

A MEMBERSHIP SERVICE FROM
THE US FAMILY HEALTH PLAN

Winter 2022

healthy Lifestyle



Don't Miss a Dose,
Stick to Your
'Script'

See Page 4

A Holiday Message from the USFHP Executive Director and Medical Director



Dear USFHP Family,

We wanted to take a moment to share how much we appreciate the trust you put in US Family Health Plan (USFHP). It is truly an honor and privilege to oversee the care USFHP gives to you and your family, for the dedication, commitment, and sacrifice you have given to serving our country. In turn, we believe you deserve the best quality health care. It is our intention to provide that care to you. You have made a commitment to USFHP, and we are committed to you.

In 2022, we look forward to responding to your needs with quality programs that encourage good health. Health care can often feel complicated. Please know that we are here to help. US Family Health Plan has a local team of customer service experts who are well-educated in the health plan.

Please call for any help you may need.

This newsletter offers some suggestions for a healthier and more relaxed you, including a fun recipe and tips to get through the winter months. We hope our quarterly publication reaches each of you with helpful information to support you in living a healthy, happy life.

With heartfelt gratitude, we thank you for your service to our country and for allowing USFHP to continue to provide service to you. Along with everyone here at USFHP, we wish each of you a very merry holiday season and a happy new year!

Kind regards,

Moung Finh
Executive Director
US Family Health Plan

Rick Ludwig, MD
Medical Director
US Family Health Plan

Manage Your Diabetes with Regular A1c Tests

Why do you need an Hb A1c test every few months? The daily blood sugar tests you do yourself tell you what your blood sugar is at that moment. The Hb A1c blood test, on the other hand, works by checking your blood's "memory" of recent levels. It can measure your blood sugar control for the past two or three months.

Regular Hb A1c testing helps confirm the results of the daily tests you've been taking yourself. But, more importantly, it tells your provider how well your treatment plan is working and if adjustments need to be made. When your A1c levels stay too high for too long, you can suffer damage of the heart, kidneys, eyes, or nerves.

Your Hb A1c should be tested at least two times a year. How often you need the test depends on how well your blood sugar is managed. If you need to check your blood sugar daily, don't skip that step.

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Stay Safe While Shopping Online

The holiday season is upon us, and we are headed to the stores both online and in person to try to find the perfect gift. While shopping, please follow these quick tips to make it a safe and enjoyable trip or evening at home with a hot cocoa.

Shopping tips for a safer and more enjoyable holiday season:

1. Make sure your phone has a passcode.
2. Make sure all the devices you have that connect to the internet are updated.
3. Turn off Bluetooth and AirDrop features when you are not using them. This will prevent threat actors from gaining access to data on your phone.
4. Don't use the same password for all your online shopping accounts.
5. Watch for phishing emails about deliveries.
6. Avoid clicking on pop-ups or coupons.
7. Beware of seasonal scams asking for money.
8. Always look for the **https://**.
9. Make sure your home Wi-Fi has a password.
 - a. In addition, make sure you are extra careful on public Wi-Fi. Never check any account or sign into anything on public Wi-Fi, as it should be considered compromised.
10. Check your credit card and bank statements regularly.
11. Don't forget to tell those closest to you that you love and appreciate them.



What Is Causing My Child's Sore Throat?

When your child complains about having a sore throat, it might be pharyngitis. Pharyngitis is an illness that is most often caused by viral infections. They are spread by close contact with other people who are sick. For example, kids attending school or day care are at risk. This is especially true during the winter months.

Symptoms can occur a bit differently in each child. They can include:

- Sore throat
- Trouble or painful swallowing
- Enlarged, painful neck glands
- Hoarseness or change in voice
- Fever or chills
- Headache
- Ear pain

- Nausea and vomiting
- Belly pain
- Feeling achy and tired
- Red or swollen throat
- Red or enlarged tonsils
- Throat or tonsils may have a whitish discharge
- Trouble breathing or snoring

The symptoms of pharyngitis can be like other health conditions, such as tonsillitis. Make sure your child sees their health care provider for a diagnosis. Treatment will depend on your child's symptoms, age, and general health. It will also depend on how severe the condition is.





