

The newsletter for NHP members



Our Neighborhood

Spring | Summer 2011

**What you can do for
a diabetic in your life**

**Eating vegetables
for a healthy heart**

**Supports to help
you quit smoking**

**Staying safe during
the warmer months**

nhp.org



**Neighborhood
Health Plan**TM

Your health. Our promise.

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Healthy Habits, Birth to Age 2

The bodies of babies and young children cannot fight off germs as well as adult bodies. This makes them more likely to get sick after coming in contact with germs.

Many germs can come from contact with a person or from food that is not prepared well.

Safe food preparation

You can help protect your child from getting sick by using safe food practices.

- Prepare food safely and help lower the chance that your child will become ill from food poisoning. Wash your hands, keep the kitchen clean, and prepare foods the right way.
- Shop safely. Raw meats, seafood, and eggs can cause other foods they touch to have germs. Keep these items wrapped in plastic and away from fresh foods in your shopping cart. Look closely at all items, and don't buy those that have signs of spoilage or damage.
- Cook foods safely. Meats and foods that have touched raw meat need to be cooked all of the way through to avoid the growth of germs.
- Store foods safely. Keep food temperatures at safe levels to avoid the growth of the type of germs that can cause sickness. Also take special care when storing breast milk or formula for bottle-feedings. Germs grow quickly in warm breast milk or formula that is left at room temperature. After bottle-feeding your baby, throw away the milk or formula that is left in the bottle at once. Keep fresh breast milk or formula in the refrigerator if it is not needed right away. Clean and disinfect all bottles before each use.

- Read the labels on food. Look for the date the food will go bad before you buy or eat it. Follow cooking guides, such as the temperature and length of time to cook the food.

Protect against the spread of illness and germs

Germs spread easily from person to person. More people get a cold or flu virus during the colder months, though they can get them at any time of the year.

Once babies and young children have had a cold or flu, they have more of a chance of getting an infection. To help protect your child against infections:

- **Get your child immunized.** Vaccinations help protect your child from diseases. Vaccinations start at birth and keep on in teen years.
- **Avoid close contact with others who are sick.** If your child is ill, avoid other children.
- **Wash hands often, and after every diaper change.** Keeping your hands clean and wash your baby's hands because a baby can touch his or her messy bottom without your knowing it.
- **Wash and disinfect surfaces and toys.** Wash and disinfect places where germs collect, such as the kitchen and bathroom.
- **Teach good hygiene habits early.** Show your child how to cover his or her mouth when coughing or sneezing and to use a tissue so germs do not get on the hands. Show your child how to wipe his or her nose with tissues.



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

From Beacon, NHP's Behavioral Health partner

Did you know that ADHD is the most common problem among school age children?

One in 20 children has ADHD. Boys are more likely to have it than are girls.

Signs of ADHD include:

- Problems paying attention
- Overactive behavior and
- Acting before thinking

Neighborhood Health Plan and Beacon Health Strategies (Beacon) have a program that helps families and their children who may have ADHD and are having problems at home, school, or with peers.

If you have concerns that your son or daughter may have ADHD, please contact your child's nurse or doctor. You can also get in touch with Beacon at 1-800-414-2820. We can refer you to a provider in your area.



Supporting a Diabetic

Know someone with diabetes? Here's how you can help.

When people have diabetes, they have to make changes to habits that they have been forming over a lifetime. They have to change the food that they eat, remember to take medicines every day, start an exercise routine, and check their blood sugar regularly. And that's all on top of everything else happening in their lives. So of course getting a diabetes diagnosis can be scary and stressful.

If you know someone with diabetes, you can help them stay healthy and live well. The most important thing to remember is to be supportive, NOT critical. Here are a few things that you can do to help:

- **Educate yourself about diabetes**
Learn about what causes diabetes and how it is treated. Find out what a diabetic must do to live a healthy and long life.
- **Voice your concerns**
Tell your friend or family member that you are worried about them. Remember that making life changes is very difficult. Don't judge the person for not making the changes right away.
- **Make healthy meals together**
A healthy diet is high in protein and fiber while being low in sugar, fat, and sodium. Invite your friend over for a healthy meal once a week. Or, try making a new healthy recipe for a family member.

