



Fall/Winter 2010



Check out our new look!

We have a brand-new look for our newsletter. We made the colors brighter and bolder. We also changed how we place the stories in *Delaware Health Aware* to make them more enjoyable for you to read.

What has not changed is the type of stories you'll find here. We will keep bringing you tips and information to help you and your family be as healthy as possible.

We hope you like our new look!

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Making our services better

Delaware Physicians Care has a Quality Management department. We offer many health programs. We focus on making education, access and services better for our members.

The department looks at the care members get. It has programs that teach members how to live healthy lives. Our Prevention & Wellness staff goes to schools and events to talk about being healthy.

The department also tracks Delaware Physicians Care activities. It checks to make sure members can get safe care and services. Some of the ways we do this are:

- Prevention & Wellness activities.
- Quality improvement projects and audits.
- HEDIS® measures.

HEDIS® is a tool that rates how well doctors are doing. It looks at:

- Well-child visits.

- Shots given on time.
- Pregnancy visits.
- Eye exams for members with diabetes.

Delaware Physicians Care got higher HEDIS® rates in 2010 than in 2009 for most areas. We met or kept our goals in 69.5 percent of the 70 HEDIS® measures.

We also look for problems with the way care is given to our members. We make sure that members get safe care. We make sure they get the care they need.

We have work groups that look at ways we can improve. We need to improve in helping our members with diabetes get the care they need. If you have any ideas about how we could improve our care for people with diabetes or any other disease, please call Member Services at **1-866-543-2167**.

If you want a written copy of our Quality Management program, call **1-866-543-2167**.



Diabetes workshops in Delaware

Delaware's Division of Public Health is offering a **free** diabetes self-management program. You will learn:

- How to deal with stress, diabetes symptoms such as high and low blood sugar, and emotional problems such as depression, anger, fear and frustration.
- Exercises to help keep you strong.
- Healthy eating.
- Correct use of medication.
- How to work easily with health care providers.

This is a six-week program. For more information about dates, times and locations, please call Delaware's Division of Public Health Diabetes Prevention and Control Program at **1-302-744-1020**.

DIABETES

You can take this information to heart

Sooner or later, there's a tough fact you have to face if you have diabetes. You are at an increased risk for developing heart disease.

People who have diabetes are more likely to have heart attacks or develop heart disease than people who don't have diabetes. For men, the risk is double. For women, the risk is triple.

Even so, there are many things you can do to help keep your heart healthy.

What raises your risk?

A big part of living with diabetes is managing your blood sugar (glucose) level.

High blood sugar can result in material called plaque. This can build up in the arteries around your heart. Plaque cuts down on the flow of oxygen-rich blood to your heart. This can raise your risk of serious health problems, including:

- Heart attack.
- Heart failure.
- Stroke.

Other things that can raise your risk of heart disease if you have diabetes include:

- Being overweight.
- Having unhealthy cholesterol levels.
- Smoking.
- Not being active.
- Eating an unhealthy diet.
- Being under too much stress.

What can you do?

To help your heart stay healthy:

- Work with your doctor to keep your blood sugar level under control.
- Take all medications the way your doctor tells you to.
- Eat well. Choose foods that are low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium and added sugar.
- Lose weight if you're overweight.
- Make it a goal to be more active. Just get your doctor's OK first.
- If you smoke, quit. Talk to your doctor about programs and products to help you stop smoking.
- Learn how to deal with stress. Try to avoid situations that make you angry. Look for time during the day when you can relax.

Make it a team effort

Talk to your doctor about which of these habits are most important for you. He or she can work with you to control your risk factors. Your doctor can help you take those important first steps toward reducing your risk for heart disease.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



The flu vaccine is free for all Delaware Physicians Care members.



Don't let the flu get to you

Help protect yourself and your family from the flu. Sometimes the flu is like having a bad cold. Sometimes it can be very serious. It's good to know that it may be prevented.

