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GOOD HEALTH

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BODY MASS INDEX

A VITAL number



Your BMI (body mass index) is a measure of body weight relative to height. It can be used to determine if people are at a normal weight, overweight, or obese.

As far as vital signs go, BMI is as important a measurement as blood pressure and should be recorded at each doctor's visit.

More than one in three adults are now classified as obese. Obesity in children is at an all-time high, with more than one-fourth of children in the U.S. considered obese. This trend isn't very promising.

To be obese, a person must have a BMI of 30 or over. A BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight, but not obese. Obese and overweight people are at increased risk for hypertension, cholesterol problems, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, arthritis,

sleep apnea, and certain cancers. The total costs from obesity-related diseases approach \$100 billion annually.

According to Roland Sturm of the Rand Health Corporation, the fastest-growing group of obese Americans consists of people in the severely obese category—at least 100 pounds overweight. These numbers are rapidly becoming a wake-up call for all Americans.

This is why it is so important to discuss your optimal BMI and your options with your doctor. If your BMI is over 30, feel free to contact one of our RN Case Managers at **800-843-0719, ext. 5058**, and we will be happy to assist you in any way that we can.

Below is a BMI chart for your reference. A more complete chart may be accessed at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.htm.

CLICK  Visit the American Academy of Family Physicians website at <http://familydoctor.org>.

JUST ASK

Q How will my health improve if I quit smoking?

A You'll start getting healthier right away. Your blood pressure and your risk for heart attack will start to fall the first day. As time goes on, you'll see these additional benefits:

- ▶ Your coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath will lessen.
- ▶ Your circulation and lung function will improve.
- ▶ Your risk for coronary heart disease, stroke, and peripheral arterial disease will decline.
- ▶ Your chances of getting cancer of the lung, mouth, throat, bladder, kidney, or pancreas will all decrease.
- ▶ Your senses of taste and smell will improve.

Sources: American Cancer Society; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

calculate YOUR BMI

BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Height (in)	Body weight (pounds)																
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287

limit ARTHRITIS PAIN WITH EASY-TO-USE PRODUCTS

If you have arthritis, such routine tasks as buttoning your shirt or opening a jar can be difficult. But there are many products available that can make your life easier.

When choosing products, keep in mind what works best for you. There are many types of arthritis. What works for one person with arthritis may not work as well for you.

The Arthritis Foundation says it's important to be selective. Look for products that make everyday tasks easier. You should also:

- ▶ Select products with texture—such as drinking glasses with bumpy exteriors, which are easier to grip.
- ▶ Look for products that require minimal upkeep.
- ▶ Purchase lightweight items, especially cleaning and kitchen tools.
- ▶ Pick products that are easy to open and close. Look for features such as flip-top caps, zippers, and large lids.
- ▶ Avoid products that have small pieces. Choose items that are simple and practical.
- ▶ Select products that are not bulky and that can be carried close to your body to alleviate pressure on your arms, hands, and back.
- ▶ Make use of assistive devices, such as extra-thick pens, long-handled pots and pans, jar openers, and buttoning aids.

By surrounding yourself with arthritis-friendly products, you can accomplish your day-to-day tasks in a routine manner. For examples of products that are easy to use if you have arthritis, visit the foundation website at www.arthritis.org.



three things

EVERY MEDICARE MEMBER NEEDS TO KNOW

Whether you're a new Medicare Member or you've been with Rocky Mountain Health Plans (RMHP) for years, there are always new things to learn about your RMHP Medicare plan. Jim Kearns, RMHP Medicare retention specialist, answers the top three questions posed by Members like you:

Q When I see a contracted doctor, which insurance card should I show—Rocky Mountain Health Plans or Medicare?

A Always show your RMHP card at the doctor's office. RMHP is not a MediGap or supplemental plan; we are a cost plan, and we work differently. When you go to a contracted doctor or use most of your Part B (out-patient services) of Medicare, RMHP is billed for the services. When you receive Part A services, such as inpatient hospitalization, the facility bills Medicare first and then RMHP pays the balance. Either way, all health care providers need to see your RMHP card. If they ask about "primary" and "secondary," ask them to contact RMHP. Whenever you use a contracted provider, you are only responsible to pay your copayment or coinsurance amount and should never be billed for the balance of any other charges. If a contracted provider bills you for a balance beyond your copayment or coinsurance, contact RMHP directly.

Q Do I have to wait a year since my last annual exam or screening to use the annual benefit?

A The annual exam and preventive screening benefit is based on a calendar year, so as long as you have not used it during the current calendar year, you may take advantage of the no-copay benefit.

Q How do I read the RMHP prescription drug formulary?

A A drug formulary provides coverage information about the drugs covered by RMHP. The first column of the chart lists the drug name. Brand-name drugs are capitalized, and generic drugs are listed in lowercase italics. The column listing the drug tier shows which copayment level the drug is covered under. You should refer to your summary of benefits for specific copayment amounts. The tier codes are as follows:

- ▶ **Drug tier 1.** Generic copayment.
- ▶ **Drug tier 2.** Preferred brand copayment.
- ▶ **Drug tier 3.** Non-preferred brand copayment.
- ▶ **Drug tier 4.** Specialty coinsurance.
- ▶ **Drug tier 5.** Injectable coinsurance.

