



# GOOD HEALTH

A JOURNAL DEDICATED TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

WINTER 2007

## INSIDE



**HAVE QUESTIONS?**  
Find out how our  
Case Managers  
can help. **PAGE 2**



**HIGH CHOLESTEROL**  
Learn the dangers and how  
to avoid them. **PAGE 3**



**PRESCRIPTIONS**  
Important news about your  
benefits. **PAGE 4**



## sniffle SEASON

TIPS TO  
BEAT COLDS  
AND FLU

**It would be nice if the only things you'd catch in winter would be snowflakes on your tongue and kids sneaking extra holiday cookies.**

Unfortunately, many of us will catch colds and flu. These illnesses can knock you down for days. In some people, the flu can even be life-threatening.

The good news is that you can take steps to protect yourself.

**Stop it before it starts** The best way to prevent the flu is to get a dose of flu vaccine. Flu strains vary from year to year, so you need to get the vaccine annually. Generally, it's best to do this in October or November. The vaccine is available by shot or by nasal spray. The spray is approved for use in most healthy people ages 2 to 49.

Vaccines don't completely eliminate the threat of flu. They are valuable, though—especially for people at high risk of flu complications, such as older adults and people with long-term health problems.

Your doctor can determine if the vaccine is right for you.


There are no vaccines for colds, but you can take steps to lower your risk of catching or spreading a cold. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and other health experts offer these suggestions: **▶ Wash your hands often.** Use a separate hand towel when you're sick. **▶ Keep your hands away from your eyes, mouth, and nose—areas where germs can easily enter your body.** **▶ Avoid close contact with people who have colds.** **▶ Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.**

**When prevention fails** Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you still get sick. Prescription medication may reduce the severity of the flu if started soon after symptoms begin, but colds generally have to run their course. You can treat your symptoms by: **▶ Resting.** **▶ Drinking plenty of fluids.** **▶ Using over-the-counter medications, such as decongestants, with your doctor's approval.** Check with a doctor before giving any medicine to children.

## JUST ASK

**Q Does antibacterial soap work better than regular soap?**

**A By name alone, antibacterial soap might sound as if it must be better than other soaps on the market. But the evidence doesn't necessarily bear that out. Research has shown that regular soap does the job of killing germs just as well. Whichever soap you choose, use it with warm water. Scrub your hands vigorously for about 20 seconds. Wash the fronts and backs of your hands, between your fingers, around your wrists, and under your nails. Then dry your hands completely. When you can, use a paper towel instead of a cloth. This may prevent the spread of germs to others who use the same towel.**

CLICK  Visit the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases website at [www.niaid.nih.gov](http://www.niaid.nih.gov).



## KIDS' coughs: IS MEDICINE OK TO GIVE?

When your child is sick, you'd do anything to try to help him or her feel better. But one thing you shouldn't do is give your child over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicine—at least not without a doctor's approval.

According to health experts, safe dosages for all children aren't yet known. What's more, suppressing a cough may

