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# GOOD HEALTH

A JOURNAL DEDICATED TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

FALL 2006

## GOOD PARENTING principles

**There's a reason kids don't** come with instructions. For one thing, every child and parent is different, so there's really no one "right" way to raise a child.

Still, there are basic parenting principles that can help guide you. The following advice from the American Academy of Family Physicians and other parenting experts can help.

**Be loving.** Take time every day to say, "I love you." Make your child feel special, and give lots of hugs and kisses.

**Be involved.** Spend time with your child every day. Read, play, clean house, or go for a walk together. Children need attention—sometimes a child may misbehave simply to get your attention.

**Be a good listener.** Really listen when your child talks. Listening helps kids feel important and lets them know that you're interested in them.

**Be consistent.** When it comes to rules, make sure they are clear and consistent. This helps your child know what to expect from you. It also helps you avoid having to make decisions on a whim.

**Be supportive.** Give your child room to explore interests and strengths. Your

support can build your child's self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Be a good example.** You are your child's most important role model. Remember that children learn from both your words and your actions. If you ask your child not to shout at you, be sure that you don't shout at your child or at others.

**When the going gets tough** One thing is for sure: Parenting is not easy. It's normal to feel frustrated and even angry at times. The key is knowing how to deal with your feelings. When you're feeling this way, try taking a break. You could take your child for a walk or call a family member or friend for help.

However, if you feel angry every day or have trouble controlling your temper, it's important that you get help. Talk to your doctor about how you feel. Your doctor can also help you find a local parenting support group.

**MAKE YOUR CHILD FEEL special, AND GIVE LOTS OF HUGS AND KISSES.**



## covering YOUNG ADULTS

If your child is now a young adult age 19 to 25 and is dependent on you, we have options available to ensure that wherever your child is, he or she has health care coverage.

If your eligible young person is not currently covered on your RMHP health plan and he or she lives in Colorado, we have SOLO Health Plans available for


individuals. There are several very affordable SOLO Health Plans to choose from that offer comprehensive coverage, including generic prescription drug coverage and first-dollar accident coverage.

If your young person is covered on your RMHP health plan and resides outside of Colorado, we can cover them too!

- ▶ If you have an RMHP PPO plan, your young person can access the in-network level of benefits outside Colorado by receiving care from a provider who is part of the Private Healthcare Systems (PHCS) nationwide network.
- ▶ If you have a RMHP HMO plan, call us or check with your employer to enroll your young person in Good Health National Access. There is no

charge, but certain enrollment criteria apply. Once enrolled, your young person can access care for routine services outside Colorado by receiving care from a provider who is part of the PHCS nationwide network.

Give yourself the peace of mind that your young person's medical care is covered through an affordable RMHP SOLO Health Plan.

**CLICK**  To get a quote or apply for a SOLO Health Plan on-line, go to [www.rmhp.org](http://www.rmhp.org) or call 866-414-SOLO (7656). To find PHCS participating providers, go to [www.phcs.com](http://www.phcs.com). RMHP HMO Members search within the "PPO Network." RMHP PPO Members search within the "Healthy Directions" network.

## IS MY CHILD TOO **sick** FOR SCHOOL?

Deciding whether to keep a sick child home from school can be a tough call.

Generally, it's a good idea to keep your child home if he or she has a fever higher than 101 degrees or does not feel well enough to participate in class.

Also watch for symptoms that may mean your child has a contagious illness:

- ▶ An unexplained rash.
- ▶ Vomiting or diarrhea.
- ▶ Sore throat, especially when combined with a fever or swollen neck glands.
- ▶ Unusual fatigue, paleness, lack of appetite, confusion, or irritability.
- ▶ Signs of chickenpox or pinkeye.

Call your child's doctor if you're still unsure about keeping your child home.

If you decide to send your child to school, be sure that the school has a phone number to contact you in case more serious symptoms develop and your child needs to return home.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics



# HELP FIGHT germs

HOW YOU CAN HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS AT HOME, WORK, AND SCHOOL

**Illnesses like the flu (influenza) and** colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu and colds usually spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

### How to help stop the spread of germs

Take care to:

**Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.** Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

**Clean your hands often.** When available, wash your hands—with soap and warm water—then rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces. Wash for 15 to 20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs can live for a long time (some can live for 2 hours or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks, and tables.

**Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed.** When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest, and check with a health care provider as needed. Your employer may need a doctor's note for an excused absence.

Remember: Keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick. Common symptoms of the flu include: ▶ Fever (usually high). ▶ Headache. ▶ Extreme tiredness. ▶ Cough. ▶ Sore throat. ▶ Runny or stuffy nose. ▶ Muscle aches. ▶ Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea (much more common among children than adults).

**Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Practicing healthy habits will help you stay healthy during flu season and all year long.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, accessed July 7, 2006: [www.cdc.gov/germstopper/work.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/work.htm)



## GEAR UP FOR **flu** SEASON

Flu season is approaching! The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends yearly influenza vaccination (flu shots) for the following groups.

**People at high risk for influenza-related complications and severe disease, including:**


- ▶ Children 6 to 59 months old.
- ▶ Pregnant women.
- ▶ People 50 or older.
- ▶ Adults and children with chronic health conditions,

such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, asthma, cancer, and HIV/AIDS.

**People who live with or care for people at high risk, including:**

- ▶ Caregivers who have frequent contact with people at high risk and who can transmit influenza to those people at high risk.
- ▶ Health care workers.

To learn more, visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

CLICK  The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its partners offer lots of information about handwashing and other things you can do to stay healthy and avoid the germs that cause the flu, colds, and other illnesses. To find out more, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## attention, MEDICAID MEMBERS!

If your doctor has prescribed a medicine that has a generic version, you can request the brand-name version of the medicine.

If you choose to have the brand-name medicine, you must pay the difference between the cost of the generic and brand-name medicine. Unless you are younger than 19, pregnant, or reside in a nursing home, you must also pay a copayment with your prescription.

If you have any questions, please call RMHP 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**.

## open auditions FOR RMHP MEDICARE MEMBERS!

Are you an RMHP Medicare Member? Would you like to tell others why you chose RMHP for your health plan? If so, don't miss this opportunity to "see your name in lights"!

Members are the heart of RMHP, so we want to celebrate you! Your shared personal experience and your smiling face may be chosen to represent RMHP Medicare in print advertisements.

We want to hear from you. If you're an RMHP Medicare Member and you're interested in sharing your experiences with RMHP, please give us a call.

To find out more, call Alison MacArthur at **800-823-8356**, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you are hearing impaired and use TTY equipment, call **800-704-6370**.

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# SUCCESSFUL aging

IT'S IN YOUR GRASP

### Lotions and potions and pills—oh my!

Someone's always touting a new way to look or feel younger.

Unfortunately, these products won't keep the hands of time from turning. But there are ways to grow old gracefully and in good health. Successful aging is a journey that begins early in life—a journey you can help direct.

**Be good to your body** A nutritious diet may help you feel good and prevent disease. Calcium-rich foods, for instance, help reduce your risk for osteoporosis later in life.

Eating well can help you maintain a healthful weight too. That reduces stress on your heart and may lower your risk of diabetes and osteoarthritis.

Just as important as what you put in your body is what you don't. Don't smoke, and know the risks of alcohol.

### Focus on three Ps of good health

**1. Practice healthful habits:** ▶ Be active. Regular physical activity lowers your risk for several diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports it is also

associated with fewer doctor visits and hospitalizations and a reduced need for medications. ▶ Get appropriate checkups, and be screened for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar. Also, talk to your doctor about cancer screenings.

▶ Limit your sun exposure. When you are in the sun, protect your skin by wearing sunscreen and protective clothing.

**2. Prioritize safety:** ▶ Make sure your home has working smoke detectors. Remember to change the batteries every year. ▶ Wear seat belts. ▶ Keep your home free of hazards that might lead to injury. For example, repair loose rugs that someone might trip on, and keep electrical cords out of pathways.

**3. Prevent what you can:** ▶ Get an annual flu shot, and make sure other immunizations are up-to-date. ▶ If you're sexually active, practice safe sex.

**THERE ARE WAYS  
TO GROW OLD  
gracefully AND  
IN GOOD HEALTH.**

**Be a team player** Work with your doctor to stay healthy. This means sharing your family health history and honestly answering your doctor's questions. Be sure you follow your doctor's advice and take your medications correctly. If you have questions, ask.