"The best advice I can give to a new or long-time Member is to keep a copy of your summary of benefits close by to refer to easily," Kearns says.

If you have any questions about your Medicare plan, please call RMHP Customer Service at **800-346-4643** from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you are hearing impaired and use TTY equipment, call **800-704-6370**.

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MEDICATIONS DELIVERED TO YOUR door

Ordering your medications through the mail can be convenient, time-saving, and simpler than you think. Here are some guidelines for using a mail-order pharmacy:

- ▶ Use a mail-order pharmacy for medications you expect to take all the time. Some medications should not be ordered through the mail, such as antibiotics and short-term pain medications.
- ▶ Use a mail-order pharmacy for a 3-month supply of medication. If you order less than a 3-month supply from

a mail-order pharmacy, you will still pay your full mail-order copay. If you need less than a 3-month supply, use a retail pharmacy.

- ▶ **Plan ahead.** Try to order your mail-order prescriptions three weeks before you need them. This gives the pharmacy enough time to contact the physician if the prescription requires intervention.
- ▶ **Pharmacies are required to call your physician** if your prescription has no more refills or if it is expired (over one year old). Your prescription bottle may

say you have refills, but if more than one year has passed since it was originally prescribed, the physician needs to be contacted for a new prescription. If your prescription is for a controlled-substance medication, it will expire after six months. Some controlled-substance medications do not allow refills and require a new prescription each time.

- ▶ **Pharmacies will fill your prescription** with a generic medication, if available, to save you money.



dealing WITH PREGNANCY'S DISCOMFORTS

A wonderful thing awaits

you when you're pregnant—your baby's arrival.

But while you wait for this much-anticipated event, you may find yourself facing a few discomforts brought on by pregnancy hormones and your growing uterus.

Indeed, it's the rare woman who makes it through pregnancy without at least some swelling, heartburn, or other not-so-welcome symptoms.

Still, there's a lot you can do to feel better, starting with these tips for:

Backaches. This is an exceptionally common complaint, especially as pregnancy progresses. Certain stretching exercises can ease your pain; find out from your doctor which ones to try. Also:

- ▶ Wear low-heeled shoes with good arch support to take the strain off your back.
- ▶ Use every opportunity to get off your feet. If you must stand for long stretches, rest one foot on a stool or box.
- ▶ Sleep on a firm mattress—or put a board under an overly soft one.

Constipation. Drink plenty of fluids (especially water and fruit juices) to help

avoid constipation, which is a given for most pregnant women at some point. Eat high-fiber foods, such as whole grains and fresh fruits and veggies, and make it a point to be active daily.

Heartburn. Steer clear of foods that leave you with heartburn's signature symptom—a burning feeling in your chest or throat. Prime offenders include spicy or fatty foods, citrus fruits or juices, and fizzy drinks. In addition:

- ▶ Don't eat or drink within a few hours of bedtime.
- ▶ Check with your doctor about using antacids.

Nausea and vomiting. You may feel less queasy if you eat dry toast or crackers before getting out of bed in the morning.

Eating five or six small meals every day may also help. You might also try sipping ginger ale or water flavored with ginger.

Shortness of breath.

By about 31 to 34 weeks, your enlarged uterus may push your stomach and diaphragm up toward your lungs, causing you to feel breathless. If this happens, sit—or stand—up straight. Your lungs will have more room to expand.

Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

THERE'S A LOT YOU CAN DO TO FEEL better DURING PREGNANCY.

HEALTHY eating PLAN

What you eat during pregnancy provides the building blocks for your growing baby. Aim to eat a variety of healthful foods each day. This includes at least:

Four servings of fruit. A serving is one medium apple or banana, half a cup of cut-up fruit, or three-fourths of a cup of fruit juice.

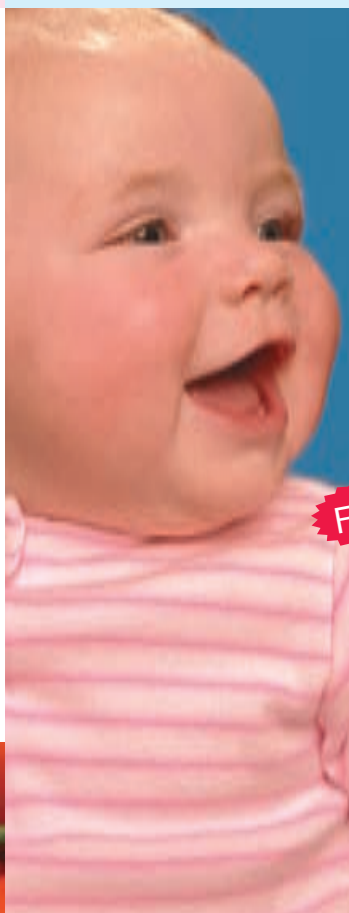
Five servings of vegetables. One serving equals half a cup of raw or cooked vegetables or three-fourths of a cup of vegetable juice.

