHP will follow the stricter law. For example, Massachusetts state law requires NHP to get your written permission before sharing sensitive information such as HIV/AIDS or drug abuse.

Except as described above, NHP cannot use or share your health information with anyone without your written permission. You may cancel your permission at any time, as long as you tell us in writing. Please note: We cannot take back any health information we used or shared when we had your permission.

You have the right to:

- See and get a copy of your health information. You must ask for this in writing. NHP may charge you to cover certain costs, such as copying and postage.
- Ask NHP to change your health information if you think it is wrong or incomplete. You must tell us in writing which health information you want us to change, and why.
- Ask NHP to limit its use or sharing of your health information. You must ask for this in writing. NHP may not be able to grant this request.
- Ask NHP to get in touch with you in some other way, if by contacting you at the address or telephone number we have on file, you believe you would be harmed.
- Get a list of when and with whom NHP has shared your health information. You must ask for this in writing.
- Get a paper copy of this notice at any time.

These rights may not apply in certain situations. By law, NHP must give you notice explaining that we protect your health information, and that we must follow the terms of this notice.

NHP can change how we use and share your health information. If NHP does make important changes, we will send you a new notice. That new notice will apply to all of the health information that NHP has about you. NHP takes your privacy very seriously. If you would like to exercise any of the rights we describe in this notice, or if you feel that NHP has violated your privacy rights, contact NHP's Privacy Officer in writing at the following address:

Neighborhood Health Plan
Privacy Officer
253 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02210-1120

Filing a Complaint or exercising your rights will not affect your benefits. You may also file a Complaint with the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services at:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201
Telephone: 202-619-0257
Toll Free: 877-696-6775

For more information, or if you need help understanding this notice, call NHP's Customer Care Center at 800-462-5449 or TTY 800-655-1761, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Living With Asthma

Many people accept their asthma symptoms as a fact of life—but you do not have to. That does not have to be the case.

Well-controlled asthma means:

- You are not missing school or work due to asthma.
- You can exercise or play without limitations from asthma.
- Your sleep is not interrupted by asthma symptoms.
- Most days are free from and asthma symptoms.

Through NHP's Asthma Management Program, you can get special services to help you with your Asthma. An NHP Asthma Care Manager can work with you and your doctor to find the treatment plan that is best for you.

If you would like more information about our Asthma Management program, call NHP's Customer Care Center at 800-462-5449 and ask to speak with an Asthma Care Manager (TTY: 800-655-1761).

The use of this program is up to you. It is open to you while you are a member of Neighborhood Health Plan.



Educational materials such as this DVD, *How to Use Your Asthma Medication*, are available to members as part of the Asthma Management program.

Why Your Inhaler is Changing

Understanding the Changes in Your Quick Relief Asthma Inhaler



The United States government has banned all products that contain CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons). This is because CFCs are known to harm the environment.

One product that has CFCs is the traditional asthma inhaler, the CFC albuterol inhaler. If that is your current inhaler, it may use CFC, which is harmful to the Earth's ozone.

All inhalers must start using HFA (hydrofluoroalkane). HFA is a safe and effective alternative to CFC.

Even though inhalers are changing, the medicine inside the inhalers is not. The HFA will deliver the same type of medicine to your lungs.

Inhalers containing CFCs are being phased out by December 2008. The FDA has found that ozone-friendly inhalers using HFA are safe and effective. In order to receive an HFA inhaler your doctor must prescribe your new HFA inhaler.

What should I expect from my new inhaler?

You may notice some slight differences in your new HFA inhaler.

The Same

- Safe and effective
- Shape and size
- Convenient to use

Different

- Softer spray
- Different taste
- Warmer sensation
- Different cleaning instructions

Discuss the use and care of the HFA metered-dose inhaler with your doctor, pharmacist or healthcare professional.

Visit these websites for more information:

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America: www.aafa.org

Allergy and Asthma Network of Asthmatics: www.aanma.org

Hate Waiting in the Emergency Room?

Save the emergency room for emergencies.

With an Urgent Care appointment, your PCP can see you within 24 hours or less.

Many health problems need medical attention right away, but are not an emergency. For non-emergency problems, call your doctor or primary care site for an urgent care appointment. They should be able to see you within 24 hours, and you will avoid waiting to be seen at the ER department.

If you think your medical problem will put your health in serious danger, you should get emergency care. As a member of NHP, you are always covered for emergency care. Go to the nearest emergency room, or call 911.

For more information about Urgent Care and Emergency Care, contact your PCP or call NHP toll free at 800-462-5449.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics ©2006

Examples of when to get an Urgent Care appointment:

*Stomach pains
Vomiting, diarrhea
Earaches
Flu/Virus
Fever*

Examples of when you need Emergency Care:

*Trouble breathing
Chest pain
Poisoning
Bleeding that won't stop
Seizures/Convulsions*

NHP Care Management Program

If you have a complex health concern, NHP can help. NHP has care managers who can support you and your doctor during treatment.

Our care managers are nursing and therapy professionals. They can help children and adults who have a range of health care needs. Care management can be provided to help with:

- cancer
- chronic illnesses
- injuries requiring physical therapy
- asthma
- organ transplant patients
- newborn intensive care
- diabetes
- smoking cessation (help to stop smoking)
- behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse)

For more information about Care Management call NHP's Customer Care Center at: 800-462-5449 (TTY: 800-655-1761) or visit the NHP web site at: www.nhp.org

Utilization Management Criteria Development

Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP) develops Medical necessity guidelines and criteria with input from practicing physicians in NHP's Network and in accordance with standards adopted by national accreditation organizations. Guidelines and criteria are developed based on medical evidence from professional and government agencies. Guidelines and criteria undergo committee review on an annual basis.

Our Neighborhood

Deborah Enos	President and Chief Executive Officer
David Segal	Chief Operating Officer
Paul Mendis, M.D.	Chief Medical Officer
James Glauber, M.D., M.P.H.	Senior Medical Director
Sonia Javier-Obinger	Director of Marketing & Communications
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