## A fact ABOUT YOUR MEDICARE PLAN

Did you know that as a Rocky Mountain Health Plans Medicare Member you are a member of a Medicare Cost Plan and not a Medicare Supplement Plan?

When you see your doctor as a Cost Plan Member, the doctor can send the bill directly to RMHP. On a Supplement Plan, the doctor bills Medicare first. Why is this important? When the doctors bill us first, they receive quick payment in full without any secondary billing. With this and

other advantages, RMHP can offer a large network of doctors, which allows you a selection of doctors to choose from that is wider than you would otherwise have in many communities.

So at your next doctor appointment, remember to tell them you are an RMHP Medicare Member (not a member of a Supplemental Plan)—and always show your RMHP Member ID card to get all the benefits of your Medicare Cost Plan!

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## DIABETES defined

When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or doesn't use insulin as well as it should. This can cause serious health problems.

There are two main kinds of diabetes: type 1 and type 2. Also, pregnant women can get gestational diabetes. And there are two conditions that increase the risk of getting diabetes.

**Type 1** Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults. If you have it, your body doesn't produce insulin, and you need to take insulin daily.

The amount of insulin you need depends on what you eat and how active you are.

**Type 2** Type 2 diabetes is the most common kind of diabetes. If you have it, your body either doesn't produce enough insulin or doesn't use it properly.

Pills, insulin, or both are used to treat type 2 diabetes. You can help control the disease by eating well and exercising.

**Gestational** Women who have high blood sugar levels during pregnancy have gestational diabetes. It occurs when your body can't make and use enough insulin during pregnancy.

If not treated or controlled, it can harm your baby. It also increases your child's risk for obesity and for type 2 diabetes. Women with gestational diabetes are at increased risk for the development of diabetes after pregnancy.

**Pre-diabetes** If you have pre-diabetes, your blood sugar level is higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Before type 2 diabetes develops, you almost always have pre-diabetes.

You can delay or prevent type 2 diabetes from developing by controlling your blood sugar.

### Metabolic syndrome

With metabolic syndrome, your body makes insulin but isn't able to use it properly. If you have metabolic syndrome, you have several conditions—such as obesity, high blood pressure, and abnormal cholesterol levels.

Metabolic syndrome increases your risk for diabetes and heart disease.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## HOW YOU CAN LOWER YOUR RISK

**You've heard it before—watch your weight, eat right, and exercise.** They are keys to healthy living. But they are also important steps to take to lower your risk of getting diabetes.

**Know the risks** Diabetes is caused by your body's inability to produce insulin or use it properly. The disease can cause serious problems, such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, and kidney failure.

Your risk for diabetes increases if you:

- ▶ Are overweight or obese.
- ▶ Have a parent, brother, or sister with the disease.
- ▶ Are African American, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic, or Pacific Islander.
- ▶ Are physically inactive.
- ▶ Have abnormal cholesterol levels or high blood pressure.
- ▶ Have delivered a baby weighing more than 9 pounds or have been diagnosed with gestational diabetes.

- ▶ Have polycystic ovary disease.

If you have any of the risk factors for diabetes or are over age 45, talk to your doctor about getting tested for diabetes.

**Lower your risk** Even if you are at high risk for diabetes, there are steps you can take to prevent the disease.

To lower your risk for diabetes:


**Be physically active.** Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. Take a daily walk or do sit-ups while watching television.

**Adopt a healthy diet.** Choose foods that are low in fat, and eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. Keep healthy snacks, such as carrot sticks or low-fat or fat-free yogurt, on hand.

**Maintain a healthy weight.** Limit high-fat foods and sweetened soft drinks and juices. Cut down on portion sizes and eat slowly.

To find out more about what you can do to prevent diabetes, talk to your doctor.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Diabetes Education Program

**CLICK**  To find out more information about diabetes and what you can do to prevent it, visit the American Diabetes Association website at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).

## LIVING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS? GET **personal help**

RMHP offers disease management programs for asthma, heart disease, and diabetes. We provide personal health

management services from registered nurses and certified case managers who work one-on-one with our Members.

If you have questions about our disease management programs, please call our Chronic Disease Case Manager,

Lynda Casellini, RN, at 970-248-5084 or 800-843-0719, ext. 5084.



## 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)



Sources: American Diabetes Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention