



**Rocky Mountain  
HEALTH PLANS®**  
We understand Colorado. We understand you.

Rocky  
Mountain

HEALTH

SPRING 2011



## Manage your asthma

**A**sthma causes a variety of symptoms, including coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath. But there's one thing it shouldn't make you feel: powerless. Many people with asthma—both young and old—lead normal, active lives by learning how to manage the disease.

Asthma affects the airways that carry air in and out of your lungs. When asthma is active, the airways are inflamed or swollen. As they swell, they get narrower and less air flows to your lung tissue, making it hard to breathe.

Follow these three steps to help manage your asthma:

➤ **Find your triggers.** Your doctor can help you identify the irritants and allergens that cause your asthma symptoms; they vary from person to person. They may include dust, animal dander, tobacco smoke, mold, air pollution, certain chemicals, and stress.

➤ **Develop a treatment plan.** Your doctor may prescribe long-term medicines to help keep airways open and prevent symptoms from flaring up. Fast-relief medicines are used to help control asthma symptoms when they occur. Follow your doctor's instructions to use asthma medications properly.

➤ **Keep symptoms in check.** Call your doctor if your medicines don't provide relief, you have trouble walking or talking because you're out of breath, or your lips or fingernails are blue.

There is no cure for asthma, but most people can control it so that they have few and infrequent symptoms. By working with your doctor, you can breathe freely and enjoy an active lifestyle.

➤ Say goodbye to cigarettes

➤ Get screened for colon cancer

# Welcome, Medicare Members!



Jim Kearns, RMHP Medicare Retention Specialist

I am Jim Kearns, the Medicare Retention Specialist for Rocky Mountain Health Plans (RMHP). If this is your first experience with RMHP, welcome! You've made a wise choice for your Medicare plan.

I want to make sure your experience with RMHP gets off to a good start. Soon after you enroll with us, you'll receive some materials with

important information about your Medicare Cost Plan, including your:

1. Membership ID card.
2. Medicare Health Plan Guide/Evidence of Coverage.
3. *RMHP Discount Programs* booklet.
4. RMHP Provider Directory.

If you do not receive these items before your plan effective date, or if you have benefit questions, call our Customer Service team at **888-282-1420** from



8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MT, Monday through Friday. If you are hearing impaired and use TTY equipment, call **800-704-6370**. Para asistencia en español, llame al **800-346-4643** y oprima el **2**.

Thank you for choosing Rocky Mountain Health Plans! We believe you'll have a great experience with us. If you know of someone who might be interested in our plans, our sales representatives can be reached at **888-251-1330**.

## More for you!

As a Rocky Mountain Health Plans Medicare Member, you can get claims and benefit information online in our secure Member portal. To register, go to [www.rmhp.org](http://www.rmhp.org), click on the "Members" section in the **accessRMHP** box on the right, and follow the easy-to-understand instructions.

You can also sign up for our walking and fitness program from Silver&Fit Affinity. You'll get a pedometer and walking guide, a free one-week trial fitness club

membership, and club discounts. Go to [www.SilverandFitAffinity.com](http://www.SilverandFitAffinity.com) or call **877-808-2746**.



## Monitoring your medications

People who take medications over a long period of time may develop a false sense of security about the drug's safety. Certain types of medications can increase the risk of a drug-related complication. There are a few key classes of medications that require regular monitoring and follow-up by your doctor. Annual blood work helps your doctor determine if dosing changes are needed to ensure the treatment's maximum benefit to your health. If you are taking any of the medications listed below, please talk to your doctor about the importance of receiving these annual lab tests.



Drug class or type	Used to treat	Annual lab suggested	Reason
ACE inhibitors/ ARBs	Hypertension and congestive heart failure	Potassium and kidney function tests	Can cause kidney damage or electrolyte imbalances
Digoxin	Heart conditions, such as atrial fibrillation and heart failure	Potassium and kidney function tests	Can cause kidney damage or electrolyte imbalances that lead to toxic drug levels
Diuretics	High blood pressure, glaucoma, and edema (water retention or swelling)	Potassium and kidney function tests	Can cause kidney damage or electrolyte imbalances
Anticonvulsants	Epileptic seizures and bipolar disorder	Drug serum level test	Blood levels of drug can be either toxic or too low



## COLORECTAL CANCER

# Early detection is your best protection

**M**any people do not know colon cancer can be prevented before it starts. It is highly curable if caught early and is most common among people age 50 and older.

