

# Delaware health aware



Fall 2008



## A health checklist Ready for school

**T**he kids are back in school. You can help your child do well in school by taking care of his or her health needs.

To be sure your child arrives at school in good health, you should think about:

**A doctor visit.** A checkup lets your doctor review your child's growth and overall health. It's a good time for you to ask questions about your child's health.

Shots aren't much fun. But they do protect your child from many serious diseases. Ask your child's doctor which shots your child needs and when.

**Eye and ear exams.** Your child's eyes and ears are important classroom tools. Have your child's vision and hearing tested before he

or she first starts school. And have it checked again if they ever have problems seeing or hearing.

With Delaware Physicians Care, Incorporated, you and your child can get eyeglasses every year. Call Block Vision at **1-800-879-6901**.

**A dental checkup.** A sore tooth can make it hard for your child to focus on school. A regular visit to the dentist is a good way to make

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take

To find a family physician for your child, visit [www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com](http://www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com) or call 1-866-543-2167.

sure your child's teeth are in good shape. Call Delaware's Medicaid program at **1-800-372-2022** for dental care for children up to 21 years old.

**Emergency information.** It's important to give your child's school your emergency contact phone numbers. You can find your primary care physician's phone number on your ID card.

Make sure school officials know about any health problems your child has, such as asthma or diabetes. You should also tell the school about any medicines your child might need to take during the school day.

Remember, children need to feel their best in order to learn.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

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## Kick the habit

### Take part in the Great American Smokeout

**Y**ou know smoking is bad for your health. You're tired of coughing and smelling like an ashtray. But you just can't seem to quit.

Maybe it's time you join other smokers and take part in the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Great American Smokeout.

The event, which takes place Nov. 20, challenges people to smoke less or to quit for at least one day. It also raises awareness of many effective ways to quit smoking for good.

**Make a quit plan.** Quitting smoking by yourself can be difficult. According to the ACS, it's easier if you have a good plan and the support of family and friends.

First, select a date to quit. Circle it on your calendar.

The ACS also advises that you:

- Tell family and friends about your quit date.

- Stock up on oral substitutes, such as sugarless gum and carrot sticks.
- Decide on a method to help you quit. You may want to use nicotine replacement products or sign up for a support group.

- Get rid of all cigarettes, lighters, ashtrays and other smoking-related items.

- Stay physically active. Exercise can help you fight cigarette cravings.

**Ready to quit?** Call the Quitline at **1-866-409-1858**. You can use this free service if you are:

- A Delaware resident 18 or older.

- A college student living in Delaware.

- A member of the military serving at Dover Air Force Base.

You may even qualify for free quit-smoking aids like nicotine patches and gum.

To learn more, call Delaware Physicians Care, Incorporated Member Services at **1-866-543-2167**.

## Dangers of secondhand smoke

**Secondhand smoke increases the risk of:**

- Heart disease.
- Lung cancer.
- Serious respiratory problems in children, including asthma and respiratory tract infections.
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Middle ear infections in children.
- Premature birth by 50 to 80 percent.
- Hospitalization of infants with mothers who do not smoke.
- Breast cancer in women exposed at any age before their first full-term pregnancy.

**Here's what you can do:**

- Don't smoke in your home or car.
- Politely let people know that you believe smokers should "take it outside" so that they know not to smoke in your home or car or around your children and loved ones.
- Don't allow your babysitters or child care providers to smoke around your children.
- Clean away the tobacco smell in your home and car, which can trigger your urge to smoke inside.
- Keep your home smoke-free to protect your loved ones, guests and pets from secondhand smoke exposure.



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# Smoking and The Human Body

Smoking affects nearly every human organ. It causes approximately 1.1 million heart attacks each year. People who smoke are 23 times more likely to get lung cancer. Here's how smoking affects other parts of the body:

## BRAIN

Smoking is a major cause of strokes, the nation's third-leading cause of death. About 600,000 strokes occur each year in the U.S.

