



GOOD HEALTH

A JOURNAL DEDICATED TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

SUMMER 2004

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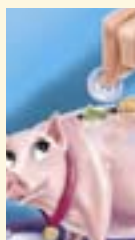
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ROCKY MOUNTAIN HEALTH PLANS turns 30

This is a very special year for Rocky Mountain Health Plans. Throughout 2004 we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary and our ongoing commitment to the people of Colorado. Our members are our neighbors and friends.

Local physicians founded our organization on the Western Slope, and for three decades we have been a trusted part of the communities we serve. Rocky Mountain Health Plans serves the residents of Colorado and is deeply grateful to you for your long-term support. Through our family of health plans, we provide access to quality health care for more than 100,000 enrollees from among all segments of the population.

Quality care Rocky Mountain Health Plans works diligently to make sure you get the high-quality health care you need, want, and deserve. For 30 years RMHP has preserved

WE WILL CONTINUE OUR tradition OF PUTTING OUR MEMBERS FIRST.

and upheld the fundamental privilege and right of physicians and patients to make medical decisions based on what is best for the patient—you, our member. And according to a member satisfaction survey, it works. In the *2003 Health Matters Quality Report*, produced by the Colorado Business Group on Health, RMHP was the only health plan in Colorado to receive a significantly higher than average score for overall quality of health care.



Members are No. 1 We're proud that Rocky Mountain Health Plans has remained independent and provided a stable source of health care services in an industry where buyouts and consolidations are routine. We are a financially strong and stable not-for-profit organization, and we continue to make decisions at the local level to serve and protect our members, not shareholders.

It is our pledge that we will continue our tradition of putting our members first and working toward the good health of Coloradans.

WELCOME TO

OUR new MEMBER NEWSLETTER!

A fresh look. A new name. More helpful information.

As Rocky Mountain Health Plans turns 30 years old, we're pleased to say that *Focus on Health* has changed to the updated quarterly newsletter you hold in your hands.

We think you'll appreciate the expanded informational health topics that will guide you and your family to better health. And of course, you'll still find the RMHP information you expect to keep you up-to-date with your RMHP plan.



30 steps TOWARD GOOD HEALTH

In our 30th year, we encourage all our members to follow 30 easy steps toward good health.

- ▶ CHOOSE WISELY.
- ▶ Eat a variety of foods.
- ▶ Don't smoke.
- ▶ Limit junk food and alcohol.
- ▶ Drink lots of water.
- ▶ GET REGULAR EXERCISE.
- ▶ Check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- ▶ Exercise at least 30 minutes a day.
- ▶ Stretch and strength train.
- ▶ Move your body every chance you get.

- ▶ AVOID OR LESSEN STRESS.
- ▶ Set priorities; put first things first.
- ▶ Simplify your life.
- ▶ Think positively; laugh often.
- ▶ Talk with friends or a professional for support.
- ▶ PUT PERSONAL SAFETY FIRST.
- ▶ Wear your seat belt.
- ▶ Keep your home doors and windows locked.
- ▶ Avoid risky behavior.
- ▶ Get self-defense training.
- ▶ KEEP YOUR MIND ALERT.
- ▶ Take a class; learn a new skill.
- ▶ Write down good ideas.

- ▶ Read and do puzzles.
- ▶ Eat right and exercise.
- ▶ TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF.
- ▶ Develop an open, trusting relationship with a family doctor.
- ▶ Get regular checkups and preventive care.
- ▶ Ask about prescribed medication and tests.
- ▶ Take daily steps toward good health.

For more tips on healthful living, visit www.rmhp.org and click on "Members" then "Take Charge Of Your Health."



stay smoke-free AFTER BABY ARRIVES

Habits can be hard to break—even habits that are bad for you.

What can be even harder is staying free of those habits you've left behind, especially when temptation taps you on the shoulder.

Take smoking, for example. Maybe you quit before you got pregnant or while you were expecting. Once your baby arrives, however, you may assume it's OK to reach for cigarettes again.

But that's a risky way of thinking, experts

say, and here's why:

1. Your baby's health is at risk. Babies have very small lungs and airways that get even smaller when they inhale smoky air. This makes breathing harder.

Among the many health risks: lung problems such as asthma, pneumonia, and bronchitis.

Smoking can also cause problems by getting into breast milk. If a mother smokes, her baby will drink poisons from the cigarettes in her milk.