- **Help remove temptations**
If your friend is trying to break bad habits, help them stick to their goals by avoiding their "off-limits" foods—like soda and fast food—while you are around them.
- **Be a workout buddy**
Offer to take walks together or join a health club. Even if you don't have diabetes, increasing activity is a great way to feel better and have more energy. So you can benefit too!
- **Talk about testing**
Part of managing diabetes is testing blood glucose (sugar) levels regularly. Help your friend remember to check their blood sugar.
- **Ask for feedback**
Ask if you are being too forceful. You could be nagging more than you realize. But also, your friend might appreciate all your help and reminders.

Remember that changes don't happen overnight and that living with diabetes can be difficult. Be an ally, not a pest.

Learn more about diabetes at www.ndep.nih.gov or visit www.nhp.org

New Child Passenger Safety Guidelines

Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death of children 4 years and older.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued revised guidelines for child safety because of new data.

The new guidelines are:

- Rear-facing car safety seats for most infants up to age 2
- Forward-facing car safety seats through age 4
- Booster seats through age 8
- Lap and shoulder seat belts for all who have grown too big for booster seats
- All children less than age 13 should ride in the rear seat

Parents will notice the change in the rear-facing car safety advice. It is now age two rather than age one. Young children are safer in an accident if they are riding rear facing until age two. That is, until age two or until they have grown too big for that model of seat.

As children outgrow each type of seat, they will have to change. But parents should not rush to the next level. Let your child stay in the same seat as long as they fit and they will be even safer.

For more information on *Car Safety Seats: A Guide for Families 2010* visit www.aap.org/healthtopics/carseatsafety.cfm

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, <http://www.aap.org>

Pregnant? NHP has personal care just for you.

As a member of Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP), you can talk to a nurse care manager at any time about being pregnant.

Your care manager can help keep you and your baby healthy. There are also many resources for you and your baby that we would like you to know about.

Please call and talk about being pregnant with a nurse. She can answer your questions and help you get just what you need for a healthy baby!

Call the NHP Prenatal Line today at 1-800-462-5449, extension 2189.

Resources and Tools

- OB nurse care managers
- Help with mental health concerns (such as: anxiety, depression) 1-800-414-2820
- Access to free education materials and resources
- Text4baby™ free mobile text messages to support a healthy pregnancy
- Lactation (breast-feeding) advice from a nurse
- Coverage for childbirth and breast-feeding classes
- Free car seats for Medicaid members
- Free breast pump



Text4baby is One Year Old

NHP was the first health plan in Massachusetts to become an Outreach Partner with text4baby.

Text4baby is a free text message service that sends health texts to pregnant women and mothers of infants. Women who sign up for the service get free texts each week.

Text4baby started in early 2010. In only one year, it has:

- Sent its one millionth text message in May 2010
- Won a Health and Human Services Innovation award
- By November 2010 sent nearly 6 million messages to more than 100,000 subscribers

To sign up, text "BABY" to 511411, or "BEBE" in Spanish, to get free SMS texts each week while you are pregnant and into your baby's first year.

Warm Weather Safety Tips



While you should make every effort to keep your kids safe year-round, there are special concerns in the summer. The heat of the summer and more time spent outdoors can threaten kids' health and safety.

Sun and Summer Heat

The greatest dangers in the summer have to do with the heat. These can include:

Heat stress and heat stroke

You can help keep your kids from getting sick in the heat by:

- Taking breaks when playing outside
- Making sure kids drink the right amount of water
- Watching for signs such as thirst, cramps, low energy, dizziness, upset stomach, throwing up, headaches, and fever
- Never leaving a child alone in a hot car

Hot playground equipment

Kids can burn their skin on slides and monkey bars that have been heating up in the sun. Check playground equipment to see if it is hot.

Sunburn

Use sunscreen or sun block on kids. Or have them wear clothes and hats that block the sun. Try to stay inside or in the shade between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. when the sun is the brightest.