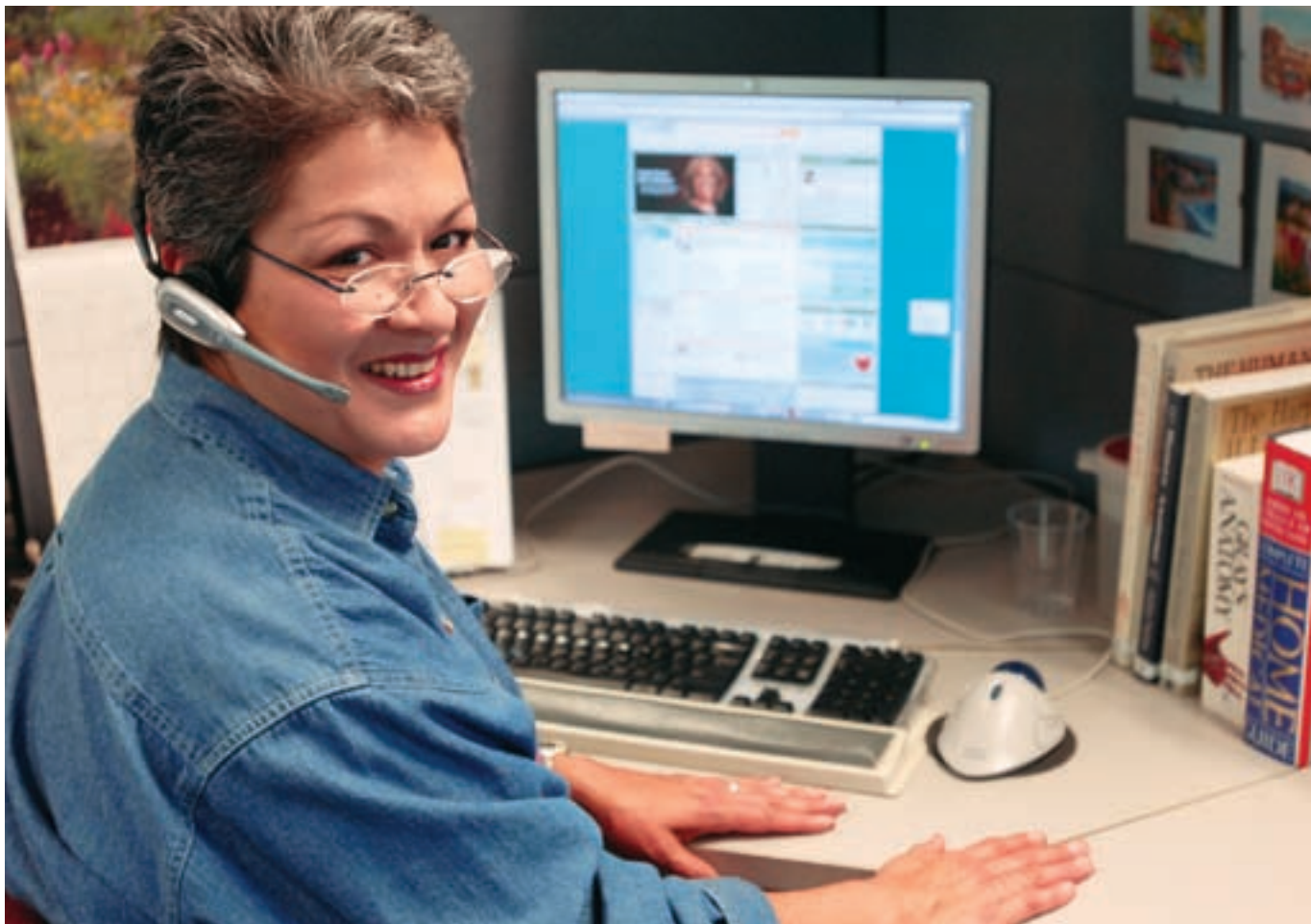
be harmful because coughing helps clear out the lungs.

The American College of Chest Physicians has even gone so far as to strongly recommend against the use of OTC cough and cold medicines for children 14 and younger.

Many coughs don't last long, and they tend to go away on their own.

If a cough is caused by a viral infection, drinking fluids and increasing the humidity in the air may help.

An ongoing cough may be due to other causes, including allergies, asthma, or irritants such as cigarette smoke. If the cough lasts more than two weeks or you're concerned, contact your child's doctor.



without an appointment or referral. The Rocky Mountain Health Plans Case Managers are:

- ▶ **Wanda Napier, General Case Manager.** Wanda is a registered nurse with 25 years of nursing experience. She specializes in geriatrics and renal (kidney) disease.
- ▶ **Jane Parkman, Oncology (cancer) Case Manager.** Jane is a registered nurse with a bachelor's degree in nursing. She has more than 34 years of nursing experience. She specializes in cancer, special needs, cardiac disease, home health care, home infusion services, and hospice care.
- ▶ **Kris Gisoni, Transplant Case Manager.** Kris is a registered nurse with a bachelor's degree and more than 25 years of nursing experience. Located in Denver, she specializes in rehabilitation, home health care, orthopedics, and transplants.
- ▶ **Nancy Thomas, CCM, CCP, Chronic Disease Case Manager.** Nancy is a registered nurse with certifications in both case management and chronic care. With more than 30 years of nursing experience, Nancy works with Members who have chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, coronary heart disease, and chronic back pain.

Don't get frustrated when steering through today's complex health care system. Let the Case Management team members at Rocky Mountain Health Plans be your guides. Case Managers can be reached Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at **800-843-0719**.

TALK WITH OUR CASE MANAGERS

# help IS JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

**Have you ever been** unsure about how to get help with any of the following?

- ▶ Scheduling doctor appointments.
- ▶ Understanding a new or old diagnosis.
- ▶ Learning about medication and treatment options.
- ▶ Receiving specialist care.

- ▶ Preparing for surgery.
- ▶ Managing chronic diseases such as cancer or diabetes.
- ▶ Finding the right kind of therapy.

Rocky Mountain Health Plans has skilled Nurse Case Managers who can help you with these issues. Case Managers are the "go-to" people within the health

plan for our Members. They can answer questions, recommend options for care, and interact with doctors, specialists, and others to help you put together a health care plan based on your needs.

Case Management services are free to Members in all areas of the state. You may call a Case Manager to discuss any question or concern

## IT'S MEDICARE OPEN **enrollment** TIME

At Rocky Mountain, we want to be your partner in good health. That means we are here to help you understand your coverage and the advantages you gain through membership in our Medicare plans.