2. Your health is at stake. Compared to women who

TO protect YOUR HEALTH AND YOUR CHILD'S, STAY AWAY FROM CIGARETTES.

don't smoke, women who do are:

- ▶ Ten times more likely to die of lung cancer.
- ▶ Three times more likely to die of heart disease.
- ▶ Five times more likely to die of a stroke.

What's more, women who smoke are at increased risk of cervical cancer, osteoporosis (bone

disease), and premature menopause, among many other conditions.

3. You're setting an example. Children who see their parents smoke are more likely to smoke when they get older.

To protect your health and your child's, stay away from cigarettes. If you need help quitting, talk with your doctor. There are many strategies and therapies that can help.

Sources: American Lung Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Women's Health Information Center; *Women's Health in Primary Care*, Vol. 1, No. 1

PARENTS' SMOKING HARMS kids

It's no secret that smoking puts you at higher risk of developing lung cancer, heart disease, and a host of other health problems.

But if you're a parent, there's more to consider: Smoking can be a health hazard for your child as well.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children whose parents smoke are more prone to:

- ▶ Ear infections.
- ▶ Asthma—and more severe symptoms of asthma.
- ▶ Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- ▶ Colds and coughs.
- ▶ Tooth cavities.
- ▶ Lung infections, such as pneumonia and bronchitis.

In a study of 4,486 infants, published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, those whose mothers smoked at the end of the first month after delivery had a 50 percent higher risk of being admitted to the hospital with a respiratory infection than did the infants of nonsmokers.

Not smoking is the safest option. But parents who are trying to quit should not smoke in the home or in the presence of their children, according to the American Lung Association. And parents should not allow other family members or visitors to smoke in their home.

If you need help to stop smoking, talk to your doctor.

KNOW what to expect AFTER YOUR BABY IS BORN

With all the joys and responsibilities of having a new baby, it is important not to let your own health get lost in the shuffle of cuddles, diapers, and feedings. That's why it is important that you have a postpartum visit after you have your baby.

Your postpartum appointment is usually scheduled between three and five weeks after you deliver. If your delivering provider did not make an

appointment for you in the hospital, then you should call him or her as soon as you get home to schedule one.

During this visit the provider will do a physical assessment and talk to you about your recovery after your delivery. Some issues to discuss with your provider are weight loss, diet, breastfeeding, getting into shape, family dynamics, contraception, and depression.

Many women experience

varied emotional mood changes after the birth of their babies. The blues affects almost half of all new mothers and is considered a normal part of early motherhood. Symptoms include

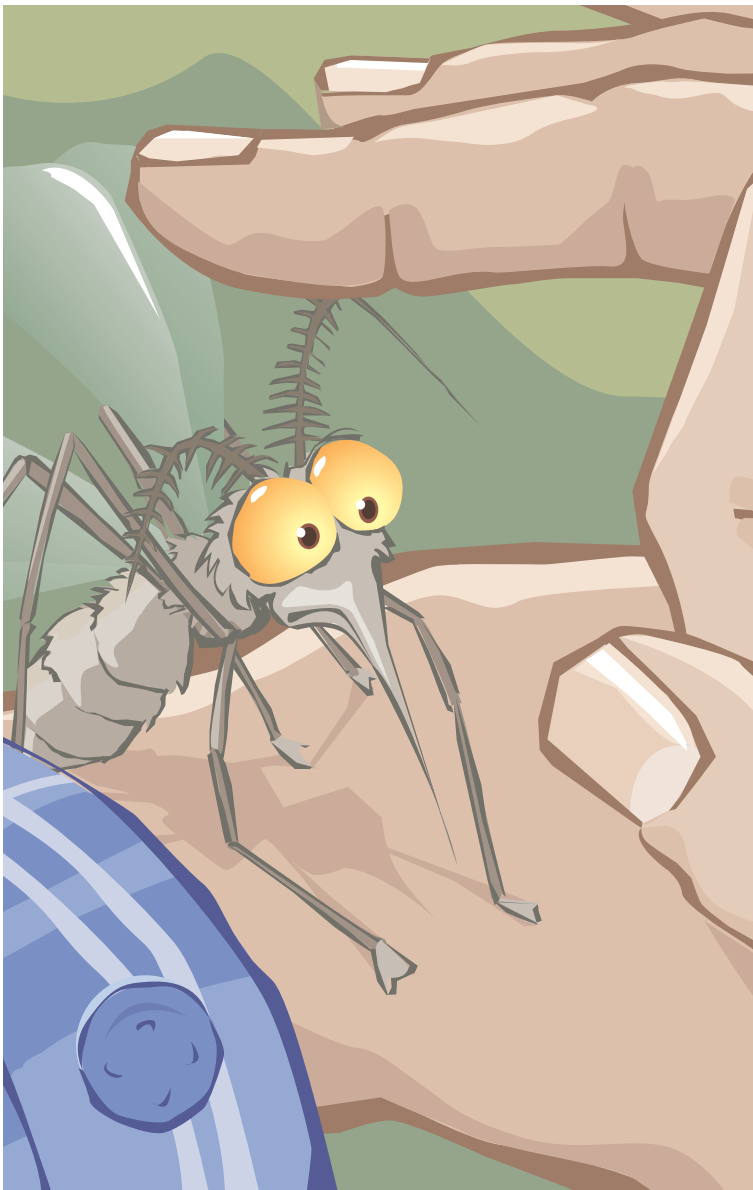
difficulty sleeping, having a hard time concentrating, and mood swings.