Nine servings of grains, such as whole-grain bread, rice, pasta, and enriched cereals. One serving equals one slice of bread, half a cup of cooked rice or pasta, or a cup of cold cereal.

Two servings of protein. A serving is 2 to 3 ounces of lean meat or poultry, one egg, one cup of cooked dried beans, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.

Four servings of calcium-rich dairy products. One serving is equal to 1 cup of milk or yogurt or 1½ ounces of cheese.

Sources: March of Dimes; National Women's Health Information Center



PREGNANT? GET YOUR PRENATAL screening

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

As an extra bonus, you'll

receive a \$10 gift certificate to Target when you return your screening.

If you're interested, please call Janice Ferguson, RNC, at 800-843-0719, ext. 7890, or 970-244-7890, or e-mail her at janice.ferguson@rmhp.org.

FREE

GIFT CARD FOR NEW MOTHERS

It is important to keep your postpartum appointment after you've delivered your baby. Don't let your busy life as a new mother get in the way of your own health. To encourage your participation, we will be sending you a postpartum follow-up mailing.

When you return the postpartum screening, we will send

you a \$10 gift certificate to Target. If you have given birth and have not received a postpartum follow-up letter or call, please contact our prenatal care coordinator, Janice Ferguson, RNC, at 800-843-0719, ext. 7890, or 970-244-7890, or e-mail her at janice.ferguson@rmhp.org.

asthma

TIPS FOR ASTHMA AND ALLERGY wellness

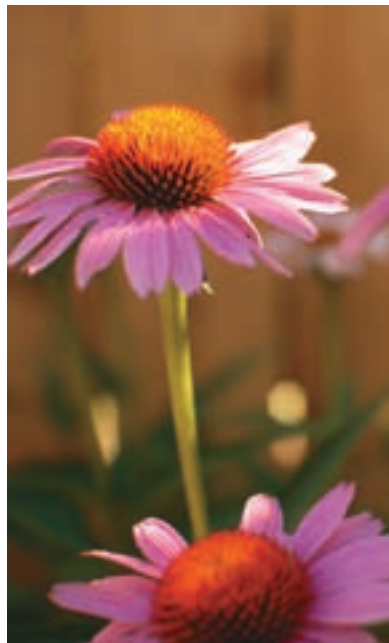
Indoor tips to stay healthy

- ▶ Keep windows closed at night.
- ▶ Use dust-proof casings on your mattress and pillows.
- ▶ Wash bed linens in scent-free detergent.
- ▶ If allergic, keep dogs and cats outside.
- ▶ Use pillows without feathers or down.
- ▶ Keep clutter under control.
- ▶ Avoid carpeted floors, if possible.
- ▶ If you cannot avoid carpet in your home, use allergen-proof vacuum bags.
- ▶ Don't smoke in your house or apartment.

Outdoor tips to remember

- ▶ Avoid activities in the mornings, when pollen counts are highest.
- ▶ Do not hang laundry outside, as pollens and molds collect on the fabric.
- ▶ Avoid smoky or polluted areas.

Sources: www.wedmd.com; Cleveland Clinic Medical Information on Allergies and Asthma; American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology at www.aaaai.org/patients/publicedmat/tips.



ASTHMA SERIES, PART 1

UNDERSTANDING asthma

What is asthma? Asthma is a chronic disease that affects your airways, the tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs. When your asthma is active, the inside walls of your airways are inflamed or swollen, making the airways very sensitive. Your airways react strongly to things you are allergic to or find irritating.

When the airways react, they get narrower, and less air flows through to your lung tissue. Asthma in children is often related to allergies. Adult-onset asthma is aggravated more often by irritants.

What are allergies? Allergies are the body's immune system response when exposed to usually harmless irritants that the body sees as foreign, such as pollen, molds, animal dander, and dust mites.

What causes asthma symptoms and attacks? Some of the more common things that bring on asthma attacks include exercise, allergens, viral infections, and irritants such as cigarette smoke or air pollution.

Other causes of asthma

- ▶ Sulfites in dried fruit or wine.

- ▶ Medicine such as aspirin and beta-blockers in susceptible people.
- ▶ A condition called gastroesophageal reflux disease, which causes heartburn.
- ▶ Irritants such as chemicals or dusts.

Some asthma symptoms to watch for are chest tightening, coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe), and difficulty talking and doing normal daily activities.

Can it be cured? Asthma cannot be cured, but most people with asthma can control it so that they have few and infrequent symptoms.

How do I know if I have asthma? Asthma symptoms are often not specific for asthma but may occur in other conditions, so your doctor needs a good history of your problems. The physical exam may not show much, so your physician may need additional tests such as spirometry, which measures how much air you can blow out of your lungs after a deep breath, and how fast you can do it.

If you have asthma (or think you might) and are interested in speaking with one of our RN Case Managers, do not hesitate to call us at **800-843-0719, ext. 5058**.

COMING IN YOUR NEXT ISSUE: PART 2—ASTHMA treatment

CLICK  To learn more, visit the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America website at www.aafa.org.

GOOD HEALTH

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Para asistencia en español 800-346-4643

TTY line for the hearing impaired 800-704-6370

(special equipment required)

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Our site www.rmhp.org