Water Safety Tips

Many families try to get away from the summer heat in a pool or nearby lake. To keep your kids safe, in and near the water, be sure to:

- Watch your kids both in and out of the water, even if they know how to swim.
- Have children who do not know how to swim wear a life vest instead of floaties when they are in the pool.
- Always have your child wear a life vest when on a lake or river, even if they know how to swim.
- Have your child take swim lessons at four to five years old, the age when most kids can learn to swim.

Other Summer Safety Tips

There are other ways to keep kids safe during the summer months.

- Keep young kids away from lawn mowers. Kids less than 16 years old should not use ride-on mowers, and kids less than 12 should not use walk-behind mowers.
- Use bug spray when needed.
- Do a daily tick check if your kids have been playing outdoors, a must if in or near wooded areas.
- Outfit your kids with safety gear such as a helmet and pads when they ride a bike, skateboard, or scooter.
- Do not let your kids play with fireworks. Go to public fireworks shows instead.
- Do not eat food left out for more than an hour at cookouts and picnics. Food can spoil and cause food poisoning.
- Teach your kids to spot and avoid poison ivy.

Keep your home well childproofed. This also applies to where you are staying when you are away from home, whether it is a hotel or relative's house.

Time off from school also means that your child may have more chances to become less active and eat more junk food, leading to weight gain. Urge your child to be active and eat a healthy diet all summer long.

Energy Drinks May Not be a Good Choice

People under age 19 drink more than half of the energy drinks sold

A recent report gave many reasons why energy drinks could be unsafe for children, teens, and young adults.

- Many of the ingredients are not regulated, so it is not known if they are safe
- Energy drinks contain about three times the caffeine of a cola soda
- Various additives may also contain caffeine, but those amounts may not be shown on the label
- Almost half of caffeine overdoses reported in 2007 were people under 19

Some incidents associated with energy drinks include:

- Seizures
- Diabetes
- Behavior disorders
- Liver damage
- Kidney failure
- Breathing disorders
- Hypertension
- Cardiac abnormalities
- Heart failure
- Death

Check with your child's primary care provider for more facts on the safety of these drinks.

Source: Bankhead, Charles. "Energy Drinks May Pose Risk to Young People." MedPage Today, 14 Feb. 2011.

It is not easy to quit smoking, but it can be done. Many people have quit. In fact, there are more people who have quit smoking than there are smokers. Smoking has become less accepted socially and it is harder to smoke with bans in many places.

There is more help now than ever before for smokers who want to quit. It starts with a plan and uses proven methods.

One of the best ways to quit smoking is to use a quit smoking medicine.

At this time there are seven medicines approved by the FDA that can raise your chance of success. NHP covers all of them with a prescription from a doctor.

If you are ready to quit:

- Think about when you would like to start
- Pick a quit date, 1–4 weeks away
- Close to the date, try to cut back on your smoking
- Set up time with your provider to talk about types of medicine
- Take care of yourself; get plenty of sleep, a proper diet, exercise

A great way to motivate yourself is to write down all of your reasons for quitting. Try to make your reasons specific and personal.

When you start to quit, you may have strong withdrawal symptoms. You may:

- Become grouchy
- Have trouble focusing
- Not sleep well

This happens as your body adjusts to the lack of nicotine and other toxins. Such symptoms are not pleasant, but they soon fade away as long as you do not smoke. Stay with it and you will start to feel that you can succeed. If you keep busy and use a quit smoking medicine you should find the process a bit easier.



Lastly, commit not to smoke at all, no matter what urges you have. As long as you do not smoke, you will feel better and better, and you will soon be tobacco-free.

How to Quit Smoking

Some tips for finally giving up cigarettes for good

By Angel Cosme, Master Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist

Remember that NHP has a smoking cessation program that can help you through the process.

To learn more, call NHP's Tobacco

Treatment Specialist directly at

617-204-1447, or via email at

quitsmoking@nhp.org.

You owe it to yourself not to smoke and NHP is here to help.