If these symptoms continue for more than 10 days, talk to your provider.

CALL



If you have not received your postpartum depression screening from Rocky Mountain Health Plans yet, please call Janice Ferguson, RNC, prenatal care coordinator, at 800-843-0719, ext. 7890, or 970-244-7890 for a free form you can fill out and discuss with your provider.



OH, BUG off!

Insects and other bugs may seem like small annoyances, but their bites can cause big health problems.

Bites or stings from bees, wasps, hornets, and spiders may lead to infections or allergic reactions.

Contact with mosquitoes, ticks, or fleas can lead to diseases that may cause you to become very ill, or even die, if not treated properly.

For example:

- ▶ Mosquitoes can carry the West Nile virus and encephalitis.
- ▶ Ticks can carry Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.
- ▶ Fleas can carry plague.

But you can take steps to lower your chances for getting bitten:

- ▶ Spray exposed skin and clothing with repellent when you are outdoors. The most effective repellents contain DEET,

an ingredient that works against mosquitoes, ticks, and some other biting insects and bugs. Children should not use repellents with more than 10 percent DEET.


- ▶ Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when you are in wooded, wetland, or grassy areas.
- ▶ Make sure window and door screens in your home are in good shape.
- ▶ Drive with your vehicle windows closed.
- ▶ Don't swat flying bugs that land on you.

Gently brush them aside or wait for them to fly away.

- ▶ Check yourself for bugs after you have been outdoors. With tweezers, remove any ticks that are attached as soon as possible.

If you think you may have been bitten and have muscle aches, skin rash, nausea, fever, headache, or chills, see your doctor.

YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM CONTACT WITH MOSQUITOES, TICKS, OR FLEAS.

CLICK  For more information on diseases carried by insects and other bugs, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/insects/diseases.htm.

so long, MOSQUITOES: MAKE THESE BUGS UNWELCOME AT HOME

If the West Nile virus has you worried, there is something you can do to reduce your risk of getting it: Make mosquitoes unwelcome around your home.

A bite by an infected mosquito isn't likely to make you sick. Only about 20 percent of people bitten by carrier mosquitoes develop symptoms, which may include headache, fever, backache, nausea, and some-

times skin rash. Severe cases, however, may cause permanent neurological damage.

So don't take a chance. Keep mosquitoes at bay by following these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- ▶ Install or repair screens on windows and doors.
- ▶ Replace outdoor lights with yellow "bug" lights.
- ▶ Drain standing water from old

tires, plastic covers, and birdbaths, prime breeding sites for mosquitoes.

Encourage your neighbors to take similar steps because mosquitoes circulate over a large area.

Also, if you notice dead birds in your neighborhood, let your local health department know. Dead birds may signal the arrival of the West Nile virus.



CHARTING BUG BITES: A LOOK AT SOME **serious** DISEASES

Thousands of people in the United States get sick each year from serious diseases they get from bug bites. If you have a bite and are concerned about being infected, talk to your doctor. If you are infected, the sooner you get treatment, the better. Here is a look at some of the most serious diseases.

