



GOOD HEALTH

A JOURNAL DEDICATED TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

FALL 2007

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Can it help you?
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FLU PREVENTION

Facts that could save your life. **PAGE 3**

JUST ASK

Q When's the right time for my child's first dental visit?

A At first tooth or first birthday, experts say. Children generally sprout their first tooth by about 6 to 12 months. But if a tooth hasn't shown by then, bring your child to the dentist anyway.

Help prevent decay by wiping your child's gums with a soft, damp cloth after feedings.

Once teeth appear, brush them with water. A dentist can tell you when it's time to start using toothpaste.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; American Dental Association

stress

LIGHTEN UP AND TAKE CONTROL

If you're like most people, you're no stranger to stress. Just thinking about a pile of unpaid bills can raise anyone's stress level. And then there are the heavy hitters like divorce or losing your job. Even a happy event, like getting married, can be stressful.

And when stress doesn't let up, it can wear you down. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, stress can even worsen health problems or cause new ones.

Body language When your stress level gets too high, your body will let you know. Everyone reacts differently, but according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), you may have problems such as: **▶ Trouble sleeping. ▶ Headaches. ▶ Difficulty concentrating. ▶ High blood pressure. ▶ Skin problems, like hives. ▶ Weight loss or gain. ▶ Anxiety or depression.**

Lightening up You can't eliminate stress from your life. But you can start taking control and feeling better with these tips from the HHS:

Set limits. Figure out what you can get done in a day, and then learn to say no to activities you can't handle.

Be active. Vigorous exercise can actually trigger your brain to produce chemicals that counteract stress. Exercise can also help fight depression and improve your fitness.

Get enough sleep. A good night's sleep can improve your judgment and make you feel better during the day.

Make time for yourself. Take time each day to go for a walk or read a magazine. Relax with friends when you can.

Eat right. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, and avoid caffeinated drinks and high-sugar or high-fat snacks.

If stress doesn't let up, ask your doctor to suggest a counselor or other mental health professional.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LET STRESS OVERWHELM YOU.



Share some laughter: Spending time with your friends can help relieve some of the stress in your life.

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

A boost TO HELP YOUR CHILD BLOSSOM

The little things you say and do today can have a big impact on your child's future.

Early in life, people form opinions about themselves and their abilities. It's what we call self-esteem, and it can help children to:

▶ Act independently and deal with peer pressure. ▶ Assume

responsibility. ▶ Handle their emotions. ▶ Attempt new things.

To build your child's self-esteem:

Give plenty of praise. Statements such as "You did a great job" or "You're really improving" can do a lot. But just as important as what you say is

what you don't. Never tell your child that he or she is bad. The behavior might be bad, but the child isn't.

Keep your child positive. When children express negative or inaccurate thoughts about themselves, try to help them think more positively. For example, if your child states

that he is "terrible at baseball," mention that he made a great catch or had more hits than the week before.

Set realistic goals for your child. By testing their abilities, children may gain self-confidence. You can help your child try new things and set goals that match ambitions with abilities. The focus should be on enjoying the activity and having fun rather than on succeeding or winning.

Don't hide your failures. Knowing that you make mistakes can help your child realize he or she doesn't have to be perfect either.

Teach children how to make decisions. You can answer questions and help kids consider alternatives, but taking charge every time your child has a problem may make your child dependent on you.

Sources: Mental Health America; National Mental Health Information Center

HOME HEALTH CARE

HELPING YOU recover

As a Member of Rocky Mountain Health Plans, you may have home health care coverage depending on your specific plan. “Home health care” is a simple phrase that covers a wide range of health and social services. As the length of hospital stays decreases, there is an increase in the number of patients needing additional skilled nursing and therapy services when they return home. Skilled services are given at home to recovering, disabled, and chronically or terminally ill people in need of assistance in their essential activities of living. These services could be a combination of medical, nursing, or therapy treatment, and training for self-care at home.

Generally, home care is appropriate whenever a person is able to stay at home but needs short-term care provided by a professional. The care needed could include:

- ▶ Treatment of wounds.
- ▶ Management of chronic conditions.
- ▶ Physical, occupational, or speech therapy.