Grow Your Own Heart Healthy Vegetables in a Container Vegetable Garden

A container garden can be a way to grow your own vegetables without many of the problems of a full size garden. If you have the space for some large pots in an area that gets about eight hours of sun, you can grow your own favorite healthy vegetables.



Tomatoes and vine plants grow best in pots of 20" or more in diameter, while peppers grow best in 16" pots. Greens, such as lettuce and spinach, have shallow roots and do well in broader, flatter growing trays.

To fill your container, buy either a soilless mix or a soil mix. Do not use dirt from your yard. Common soil is too heavy; it will dry out rapidly and may contain weed seeds, fungus, or germs.

There are two types of fertilizers: timed-release and water-soluble. You need both for vegetable growing success. Mix in the timed-release when you plant.

When buying plants for your pots, look for those described as "bush" or "compact" so they will be small when fully grown. Some plants are bred smaller just for container growing.

Look for plants that do not spread out too much when they grow. Some vegetables that grow well in pots are:

- Salad greens
- Spinach
- Eggplant
- Swiss chard
- Beets
- Radish
- Carrots
- Peppers
- Bush beans
- Some tomatoes
- Summer squash
- Cucumbers
- Green onions
- Many herbs

Be sure to ask for more advice where you buy your plants. They may be able to give you tips on the plants you want to grow. Do not be afraid to try it. Even if you start with just one vegetable, you are sure to enjoy the fruits of your labor at harvest time.

Source: Ohio State University Extension

More Fruits and Vegetables for a Healthy Diet

Most of us need to add more fruits and vegetables in our diet. We also need to vary what we choose. No one type can give you all of the nutrients you need to be healthy. They are good for your health because they are:

- Rich in vitamins
- Rich in minerals
- Low in calories
- High in fiber

Advice on the Harvard School of Public Health web page *The Nutrition Source* is to "aim for at least 4½ cups of vegetables and fruits a day and potatoes don't count."

The Nutrition Source, Harvard School of Public Health: www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource

The CDC says, "Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables each day will promote good health and may help reduce the risk of stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, and some cancers."

Centers for Disease Control: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov



The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

stress the importance of eating less calories and being more physically active because over one third of children and over two thirds of adults in the United States are now overweight or obese.

Eat Less, Move More

In January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services issued the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The report comes out once every five years and changes based on new data.

Some of the advice is to:

- Enjoy your food, but eat less
- Avoid oversized portions
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
- When buying food like soup, bread, and frozen meals, choose those with the lowest amount of salt (sodium)
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks

Find the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans at: dietaryguidelines.gov

Healthy Living Can Help Prevent Colorectal Cancer

Making five simple healthy lifestyle choices could avoid as many as 23 percent of colon cancers, Danish researchers say.

Each of these healthy lifestyle choices helps avoid colon cancer. Together they provide even more protection.

The five elements of a healthy lifestyle are:

- At least 30 minutes of exercise a day
- No more than 7 alcoholic drinks a week for women; 14 for men

- Not smoking
- Eating a healthy diet
- A waist size no more than 34.6 inches for women and 40.1 inches for men

A healthy diet is:

- High in fiber, more than six servings (3 cups) a day of fruits and vegetables
- Low in red meat and processed meat (no more than just over a pound a week)
- Less than 30 percent of total calories are derived from fat

Source: British Medical Journal, Published 26 October 2010, BMJ 2010; 341:c5504

Should you be worried about colon cancer? Find out when you should be tested.

By Jim Hellinger, MD

Most people have a normal chance of getting of colon cancer, but some people are more at risk.

You have a greater chance of getting colon cancer if:

- Your mother, father, brother, or sister had colon cancer.
- You have had polyps in your colon. Polyps are small growths that can change into cancer over many years, but can be removed safely and easily to avoid this.
- You have swelling of the lining of your intestine due to inflammatory bowel diseases such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease.

If you have any of these health risks, you should talk to your doctor about a test for this type of cancer.

Routine Colonoscopy Screening Test

For those who have a normal chance of getting cancer of the colon, doctors want routine testing to start at age 50. Repeat the test every 10 years as long as the results are normal.