DISEASE	CAUSE	SYMPTOMS
West Nile virus	Mosquito bite	Headache, fever, body aches. More severe cases, which are rare, may lead to encephalitis (swelling of the brain) or meningitis (swelling of the membranes around the brain and spinal cord).
Lyme disease	Tick bite	Red, slowly expanding rash, fatigue, fever, headache, stiff neck, muscle aches, joint pain. If untreated, can lead to arthritis and nervous system problems.
Rocky Mountain spotted fever	Tick bite	Fever, nausea, vomiting, muscle pain, loss of appetite, severe headache, rash, abdominal pain, joint pain, diarrhea.
Encephalitis	Mosquito bite	Headache, stiff neck, fever, disorientation. Can lead to seizures, paralysis, coma.
Plague	Flea bite	Swollen and tender lymph glands, fever, chills, headache, extreme exhaustion.



smart savings ON YOUR MEDICATIONS

Just because something costs more doesn't mean it's better.

If the medicine you take comes in generic and brand-name forms, you can probably save money by buying the generic. The generic medicine will likely look different from the brand-name version. But both medicines are the same.

Not all medicines come in generic form, especially if the medicine is fairly new.

When a medicine is developed, the company that makes it is given a patent, says Steve Findlay, director of research at the National Institute for Health Care Management. The patent gives the company the exclusive right to sell the medicine for a fixed time. This helps protect the company's investment in development.

Once the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves the medicine as safe and effective, the company sells it as a brand


name. Prozac, for example, is a brand name.

When the patent period ends, other companies can make the medicine too. After approval by the FDA, these medicines can be sold by generic names. For example, the patent on Prozac has expired so now it also comes as a generic drug called fluoxetine.

"The generic is a copy," Findlay says. "It has to have the same ingredients, and it has to act in the body the same way as the brand name."

Because the brand-name medicine might have a trademark on its shape or color, the generic version usually doesn't look the same. But the medicine in the generic will be the same as the medicine in the brand name.

About half of all prescriptions are filled with generics. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about generic versions of your medicine.

CLICK  To learn more, visit the FDA Website at www.fda.gov/cder/ogd/. Or go to www.rmhp.org and click on "Members" then "Prescription Drug Services" for information about medications covered in your health plan.

GOOD HEALTH

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GOOD HEALTH is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of ROCKY MOUNTAIN HEALTH PLANS, PO Box 10600, Grand Junction, CO 81502-5600, telephone 800-843-0719, www.rmhp.org. Information in GOOD HEALTH comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider. Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

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YOU MAY GET A DIFFERENT BILL FOR **medical supplies**

Rocky Mountain Health Plans currently sends members a bill for their deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance for medical supplies. We do the same for services obtained from certain providers, including some out-of-state providers.

These providers supply members with covered items and services, such as durable medical equipment, home infusion services, orthotic devices, prosthetic devices, oxygen supplies, electrocardiac monitoring services, and other medical items and supplies.

Effective July 1, 2004, these providers will begin collecting deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance from members. These members will



no longer receive a bill from RMHP for these items; they will need to pay the provider directly.

If you have recently received such medical supplies and services from one of these providers, we will send you a letter telling you more about the change.



WHERE **should you go** FOR HEALTH CARE?

Remember that Centura's Denver-area hospitals are participating only in the Rocky Mountain Health Plans Medicare and Rocky Mountain HealthCare Options plans.

If you are enrolled in a commercial Rocky Mountain HMO plan, most nonemergency care provided by a Denver-area Centura hospital will not be covered. Going to one of these hospitals could create a delay in getting to a participating provider for needed services and could result in your having to pay for the services you receive. The Denver-area Centura

hospitals are Littleton Adventist, Porter Adventist, Parker Adventist, St. Anthony's North, and St. Anthony's Central. HealthONE and Exempla hospitals are participating providers in the Rocky Mountain HMO plans network.

Look under the RMHP logo on your ID card to see if your plan is underwritten by Rocky Mountain HMO or Rocky Mountain HealthCare Options. If you don't know what type of plan you have or would like more information about participating hospitals, please call RMHP Customer Service at 800-346-4643 or 970-243-7050.

HOW TO **reach** US

HEALTH CARE BENEFITS QUESTIONS

Customer Service800-346-4643 or 970-243-7050
Para asistencia en español 800-346-4643
TDD line for the hearing impaired 800-704-6370
(special equipment required)

CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

Our site www.rmhp.org