### Premiums and service

It is true that medical and pharmacy costs tend to go up over time, and Rocky Mountain Health Plans is not immune to this trend. Each year, we make a budget for how much we expect to pay

doctors for their services, how much drugs will cost, and the costs to cover the services our Members need. Based on these costs, we set our monthly premium to ensure we can fulfill our promise to our Members. We price our products fairly, follow the rules, and will always be honest with you about costs, no matter what.

**The Rocky Mountain difference** We believe our premiums are set responsibly and offer more than meets the

eye. For example, we're local and provide great customer service right here in Colorado, not in another state or country. We are Colorado's only independent, not-for-profit health plan. That means we answer to you, not to Wall Street. We are committed to you and to Colorado. Unlike many competitors, we have never left a county where we offer Medicare coverage, and we don't plan to.

**Reliable value** Our Medicare health plans

are focused on providing value for your premium. For example, your favorite doctor or hospital is most likely a part of our network. The prescription drugs you take are very likely covered. On top of that, you don't need to ask for permission before seeing specialist doctors, and we *guarantee* you have access to doctors and hospitals in the community through our network.

Our plans offer Medicare beneficiaries comprehensive coverage, access to quality health care, and excellent customer service. They

also provide all services covered by Medicare Part A and Part B *and* offer additional coverage and benefits such as free preventive care, Part D prescription drug plan options, and more.

For more information, call **800-346-4643** from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mountain time, Monday through Friday. TTY, call **800-704-6370**. For Part D questions, you may call 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mountain time, seven days a week (except on Thanksgiving and Christmas). **CMS112507 S5860 H0602 1395001**

# KEEPING CHOLESTEROL **low**

Many people know that low cholesterol numbers are important for their long-term health. But because high blood cholesterol by itself does not cause symptoms, some people are unaware that their levels are too high.

**Good and bad** Cholesterol is a waxy, fatlike substance that is found in all cells of the body. Your body does need some cholesterol to work the right way, and though it is found in some foods, your body actually makes all the cholesterol it needs.

Blood is watery, and cholesterol is fatty. Just like oil and water, the two do not mix. To travel in the bloodstream, cholesterol is carried in small packages called lipoproteins, which are built in a special way to allow the fat to travel in the blood. Two basic kinds of lipoproteins carry cholesterol throughout your body, and it is important to have proper levels of both:

- ▶ **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol** is bad cholesterol. Elevated LDL levels can lead to a buildup of cholesterol in the arteries. The higher the LDL level in your blood, the greater chance you have of getting heart disease.
- ▶ **High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol** is good cholesterol. It carries cholesterol from other parts of your body back to your liver, which then removes the cholesterol from your body. The higher your HDL cholesterol level, the lower your chances are of getting heart disease.

**Clots can block** Too much cholesterol in the blood can be a serious problem. It can build up on the walls of your arteries, which are blood vessels that carry blood from your heart to other parts of your body. This buildup is called plaque (*plak*). Over time, plaque can cause narrowing or hardening of the arteries, also known as atherosclerosis (*ath-er-o-skler-o-sis*).

When the arteries narrow, the amount of oxygen-rich blood in your body is decreased. Some plaques have a thin covering that bursts, releasing fat and cholesterol into the bloodstream. This may cause your blood to clot. A clot can block the flow of blood, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke. Lowering your cholesterol level decreases your risk of heart and stroke problems and may slow down, reduce, or even stop plaque from building up in your arteries.

**Lower your risk** Diet and exercise are helpful in lowering cholesterol, but some people may also need medications. Risk factors for high cholesterol include smoking, diabetes, age, and high blood pressure. Getting your cholesterol levels checked is the first step to lowering your risk. Then you can discuss risks and treatment options with your doctor.

## DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND GET YOUR CHOLESTEROL CHECKED!

fat and cholesterol into the bloodstream. This may cause your blood to clot. A clot can block the flow of blood, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke. Lowering your



## KNOW YOUR CHOLESTEROL **levels**

See how your cholesterol numbers stack up. Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood.

<b>Total cholesterol</b>	
Less than 200 mg/dL	Good
200–239 mg/dL	Borderline high
240 mg/dL and above	High
<b>LDL cholesterol</b>	
Less than 100 mg/dL	Excellent
100–129 mg/dL	Good
130–159 mg/dL	Borderline high
160–189 mg/dL	High
190 mg/dL and above	Very high
<b>HDL cholesterol</b>	
60 mg/dL and above	Considered protective against heart disease
40–59 mg/dL	Good
Less than 40 mg/dL	A major risk factor for heart disease

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

## UNDERSTANDING AND TREATING THE PAIN OF **migraine headaches**

A throbbing pain that can send you to bed for hours—or days. Nausea and vomiting. A scalp so tender you can't pull a comb through your hair.