During this type of screening, the doctor uses a small scope to check the inside of your colon for polyps and other early signs of cancer. The doctor simply removes the polyps at that time.

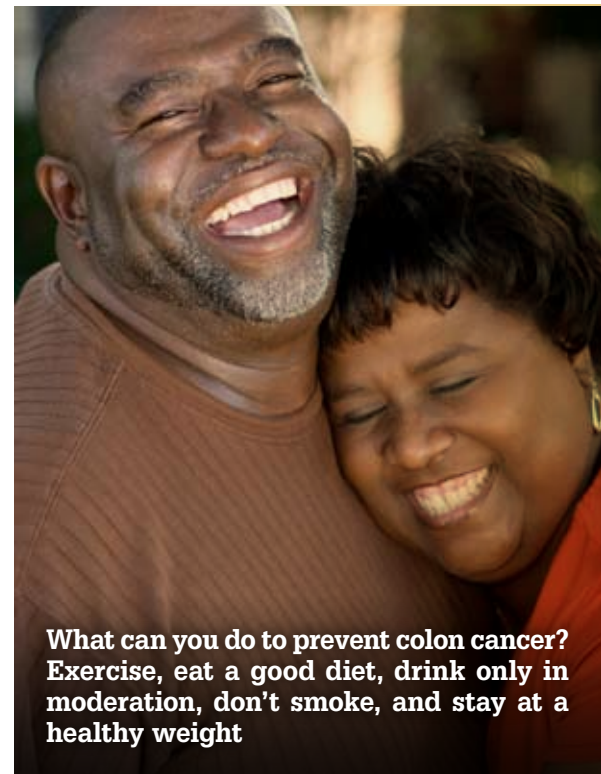
Digital Rectal Exam

This type of exam happens more often in the clinic. A doctor checks for any signs of hidden bleeding. Some cancers may bleed very slowly. You will not notice the blood but the doctor can see it. If your doctor finds signs of bleeding, he may order a colonoscopy.

Did you know...

- The colon is the last part of the digestive system ending in the rectum
- Colorectal cancer is highly preventable
- It is the third leading cause of cancer death among men and women in the U.S.
- Both men and women have the same risk.
- Of any racial or ethnic group in the US, African-Americans:
 - Have the highest risk for colon cancer.
 - Have the highest death rate from colon cancer.
 - Are less likely to have colon cancer diagnosed in the earliest, most treatable stage.
- More than 90 percent of colon cancer cases occur in people age 50 and older.
- Colon cancer found early has a survival rate of 90 percent.

Source: American Cancer Society



What can you do to prevent colon cancer? Exercise, eat a good diet, drink only in moderation, don't smoke, and stay at a healthy weight

For more information about colon cancer, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

Colon cancer occurs in 5% of all people but is very rare before age 40.

What is Ovarian Cancer?

When cells that are not normal grow in one or both of your ovaries, it is called ovarian cancer.

What are the symptoms?

Cancer of the ovaries does not always show signs at first. Most women do show signs between six to twelve months before it is found.

The most usual signs are:

- Gas and pain or swelling in the belly
- Diarrhea or constipation upset stomach

How is it diagnosed?

A doctor may feel a lump in or on an ovary during a routine pelvic exam, or a lump may be seen during an ultrasound. Most lumps are not cancer.

A blood test called CA-125 is a test to look for cancer in women most likely to get it. But other things, such as a woman's period, may cause high levels of CA-125 in blood.

There is only one way to know for sure that a woman has this cancer. A doctor can make a tiny cut in the belly and look for cancer. Bits of any tumors that are found are sent to a lab to find out if they have cancer in them.

How is it treated?

Taking out the tumors is the best way to treat it. Doctors will remove all tumors that they can find. This most often means taking out one or both ovaries and maybe the tubes and womb. After this, most women have some months of chemotherapy. Exams check the patient's health regularly after that.

What are the chances of getting ovarian cancer?

This cancer most often affects women who have:

- Gone through menopause
- Had a history of ovarian cancer their family
- Had breast cancer
- Never had a baby or unable to become pregnant
- Have used hormone replacement treatment for change of life symptoms

How can it be prevented?