More and more older people, electing to remain independent, are receiving home care services as their physical abilities lessen. Younger adults who are recovering from severe illnesses are choosing home care whenever possible. Chronically ill infants and children are receiving advanced medical treatment in their loving and secure home environments. Adults and children diagnosed with terminal illness also are being cared for at home, receiving compassionate care and maintaining dignity at the end of life. Other patients are able to avoid nursing homes and hospital stays, and are able to receive safe and effective care in the comfort of their own homes.

These services are arranged and directed by your physician.

Source: National Association for Home Care and Hospice website: www.nahc.org/famcar_whatisc.html.

**RMHP OFFERS
SKILLED NURSING
SERVICES
AVAILABLE IN
THE COMFORT OF
YOUR OWN HOME.**



Medicare Part D PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE AND FRAUD

Since the Medicare program was signed into law in July 1965, Part D prescription drug coverage has been one of its most significant additions. It’s also one of Medicare’s most confusing benefits. The complex nature of Part D makes it an easy target for swindlers who target patients, health plans, and practitioners alike. Part D fraud scams began before the plan even became effective in January 2006, robbing Medicare members of financial resources and, in many cases, their financial identities.

Con artists are more effective when they are able to make their intended target panic and believe a decision must

be made immediately. These deceivers will insist there is no choice and the person must purchase coverage in addition to their existing coverage. Sometimes they give an “it’s too good to be true” sales pitch describing a one-time payment allowing the Medicare member to avoid all future payments.

A fraudulent caller may try to get personal information from a person over the phone, such as the person’s Social Security number (SSN) and banking account information. Not only does this put the person’s money at risk for being stolen, but also jeopardizes that person’s personal

information, which can be used to access the Medicare member’s credit information, leading to identity theft.

Here are some tips to follow when confronted with a suspicious solicitor:

- ▶ Never give personal information, such as an SSN, bank account information, or credit card numbers over the phone.
- ▶ Legitimate salespeople must honor your request if they are asked not to call again.
- ▶ Salespeople are not allowed to call between the hours of 9 p.m. and 8 a.m.
- ▶ Signing up for a legitimate Part D plan is free. There should be

no application fee.

The Medicare office offers additional tips for dealing with people who are working with Medicare Part D. They are not allowed to:

- ▶ Ask for your SSN, bank account, or credit card information over the phone.
- ▶ Come to your home uninvited to sell or endorse any Medicare-related product. But they can contact you by phone about the plan.
- ▶ Enroll you into a drug plan over the phone unless you call them, or unless you are adding prescription drug coverage to a Medicare plan you already have.
- ▶ Ask you for payment

over the phone or web; the plan must send you a bill.

Fraud increases health care costs for all of us and should be reported. If you are ever confronted with a situation that looks suspicious, please refer to these numbers to report it:

- ▶ RMHP Fraud Hotline: **888-237-1179**.
- ▶ Medicare: **800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227)** (24 hours a day, seven days a week).
- ▶ HHS office of the inspector general: **800-447-8477**.
- ▶ Federal Trade Commission’s ID Theft Hotline: **877-438-4338**.

**CMS080107 S5860 H0602
1208001 Part D Fraud**

HEALTHY PREGNANCY
WITH RMHP

gift card FOR NEW PREGNANT MEMBERS

Are you pregnant or hoping to be pregnant soon? The RMHP prenatal care coordinator can give you a valuable prenatal screening kit. We also have lots of prenatal educational information for you.

As an extra bonus, you'll receive a \$10 gift certificate to Target when you return your completed prenatal screening. If you're interested in this program from RMHP, call our prenatal care coordinator, Janice Ferguson, RN, at 800-843-0719, ext. 7890, or 970-244-7890. You can also e-mail her at jferguson@rmhp.org.



KICK THE HABIT

take part IN THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT

You know smoking is bad for your health and you want to quit. But you just can't seem to get it done. Why not join other smokers and take part in the American Cancer Society's (ACS's) Great American Smokeout?