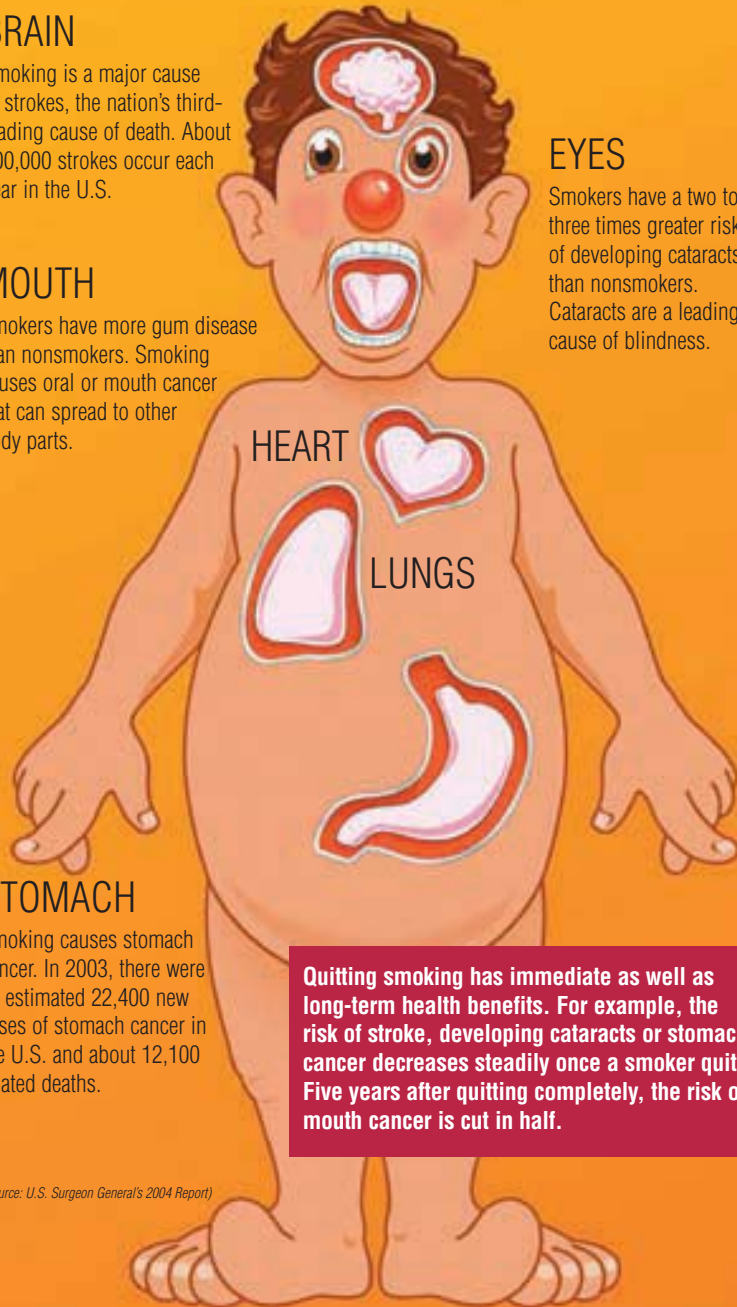
## MOUTH

Smokers have more gum disease than nonsmokers. Smoking causes oral or mouth cancer that can spread to other body parts.

## STOMACH

Smoking causes stomach cancer. In 2003, there were an estimated 22,400 new cases of stomach cancer in the U.S. and about 12,100 related deaths.

(Source: U.S. Surgeon General's 2004 Report)



## EYES

Smokers have a two to three times greater risk of developing cataracts than nonsmokers. Cataracts are a leading cause of blindness.

**Quitting smoking has immediate as well as long-term health benefits. For example, the risk of stroke, developing cataracts or stomach cancer decreases steadily once a smoker quits. Five years after quitting completely, the risk of mouth cancer is cut in half.**

## How tobacco harms teeth

Chances are you know that tobacco can hurt your lungs.

But here's a surprise: It can hurt your teeth and mouth too.

Take smokeless tobacco, also called spit, chew or snuff.

It can permanently stain your teeth and make them a yellowish-brown color.

Smokeless tobacco can also:

- Cause cavities and bleeding gums.
- Give you bad breath.
- Make your gums pull away from your teeth so they become loose and fall out.
- Cause painful mouth sores that never heal. These sores may become cancer.