There is no way to prevent this cancer, but you may be able to lower your chances of getting it.

- Studies have found that the use of birth control pills with both estrogen and progestin for more than 5 years lowers a woman's chance of ovarian cancer.
- Women who have a family history of ovarian cancer may also lower their chance of getting it by using birth control pills.
- Having surgery to close or tie off your tubes will lower your chances of getting ovarian cancer. But, you will not be able to become pregnant after having this surgery. Talk to your doctor about whether this choice is right for you.
- Having one or more babies also lowers chances for ovarian cancer.
- Breast-feeding for at least one year also lowers your chances.
- Including lots of fruits and vegetables in your diet may help protect against ovarian cancer.

Source material Healthwise
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NHP Care Managers Work with Members Through the Care and Disease Management Programs

If you have health concerns you find hard to take care of, NHP may be able to help. NHP has Care Managers who can:

- Support you and your health care provider while you are being treated
- Help with other things in your life that make it hard for you to get and stay healthy
- Provide in-home management for complex, unstable conditions.

At no cost to you, NHP Care Managers can provide services such as:

- Health counseling specific to you, and support to prevent or control your chronic disease or health issues
- Treatment plans just for you, to help you stay healthy
- Someone who can explain your benefits and the services you can get
- Educational materials that help you to manage your healthcare
- Help with community resources for support and special needs
- Someone to coordinate care with your health care provider, and other care givers to make sure you're getting the care you need
- Health resources and tools

NHP Care Managers include:

- Nurses
- Social services professionals
- Therapists
- Behavioral health clinicians who have expertise helping children and adults with a range of complex health needs

Signing up for programs is up to you. Whether or not you sign up will not change your coverage or your health plan benefits. You do not need to speak with your health care provider to join one of the programs and you may stop at any time.

Call NHP at 1-800-462-5449 (TTY 1-800-655-1761) to see if one of the programs is right for you. You can find out more about our programs in your NHP Member Handbook, or go to the NHP website at www.nhp.org and click on Members, then click on Your Health.



NHP Care Manager Wins National Award

NHP staff member Bill Sweet was honored with the "Making a Difference" award from the Association for Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP).

The award is for great service to underserved children with disabilities and their families. Bill is a pediatric nurse practitioner and complex care management coordinator with the "Special Kids ♥ Special Care" program at NHP.

ACAP is made up of 53 not-for-profit health plans like NHP serving over 7 million people across the country.

Among other things, Care Management is for:

- Adults with severe physical disabilities
- Care after a hospital stay
- Complex care needs
- HIV/AIDS
- Organ transplant
- Pre- and post-pregnancy care
- Pediatric care and special care for children with severe physical disabilities
- Smoking cessation
- Social resources
- Special educational needs
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Behavioral health

Along with our Asthma and Diabetes Disease Management programs, NHP also offers other disease management programs for members with chronic and rare medical conditions, such as:

- Heart failure
- Chronic lung disease
- Cystic fibrosis
- Sickle cell anemia
- Liver failure
- Multiple sclerosis

Controlling the Cost of Health Care: How to save money on your prescriptions

The news is full of stories about the high cost of health care in the U.S. and in Massachusetts. The cost of health care in Massachusetts is now 37% of the state budget. This is up 21% from 2000. But, there are ways that you can cut costs.

Neighborhood Health Plan offers you ways to save money on your medicine. Buy a generic, or non brand name drug, and buy three months at a time.

Buying Generic

Non brand name medicine works the same as brand name but costs less. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) must approve all medicines. How the FDA reviews and approves what is in a drug and how it is made is the same for brand name and non name brand.

Non brand name medicines are more often in the lowest copay tier of your pharmacy benefit, and that can save you money.

The FDA website says this about generic drugs:

“Generic Drugs: Vital Facts

- Generic drugs are identical to their brand-name equivalents in dosage, safety, strength, quality, performance characteristics, intended use, and the way they're administered to patients.
- On average, the cost of a generic drug is 80 to 85 percent lower than the brand-name product.