This year's event, which is on Nov. 15, challenges people to smoke less or quit for at least one day. It also raises awareness of the many effective ways to quit smoking for good. Check

the ACS's on-line calendar for community events in your area.

Here are some quitting tips from the ACS:

- ▶ Tell family and friends about your quit date.
- ▶ Stock up on sugarless gum and carrot sticks.
- ▶ Use nicotine replacement products or call the Colorado QuitLine at 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) to get free items that can help you quit.
- ▶ Exercise can help you

fight cigarette cravings.

- ▶ Stand in front of a mirror and practice saying, "No thank you, I don't smoke."

For more information on the Great American Smokeout and quitting smoking, visit the ACS website at www.cancer.org or call 800-ACS-2345 (800-227-2345).



FLU facts

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

In the past few years, there has been concern about an outbreak of life-threatening bird flu. Although lately this risk seems to be lessening, the regular flu is still a major problem.

The flu is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses, which can cause severe illness or death. Every year in the United States, 5 to 20 percent of the population gets the flu. Complications from flu send more than 200,000 people to the hospital annually, and about 36,000 people die from the flu.

Symptoms of the flu are: ▶ Fever. ▶ Muscle aches. ▶ Extreme tiredness. ▶ Dry cough. ▶ Sore throat. ▶ Runny or stuffy nose. ▶ Headaches. ▶ Intestinal symptoms (uncommon in adults).

Complications of flu include: ▶ Pneumonia. ▶ Ear infections. ▶ Sinus infections. ▶ Worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes.

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. People may become infected by touching things with flu viruses on them and then touching their faces. Adults can infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick.

The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year. The best time to get vaccinated is October or November, but even December or later can still work. Flu season can continue as late as May. There are two types of vaccines:

- ▶ The flu shot—a vaccine that contains killed virus. The flu shot is for use in people ages 6 months and older.
- ▶ The nasal-spray flu vaccine—a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu. This is for use in healthy people ages 5 to 49 who are not pregnant.

People who want to reduce their chances of getting the flu should get vaccinated, with some exceptions. Follow these important guidelines.

People who **should** be vaccinated include:

- ▶ Children ages 6 months to 5 years.
- ▶ Pregnant women.
- ▶ People who are 50 or older.
- ▶ People who have a chronic medical condition, such as diabetes (any age).
- ▶ People who live in a nursing home.
- ▶ People who live with or care for a high-risk person.

Those who **should not** get vaccinated without asking a physician first include:

- ▶ Children less than 6 months old.
- ▶ People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination.
- ▶ People who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome within six weeks after getting a flu vaccine.
- ▶ People who have a severe allergy to eggs.
- ▶ People who have a moderate or severe illness with a fever.

If you aren't sure whether you should get a flu vaccine, consult your health care provider.

JUST ASK

Q What's it like to work for Rocky Mountain Health Plans?

and disease prevention education are available to great people like you.

Our offices are located throughout Colorado, with most positions in Denver and Grand Junction. We share a common desire to improve the lives of our Members and the health of our communities with quality, Member-focused care. We have great people and careers in a work environment that encour-

ages employees to develop to their fullest potential.

Top-notch skills and performance are rewarded with competitive salaries and benefits, and the opportunity to work with some of the most knowledgeable and service-oriented professionals in the health care industry. Click the "About Us" tab at www.rmhp.org to learn more. We are an equal opportunity employer.

A The best health care starts with great people. More than 400 people bring a variety of skills that help manage your health plan. Career opportunities in sales, clinical services, data analysis, client support,



save MONEY!

SKIP THE TRIP TO THE ER, TRY AN OFFICE VISIT INSTEAD

Did you know that a trip to the emergency room for a simple sore throat can be nearly three times as costly as an office visit to your primary care provider (PCP)? As a health plan, we understand that when you need urgent or emergency care, the cost of care is the furthest thing from your mind.

However, you could end up with a long wait and a large medical bill if you visit an emergency room for a nonemergency situation. To save substantial time and money, go to your PCP or an urgent care facility rather than the emergency room. Look on your Member ID card to find your plan's actual urgent care and emergency room benefit costs.