Smoking can cause problems with teeth too. If you smoke, your family can breathe in the smoke. And children who breathe in other people's cigarette smoke may be more likely to get cavities.

All of this means that if you use spit tobacco or smoke cigarettes, it's important to stop.

So talk to your doctor and ask for help quitting.

And ask about using nicotine gum or a similar product. It may make quitting easier.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Keep blood pressure in check

Millions of Americans have high blood pressure. You could be one of them.

You might not even know it. High blood pressure usually doesn't have warning signs.

It affects the whole body. Risks of a heart attack, stroke, kidney disease and other serious health problems go up if you have high blood pressure.

The good news: It can be controlled.

You may have to take medicine, maybe for life.

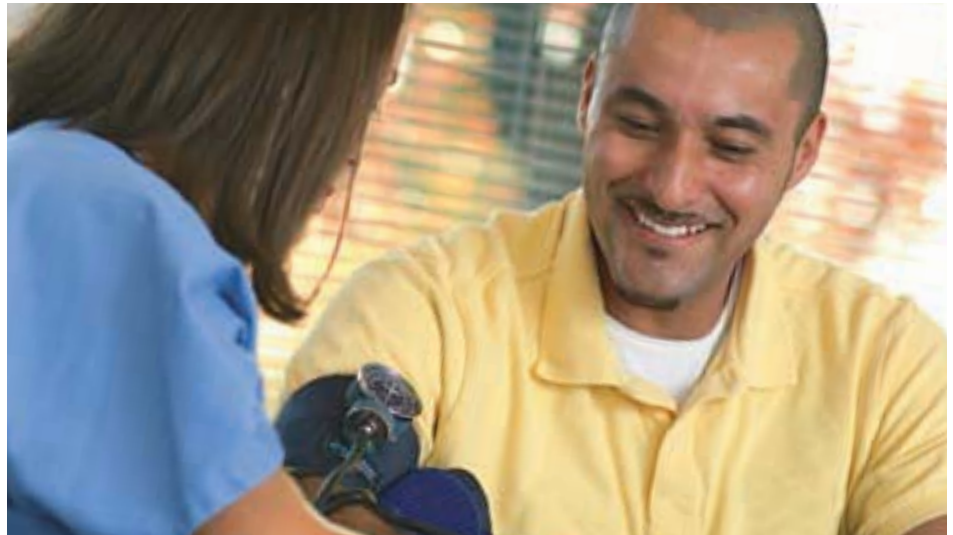
And you'll probably have to make some changes. You may need to:

- Quit smoking if you smoke.
- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Exercise on most (or all) days of the week.
- Eat low-fat foods that include fruits, vegetables and low-fat or nonfat dairy products.
- Limit salt in your diet.
- Pay attention to food labels.

It won't be easy. But you can do it.

It is quick and easy to have your blood pressure tested. Adults should have it done at least every two years—and more often if they have high blood pressure.

Ask your doctor to explain what the two blood pressure numbers



mean. Both are important. They measure the force of the blood against your arteries.

If you have high blood pressure:  
■ Take your medicine just as prescribed.

- Keep your medical checkups.
  - Follow your doctor's advice.
- When your blood pressure numbers get better, be proud. You've made big changes.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

## Do you have other insurance?



Some members have both Delaware Physicians Care, Incorporated, (DPCI) and other medical insurance

coverage. If a member has other medical insurance, DPCI will always pay last. DPCI will coordinate benefits with the other insurance company. This is called "coordination of benefits" or "COB."

If your other medical insurance changes, you need to tell DPCI. You should always show all your

insurance ID cards to all of your doctors.

If you are in an automobile accident, hurt at work, or have a court-ordered judgment or settlement, another party may pay for your expenses. When another party pays for your medical expenses, it is known as "third party liability" (TPL). TPL is usually through insurance companies. You need to tell DPCI when you have TPL.

You can read more about COB and TPL in the DPCI member handbook. Remember to let us know if you have other insurance. Call DPCI Member Services at 1-866-543-2167.

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take Find a provider who is right for you. Visit [www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com](http://www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com).