Getting tested for colorectal cancer could save your life. Even if you feel fine, regular testing is important, since some people with colon cancer have no symptoms.

Colorectal cancer usually starts from a growth in the colon or rectum. These growths are called polyps. Over time, a polyp can turn into cancer. Screening tests like colonoscopies can find polyps so that they can be removed before they turn into cancer. Other screening tests, like the test for blood in your stool, can find colorectal cancer early, when early treatment is most effective.

**Choose the right screening test for you** Deciding which screening test is best for you is a personal choice. Your doctor can help you decide and explain what to expect with the different tests available. Here is the recommended screening schedule:

- Colonoscopy—every 10 years.
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy—every five years.
- Fecal occult blood test—every year.
- Fecal immunochemical test—every year.

**Colorectal cancer screenings are 100 percent covered** Getting tested is the most important step you can take to help prevent colon cancer, which is the third most common cancer in men and women. For Rocky Mountain Health Plans Members, these preventive screenings are 100 percent covered in-network. Please call your health care professional to schedule your colon cancer screening today.

# Make a tobacco quit plan

**Y**ou're through making excuses and are ready to stop using tobacco. Congratulations! Now you need a solid quit plan to succeed. As you develop your quit plan, be sure to take advantage of the free tobacco cessation program available to all SOLO (individual) and group Members of Rocky Mountain Health Plans (RMHP). The program works with the Colorado QuitLine to provide free nicotine replacement therapy (gum and patches) and certain tobacco cessation prescription drugs. RMHP Members do not incur any out-of-pocket costs for accessing any part of this program.

The Colorado QuitLine has helpful fact sheets, tools, and worksheets about a variety of topics related to tobacco cessation. To develop skills to handle high-risk situations when you're trying to quit, they suggest using the three A's: avoid, alter, and alternatives:

- **Avoid** high-risk situations completely, such as going to bars or smoking areas or being around others who smoke.
- **Alter** situations by mixing up your old routines that used to be paired with smoking, like coffee (try switching to tea) or breaks (take a walk instead).
- Use **alternatives** to cope by finding something to occupy your hands in place of cigarettes (straws, cinnamon sticks, or popsicle sticks) and find other things to keep your mouth busy (gum, candy, or crunchy veggies).

To join the program, call the Colorado QuitLine at **800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)** or go to **www.coquitline.org**. You can also call our Customer Service line toll-free at **800-346-4643, option 6**, for more information.



Source: Colorado QuitLine website



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# Cost Corner

GET THE BEST VALUE FOR  
YOUR PREMIUM DOLLAR

**R**ocky Mountain Health Plans (RMHP) has several programs designed to help our Members navigate the health care system. Help with all these services is **free** to RMHP Members all over Colorado. We can help you with:

- Scheduling doctor appointments.
- Understanding a diagnosis.
- Medication and treatment options.
- Specialist care.
- Surgery.
- Therapy.

RMHP has skilled Nurse Case Managers who can help you navigate these issues. A Case Manager (CM) functions as your go-to person within the health plan by answering questions; recommending options for care; and interacting with doctors, specialists, and others. Your CM will help you put together a health care plan based on your specific needs. Case Managers also have access to community resources to help Members who are experiencing social and financial hardships. They can direct you to local, state, and national organizations that may be able to help.

**Help with chronic conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or asthma** We have disease management programs designed to help Members strengthen the skills needed to perform day-to-day activities as you live with your condition. Members who participate in our programs can expect regular calls and mailings from our clinical team. We provide health education, reminders about standards of care, and encouragement to help you meet your goals. If you have a chronic condition, we will reach out to offer assistance. However, you are under no



obligation and can choose to not participate at any time.

You can call a CM to discuss a question or concern without an appointment or referral from your doctor. Let the clinical team at RMHP be your guide as you navigate through today's complex health care system. To contact a CM or to get more information about our disease management programs, call Customer Service at **970-244-7760** in Mesa County or toll-free at **800-843-0719**.