When you're not sure

about the seriousness of your medical situation, call your PCP first. He or she will be able to help you get the best care in the best place, minimize the amount of time you spend waiting for care, and keep your out-of-pocket costs lower. Your PCP

NEED HELP FINDING AN URGENT CARE PROVIDER? call CUSTOMER SERVICE AT 800-346-4643.

may set up an office appointment or even solve the problem over the phone. If your PCP is unavailable, an urgent care center is a practical, cost-saving first

option if your situation is not a medical emergency.

Examples of urgent care situations include:

- ▶ Earaches.
- ▶ Minor burns or cuts.
- ▶ Sinus or urinary infections.
- ▶ Sprains.
- ▶ Skin rashes.
- ▶ Colds, cough, or

sore throat.

- ▶ Diarrhea or upset stomach.

Examples of medical emergencies requiring a visit to the emergency room include:

- ▶ Chest pain.
- ▶ Coughing or vomiting blood.
- ▶ Poisoning.
- ▶ Severe shortness of breath.
- ▶ Life- and limb-threatening conditions.
- ▶ Loss of consciousness.
- ▶ Major burns.
- ▶ Severe bleeding.
- ▶ Spine injuries.

Locating an urgent care center near you

For a complete list of Rocky Mountain Health Plans' participating Urgent Care Providers, visit our website at www.rmhp.org. If you don't have access to a computer, please call our toll-free Customer Service Line at **800-346-4643** and we'll mail a listing to you.

FEEDING YOUR INFANT GOOD NUTRITION FOR BABY'S first year

Your baby's first year is a time of rapid growth and development. Good nutrition can help give your baby the right start.

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers the following age-by-age guide to feeding your baby during the first year.

Newborn to 6 months. For the first six months, breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula supplies all your baby's nutritional needs.

It's best to hold off introducing solids until your baby is

about 6 months old. Your child's doctor can help determine when your child is ready.

Six to 7 months. Your baby still needs regular feedings of breast milk or formula. But you can gradually transition to solids by offering small amounts (about one tablespoon per day at first) of iron-fortified baby cereal and strained or pureed fruits and vegetables.

Seven to 9 months. At this age, your baby's daily basic foods should include:
▶ Breast milk or formula as

needed. ▶ Four tablespoons or more of baby cereal. ▶ Four to eight tablespoons of strained or pureed fruits and vegetables.

You might also try offering cottage cheese, plain yogurt, or pureed meat.

Eight months to 1 year. Once your baby can sit up, try adding finger foods such as small cracker pieces; sliced cheese; and soft, diced fruit or cooked vegetables.

Talk to your doctor if you have questions about introducing a food to your baby.



GOOD HEALTH READERS' survey

In our spring 2007 newsletter, we randomly inserted readers' surveys to get feedback about *Good Health* from you. Here are a few things we learned from the responses. As a result of reading *Good Health*:

- ▶ 73 percent read all or most of *Good Health*, and 96 percent think *Good Health* is a valuable source of information.
- ▶ 10 percent said they'd call for more information about a topic.
- ▶ 12 percent said they'd schedule a doctor's appointment.
- ▶ 41 percent said they had made a change in lifestyle.
- ▶ 61 percent said they had shared *Good Health* with a family member or friend.
- ▶ 90 percent wish to continue receiving *Good Health*.

- Top 10 topics readers are most interested in:
1. Senior/aging health issues.
 2. Diet/healthy eating.
 3. Obesity/weight control.
 4. Disease prevention/wellness.
 5. Exercise/staying fit.
 6. Diabetes.
 7. Arthritis.
 8. Heart disease/heart health.
 9. Children's/teens' health.
 10. Blood pressure/hypertension.

Editor's note: Originally it was announced we would post the names of the winners of the drawing, but due to privacy concerns, we are unable to do so. So instead, we will just say congratulations to the winners and thanks to all who participated!

GOOD HEALTH

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HOW TO reach US



HEALTH CARE BENEFITS QUESTIONS

Customer Service800-346-4643 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