Getting protected is easier this year. The vaccines for some of the more common seasonal flu viruses and H1N1 have been combined. One shot* works for both types of flu.

Everyone 6 months of age and older should see his or her primary care provider (PCP) about getting a flu shot. Talk to your PCP to find out what's right for you. Find out what's right for those you care about.

Children between 6 months and 8 years of age may need 2 doses. Talk to your PCP to find out if your child may need an extra dose to be fully protected if they:

- Have never received a seasonal or H1N1 flu shot.
- Received their first and only seasonal flu shot last year.

Call your PCP today and make an appointment. Get the care you need.

Call Delaware Physicians Care at 1-866-543-2167. We can help:

- Answer your questions.
- If you have a problem getting an appointment for a flu shot.
- You get a ride to your appointment.

*A nose spray may be given, instead of a shot.

Make exercise a family affair

Regular exercise promotes weight control, disease prevention and heart health, among other things. People of all ages and body types can benefit.

But many of us don't get all the exercise we should. If you need some help staying active, consider making exercise a family affair.

Here are a few ideas:

- Start small. Begin with activities everyone is willing to try. For example, get the whole family together for a walk after dinner. Or plan to walk to school with your kids a couple of times each week.
- Take control. Set limits on screen time. Fewer hours spent with the TV, computer or video games frees up time for more active pursuits. Two hours—or less—a day is a good goal.
- Learn something new. Let your kids be the experts. Ask them to show you how to play their favorite game or sport. You can also teach them a game you enjoyed as a kid.

- Share chores. Get the kids to help with yard work, washing the car, working in the garden or cleaning the house. These jobs have to get done anyway, and they can be good exercise for everyone.
- Have fun. Plan a weekend hike or bike ride with the kids. Organize a family softball or basketball game. Take everyone to the park. Set aside time to visit the zoo or a local pool.

Exercising as a family not only helps you stay fit, it also teaches your kids an important way to stay healthy.

Sources: National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Eating right is also important for good health. Most people should eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains.



This shot is for young men too

Delaware Physicians Care also covers the HPV vaccine for males ages 9 to 26. Parents of boys should talk to their sons' doctor about this vaccine. Young men can also discuss this vaccine with their doctors.

1-2-3

Steps to reducing cervical cancer risk

Ready to reduce your risk for cervical cancer? This three-step plan can put you on the path to prevention.

1 Get immunized. A virus known as HPV causes most cases of cervical cancer. But the HPV vaccine can prevent up to 70 percent of those cancers.

The shot won't help if you already have HPV. So it's best to get the vaccine before you start having sex.

Girls ages 11 and 12 should have the shot. And it may be given to women up to age 26. Talk to your doctor about whether you should have the vaccine.

2 Go for screenings. The Pap test is a crucial part of prevention. Doctors use the test to find changes in the cells of the

cervix. These changes sometimes lead to cancer.

But when a doctor finds them early, they can be treated. That treatment can stop cervical cancer before it starts.

You should start having Pap tests about three years after you start having sex or by age 21, whichever comes first. Get tested every three years, or as often as your doctor recommends.

3 Practice safe sex. HPV can be spread through vaginal, anal and oral sex. The best way to avoid HPV is to not have sex. If you do have sex, limit the number of partners you have. And use a condom every time.

Sources: National Cancer Institute; American Cancer Society

GONORRHEA

What you need to know

Alert: Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD). It is a very common disease. Young adults ages 15 to 24 are most at risk for this disease.

There has been a big increase in cases of gonorrhea in the Philadelphia area. If it is not treated, it can cause serious

and permanent health problems in both women and men.

Using condoms greatly reduces the risk of catching or spreading gonorrhea. Talk to your doctor about this dangerous problem. You can cure gonorrhea with antibiotics prescribed by your doctor.

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This newsletter is general health information and should not replace care you get from your doctor. It is not meant to replace advice you get from your doctor. The plan does not provide health care; you must receive health care from your doctor. Always ask your doctor or other health care provider for information about your own health care needs.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

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