Those are some of the symptoms that can accompany a migraine headache.

Migraines affect close to 30 million Americans, according to the American Academy of Neurology Foundation. They can occur in most anyone but are more common in young women.

No one knows for sure what causes the headaches. But we do know that certain things can trigger them.

### What triggers migraines?

The list of items that can trigger migraine

headaches is a long one, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It includes:

**Diet.** Skipping a meal can cause a migraine. Certain foods also can trigger attacks. Common food triggers include chocolate, excessive caffeine, alcohol, and aged cheeses.

**Sleep.** Both sleeping too much and too little can bring on a headache.

**Stress.** Anxiety can lead to a migraine, as can the relief from stress. Physical exertion also can trigger the headache.

**Environment.** This includes such things as weather changes, strong odors or fumes, secondhand smoke, and glaring lights.

### Hormones (in women).

Migraines are often linked to a woman's menstrual cycle.

Keeping a diary of what you did, ate, or drank before you had headaches may help you find your triggers.

### How migraines are treated

Treatment will likely involve a combination of medications and behavioral changes.

If your headaches are mild, your doctor might recommend over-the-counter pain relievers, such as aspirin or ibuprofen.

Prescription medications called triptans are generally the first line of treatment for more severe migraines, according to the FDA.

Avoiding your migraine triggers may be your most important behavioral change. Your doctor also might recommend biofeedback or relaxation exercises.

For more information about migraine headaches, visit the National Headache Foundation website at [www.headaches.org](http://www.headaches.org).





PRESCRIPTION BENEFITS

# NEW NAME, SAME **great** SERVICE

**Rocky Mountain Health Plans (RMHP)** has chosen to partner with Express Scripts to process your prescription drug claims starting Jan. 1, 2008. We selected Express Scripts because of their fast, reliable service. Express Scripts administers prescription plans to more than 50 million Americans and uses the most advanced methods available to process drug claims.

As part of this new affiliation, there will be a few changes to how you fill prescriptions:

- ▶ **Your ID card.** You will receive a new ID card that will include the information retail pharmacies will need for proper billing. You will have to show the new card to your pharmacist before RMHP can be billed for your prescription. Other than the new ID card, this transition will be seamless for Members who use retail pharmacies.
- ▶ **Mail-order pharmacy.** If you currently use mail-order services, you should have received postcards announcing this change. In December, all Subscribers will receive a letter explaining the transition in detail, along with a copy

of the new Express Scripts home delivery service form.

- ▶ **If you are a Commercial or Medicare Member with no Part D,** and you have a new prescription and want to use mail order, the soonest you can submit to Express Scripts is Dec. 26, 2007.
- ▶ **If you are a Member with Medicare Part D,** you will have a choice of mail-order pharmacies. You can choose to stay with WellDyneRx West or get a new prescription from your provider and submit it to Express Scripts beginning Dec. 26, 2007.

These important features of RMHP will NOT change:

- ▶ **The RMHP drug formulary.** There will be no change to the medications RMHP covers.
- ▶ **Customer Service.** All of your prescription benefit questions will still be answered by Rocky Mountain Health Plans Customer Service representatives.

If you have any questions regarding these upcoming changes to your prescription benefits, please call our toll-free Customer Service line at **800-346-4643**.



## Will you be there

*when he grows into it?*

You can quit smoking. We can help. Call the Colorado QuitLine and get:

- **FREE** personalized quit plan from a Quit Coach
- **FREE** – up to eight weeks of nicotine patches
- **FREE** self-help guide

*Quit for your family. Quit for good. You can do it. Call now.*

**1.800.QUIT.NOW** (1-800-784-8669)

COLORADO  
**QuitLine™**  
*Be tobacco free*

**STEPP**  
STROKE PREVENTION  
EDUCATION & PROMOTION PROGRAM

The Colorado QuitLine is funded with proceeds from Colorado's tobacco tax.

HEALTHY PREGNANCY WITH RMHP

## gift card FOR NEW PREGNANT MEMBERS

**Are you pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant soon? Rocky Mountain Health Plans (RMHP) has a prenatal program that will send you a valuable screening. There is also lots of educational information available for you. When you return your screening, you will receive a \$10 gift certificate to Target.**

**If you are interested in this RMHP program, call our prenatal care coordinator, Janice Ferguson, RNC, at 800-843-0719, ext. 7890, or 970-244-7890. You can also e-mail her at [janice.ferguson@rmhp.org](mailto:janice.ferguson@rmhp.org).**



# GOOD HEALTH

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## HOW TO **reach** US



### HEALTH CARE BENEFITS QUESTIONS

Customer Service . . . . .800-346-4643 or 970-243-7050

Para asistencia en español . . . . . 800-346-4643

TTY 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](http://www.rmhp.org)