

Time to Get Your Seasonal Flu Shot!

Fall marks the start of the flu season. The flu is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses, and each year it causes illness, hospital stays, and even deaths. Children, people with chronic illnesses, and the elderly are the most at-risk.

How Can You Protect Yourself from the Flu?

- Get your flu shot early! This is the best way to protect yourself from the flu.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water (or use an alcohol based hand cleaner).
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick.

The seasonal flu shot is made from a killed or inactivated virus so it is not possible to get the flu from the shot itself.

The flu season often starts in October and can last late into May. Vaccinations can begin as early as September. Talk to your doctor or nurse today about getting your seasonal flu shot.

H1N1 Flu Information

There are many different flu viruses and sometimes a new flu virus emerges that makes people sick. This year, you may have heard of H1N1, or swine flu. The H1N1 flu is a different influenza virus than the seasonal flu and it is spreading worldwide, especially in children. However, **the chance of H1N1 flu infection in elders seems to be low.** There is a small supply of the vaccine for the H1N1 flu, and the Centers for Disease Control has recommended that only pregnant women, children, and health care workers be vaccinated now. Later in the year if more vaccine becomes available Commonwealth Care Alliance will start an H1N1 immunization campaign for its members if necessary.

Questions? Talk to your nurse or another member of your primary care team or call our Member Services team at 1-866-610-2273, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. ♦



Photo/Brian Hoskins

No More Paper!

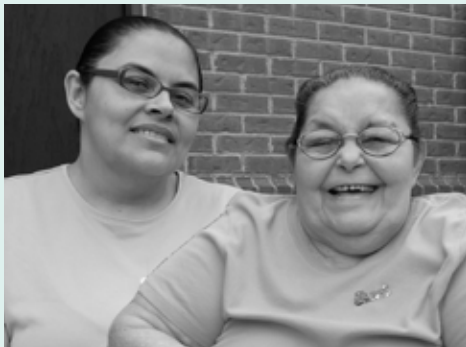
Do you have a computer or regular access to one? We have good news for you! Instead of receiving paper booklets from us, we can now send them to you electronically in an e-mail or on a disk. This applies to the following 2010 documents:

- Summary of Benefits
- Annual Notice of Change and Evidence of Coverage
- Formulary (List of Covered Drugs)
- Pharmacy Directory
- Provider Directory

If you would like us to electronically send you the 2010 documents listed above, please call our Member Services team at 1-866-610-2273.

To continue receiving paper documents — relax! You do not need to do anything.

caregiver STORY



Elisaida De Leon (left) and Irma Morales, Springfield, MA

“I have been able to take care of my mother through the personal care attendant (PCA) program. I clean her house, I cook her meals, I go with her to all her doctor’s appointments. I help her with her personal hygiene. I’m always looking after her health. I stay with her from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then her other PCA arrives.

“Before I leave I make sure she’s okay, and I talk to her birds — she has lots of canaries.”

I feel really good about my mother being part of the Commonwealth Care Alliance SCO program because they provide a lot of help. If she has questions, she can call her doctor and nurse. If she has to leave a message, they always call her back quickly. It’s a good program.” ♦

Diabetes ABC

Better manage your diabetes by remembering the Diabetes ABC!

A is for A1C test!

The A1C test shows what your blood sugar has been over the last three months. People with diabetes whose blood sugar is controlled are likely to have less complications. You can help prevent damage to your eyes, kidneys, and nerves by maintaining good blood sugar control.



B is for Blood Pressure!

High blood pressure puts a strain on your heart. The constant strain can cause heart attack, kidney disease, and stroke.

C is for Cholesterol!

Bad cholesterol, or LDL, can clog your heart’s arteries which can cause heart attack or stroke. Good cholesterol, or HDL, helps to remove cholesterol from your arteries.

Famous Diabetics:

James Cagney—Actor
Johnny Cash—Musician
Dick Clark—Comedian
Miles Davis—Jazz Musician
Patty LaBelle—Soul Singer
Mary Tyler Moore—Actress
Elvis Presley—Musician
Elizabeth Taylor—Actress

Tips for controlling your Diabetes ABC:

- Eat healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, fish, lean meats, whole grains, and skim or low-fat skim milk and cheese
- Eat foods that have less salt
- Take your medicines even when you feel good
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day
- Have your eyes checked every year
- Keep your feet healthy and get them checked regularly

Questions? Talk with your doctor, your nurse or care manager, and ask them to refer you to a community program or diabetes educator.

If you want to attend a self-management diabetes program, please contact Rosa Palacios at 1-866-610-2273 ext. 226, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. ♦

Tips to Help You Lose That Extra Weight

Did you know that being overweight is a risk factor for health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and high blood cholesterol? The good news is that losing weight, even just 10 pounds, can make a big difference.

Fact:
Over
70 million
Americans need
to lose weight

1. Aim for a healthy weight.

Try not to gain extra weight. If you are overweight, try to lose weight slowly — about half to one pound a week.

2. Choose food low in fat and low in calories.

Try these foods:

- Fat-free (skim) or low-fat milk
- Cheese marked 'low-fat' or 'fat-free' on the package
- Fruits and vegetables without butter or sauce
- Rice, beans, cereals, corn tortillas, and pasta
- Lean cuts of meat, fish, and skinless turkey and chicken

3. Make foods the healthy way.

- Bake, broil, or boil foods instead of frying
- Cook beans and rice without lard, bacon, or fatty meats
- Use *less* high-fat cheeses, cream, and butter
- Use cooking spray or a small amount of vegetable oil or margarine
- Use low-fat or fat-free mayonnaise and salad dressings

4. Limit your portion size.

Serve smaller portions and eat smaller meals throughout the day instead of one big meal.

5. Get active! No excuses!

Do your favorite physical activity for at least 30 minutes every day. Does that seem like too much? Try walking for 10 minutes three times a day.

Questions? Talk with your doctor, your nurse or care manager, or call our Member Services team at 1-866-610-2273, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. ♦

Source: Nutrition, Clyde Street Nursing Center



Local Member Meetings are held in your communities.

(Look for your invitation in the near future.)



November is National Family Caregiver Month

Former First Lady Rosalyn Carter said: “There are only four kinds of people in the world—those who **have been** caregivers, those who **are currently** caregivers, those who **will be** caregivers, and those who **will need** caregivers”.

Last year Commonwealth Care Alliance paid for 540 personal care attendants (PCAs) on behalf of its members. Remember, caregivers are not just PCAs, they are also family, friends, partners, and neighbors.

National Family Caregiver Month is a nationally recognized time to focus attention on the more than 50 million family caregivers who provide 80% of our nation’s long term care services. The month of November is a great time to thank the caregivers in your life.

Do you want to publicly thank your Caregiver? Call our Member Services team at 1-866-610-2273, and we will acknowledge them in our next newsletter. ♦

Fact:
30% of family caregivers caring for Seniors are themselves aged 65 or over; another 15% are between the ages of 45 to 54

Source: www.thefamilycaregiver.org

Visit the Commonwealth Care Alliance web site for the latest in member information

www.commonwealthcare.org



Call our Member Services Team, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m.

1-866-610-2273

To share your own recipes or stories, or if you have an idea for the newsletter, contact Nerissa J. Fry at 617.426.0600 ext. 244 or e-mail nfry@commonwealthcare.org



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**Health or Wellness or
Prevention Information**