This article appears on FDA's Consumer Updates page, which features the latest on all FDA-regulated products.”

Posted December 20, 2010

Access90

A great way to save money on medicine that you take all the time is the Access90 program. You can get 90 days of your generic and Tier 2 brand medicine at certain network drug stores for only two copays instead of three.

To start, get a prescription for 90 days of medicine from your primary care provider. If you have not filled the prescription with your NHP insurance, you will need to fill it the first time for just 30 days. After that, your refills can be for 90 days.

To learn more about generic medicines, check out the NHP website "Your Pharmacy" section about copays and pharmacy costs.

For more information about Access90, check the "Pharmacy Programs" section on the "Your Pharmacy" page of the NHP Member website. For the most up-to-date list of medications in the Access90 program, use the Drug Lookup Tool also on the NHP website.

Note: Most pharmacies are part of Access90 but CVS Pharmacies have chosen not to be part of the NHP Access90 program.

Source: "Medicaid Cost Crisis Looms for Bay State", Michael Levenson, Boston Globe January 3, 2011.

Quality Evaluation

At the end of each year, we measure the work done on each project and determine if we met the goal. The results help us to decide next year's plan. In 2011, one goal is for NHP to work on the billing concerns raised by members last year.

NHP is proud of the goals we reached last year, and we look forward to serving our members even better, reaching higher goals in 2011.

More information about NHP's Quality Evaluation and Work Plan is available at www.nhp.org/Pages/quality.aspx

Your Personal Health Information (PHI)

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

This article 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 section 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 1-800-462-5449 (TTY 1-800-655-1761), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thursdays until 8:00 p.m.

Confidentiality

NHP takes our obligation to protect your personal and health information seriously. To maintain 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 private information are required to sign agreements in which they agree to keep that information confidential.
- 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.

Maxine Ricketts Domestic Violence Advocate

Maxine Ricketts works at Dorchester House in Boston. She helps women and men being hurt by a close partner, such as a boyfriend, dating partner, or spouse.

Through the Community Advocacy Program (CAP), Maxine serves all types of people. She mostly works with women, but has helped male victims in the past as well. She has worked with a wide age range of people, from 17 to 79. In her work, she says that it is not a race or class problem, it can happen to anyone.

As a survivor of domestic violence herself, Maxine does her best to help victims get the resources they need.

At first, Maxine makes sure that the victim and any children are safe. Then, she does more, helping the victim to find what they need:

- Housing
- Services
- Legal help
- Money

Many times the problems are complex. When they are, she works to unravel the problems the victim faces “like a ball of yarn.”

Maxine stays with her client through every step. She works hard to form a safe, trusting, and caring relationship. She wants victims to know that the abuse is not their fault and that no one deserves to be harmed.

The help she gives and the resources at Dorchester House and other health centers can change the life of an abuse victim. They can start to live on their own, free from violence. Maxine is always taking on new clients and says her faith gives her strength and helps her to heal, survive, and help others.

For more information or for resources in your area please contact SafeLink, Massachusetts’ 24-hour domestic violence hotline, at 1-877-785-2020 (TTY 1-877-521-2601).

Get answers to health questions, any time, day or night.

The Nurse Advice Line gives you access to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can call about any health concern that you have, large or small. This service is free for all NHP members.

When you call the Nurse Advice Line you get:

- Free access to nursing advice on any subject.
- Recorded information about health and wellness. Over 1,000 topics are in English and over 500 are in Spanish.
- Nurses who speak both English and Spanish. We will translate for any non-English speaking members at no cost.
- Total privacy. Your call, and what you discuss with the nurse, are all private. The information will only be shared with your doctor, or other NHP health care professionals, if appropriate.

There is no limit to how many calls a member can make. Call as often as you need. Reach the service by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at the NHP Customer Care Center 1-800-462-5449 (toll-free) or online at www.nhp.org.

If there is an urgent medical need, please contact your primary care provider. If there is an emergency, call 911.

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.

Voluntary and Involuntary Disenrollment Rates

The Voluntary Disenrollment Rate for NHP commercial members is defined as the number of members who have been disenrolled because of nonpayment of premium. The Voluntary Disenrollment Rate for NHP’s commercial members for 2010 was 0.92%.

The Voluntary Disenrollment Rate for Commonwealth Care members is defined as the number of members who were disenrolled from NHP at the request of the Massachusetts Health Connector. The Voluntary Disenrollment Rate for NHP’s Commonwealth Care members for 2010 was 0.02%.

The Involuntary Disenrollment Rate is defined as the number of members who have been disenrolled because of misrepresentation or fraud, or acts of physical or verbal abuse. The Involuntary Disenrollment Rate for both Commercial and Commonwealth Care members for 2010 was 0.0%.

NHP in the Community

Representatives from Neighborhood Health Plan will be out in the communities of Massachusetts at these events during the summer. Stop by to say “hello” and learn about programs and benefits available to NHP members.

May

Event Name	Location
MGH “Celebrating Women” Health Fair	Everett High School
Health Careers Academy Community Health Fair	Ruggles ‘T’ Station
Asthma & Chronic Disease Fair	Martha Eliot Health Center, Jamaica Plain

June

Event Name	Location
Men’s Health Summit	Reggie Lewis Athletic Center, Roxbury
Aids Action Walk-Festival	Hatch Shell, Boston
Allston Family Fair	Artesani Park, Brighton
Pride Day Parade	Boston City Hall Plaza
MGH-Annual Family Summer Safety Fair	Chelsea Health Center
Lawrence Health Fair	YWCA Headquarters, Lawrence
Great Brook Valley Health Fair	Great Brook Valley Community Health Center, Worcester
Channel 7 Health & Fitness Expo	Hynes Convention Center

July

Event Name	Location
Chelsea River Fest	Chelsea Meridian Bridge
Latino Day at Fenway	Fenway Park
Boston Health Commission Lead Fair	Heritage Park, Lawrence
Annual Community Health Fair	South End Community Health Center

August

Event Name	Location
Harvard Street Health Fair	Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center
Community Health Fair	Brockton Community Health Center
Diabetes Tune-up	Codman Square Health Center
Health Fair and Bike Safety Day	Family Health Center of Worcester
Boston Health Commission Annual Book Bag Drive	Tobin Community Center, Roxbury
Centro las Americas Latin American Festival	Worcester Common

September

Event Name	Location
Health Care Revival	Mattapan Community Health Center
Brazilian Day Festival	Artesani Park, Brighton
Annual Community Health Fair	Martha Eliot Health Center, Jamaica Plain
South Boston Street Festival	Broadway, South Boston
Allston Village Street Festival and Multicultural Festival	Harvard Avenue, Allston
Uphams Corner Health Festival	Strand Theater, Dorchester



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Correct Use of Inhalers by Asthma Patients

Although many people with COPD or asthma misuse inhalers, it is very easy for patients to learn how to use them correctly.

Patients are often on their own to take medicine when they go home from the hospital. Some patients must use an inhaler device. The device measures out the dose they need to take. What people need to learn is how to use the device correctly so they get the proper dose.

In a recent study, researchers wanted to find out if patients were using their inhaler the right way before they went home.

The study included 100 patients with COPD¹ or asthma. Research found that misuse was common. The results were about the same for COPD as they were for asthma.

Of the 100 patients in the study:

- 86% misuse their MDI²
- 71% misuse their Diskus

Researchers They also found that of those people who were taught how to use the inhaler, all of them were able to use it the right way.

If you use an inhaler, be sure to bring it with you to any asthma/COPD appointment. Ask your doctor or nurse to watch you using it to be sure you are using it the right way.

¹Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease – a disease that blocks the flow of air in and out of the lungs.

²Metered Dose Inhalers

Source: Journal of General Internal Medicine, online January 20, 2011. Excerpts reprinted with permission.

Learn the correct way to use your inhaler. NHP has step-by-step guides for various models.

Visit www.nhp.org/asthma to view, print, or download a guide.

Our Neighborhood

A publication of
Neighborhood Health Plan
Boston, Massachusetts

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1-800-462-5449

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