Don't Miss a Dose, Stick to Your 'Script'

Many medications are prescribed for people to take for long periods of time. Examples of these types of medications include cholesterol, diabetes, and high blood pressure medications. Because patients often don't "feel bad" when they miss a dose, it's not uncommon for individuals to forget to take their medications daily as prescribed. However, it is important for individuals to make sure they take their medications as directed. Consistent use of cholesterol, blood pressure, and even diabetes medications can reduce the risk for a heart attack or stroke. Consistent use of diabetes medications can prevent adverse outcomes from diabetes like kidney failure, nerve damage, and even blindness.

The best way to stay on top of your medications is to get a pillbox. These are often found in most pharmacies and have compartments for each day of the week. For many individuals on cholesterol medications, these are prescribed at bedtime while blood pressure or diabetes meds are often prescribed in the morning. In these cases, it's often a good idea to get a pillbox that has separate compartments for both morning and evening doses. Having a pillbox allows individuals to recognize when they have skipped a dose. This

allows people to really see how often they miss doses or how good they are at not missing doses.

Another option that many people find helpful is to set an alarm each day. Smartphones are an excellent way to have an alarm reminder to take medications (or even downloading a "pill reminder" app can be helpful). Alarms and reminders are particularly helpful if you have medications taken later in the day (like many cholesterol medications). It is often much harder to remember to take a medication later in the day because dinnertime varies or you may be out and about and intend to take your medication when you get home but don't remember to do so. If you are active and away from home during the time you normally take your medication, consider taking your medication with you. That way, when your alarm reminds you to take your medication, you have your medication handy. In fact, some pillboxes have compartments that pop out so you can take your medication with you in addition to keeping track of how well you're doing with remembering to take your medications as directed.

We here at USFHP want you to have the best health. Ensuring you take your long-term medications properly and consistently is one of the best ways to ensure better health in the future.

Cost Increases for 2022

The Defense Health Agency has announced cost changes for 2022.

Copays will increase for the use of nonmilitary, retail pharmacies and mail-order delivery. The increases will range from \$1 to \$8 in 2022. Survivors of active-duty service members are exempt from these increases. Medically retired service members and their family members are also exempt.

Annual enrollment fees for TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select will also rise. By law, the Department of Defense is required to raise certain out-of-pocket cost shares. These increases are based on the annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) for retirees. These increases are also due to changes in the cost of health care services and other factors.

For retirees, 2022 annual enrollment fees will be based on when the sponsor entered the military:

- Those who entered before 1/1/2018 — \$323 per individual or \$647 per family
- Those who entered on or after 1/1/2018 — \$392 per individual or \$784 per family

Beneficiaries whose sponsor has an initial service date before January 1, 2018, will not pay the increases, as long as at least one family member remains enrolled in TRICARE Prime and they are:

- Survivors of active-duty deceased sponsors OR
- Medically retired Uniformed Services members and their dependents

Also in 2022, retirees will see copay increases for health care services. These increases will range from \$1 to \$10.

Active-duty family members do not make copays for health care services. They also do not pay enrollment fees. In the same way, retirees with Medicare Part B do not make copays for health care services and do not pay enrollment fees. However, Medicare Part B premiums are expected to increase based on the COLA.

If you are a retiree (or family member), watch for new membership cards in early January. You will also receive an updated Summary of Benefits.



Choosing Foods Wisely

Are your favorite foods less than ideally healthy? You don't have to give them up completely—just eat them less often and in smaller amounts.

Try tweaking your recipes, too! When you cook it yourself, you can make easy healthy changes to recipes. For example, swap in low-fat milk, reduced-fat cheese, and whole-grain pasta in mac and cheese. Toss in some vegetables for added flavor and nutrition.

Managing your weight and eating healthier is about making healthy changes that you can stick with for the long haul. Here's a healthy recipe to get you started.

Chicken and Mushroom Stew

Ingredients

- 1/2 lb. chicken thighs, boneless, skinless, diced, and visible fat removed
- 3/8 tsp. thyme, divided
- 3/8 tsp. smoked paprika, divided
- 3/8 tsp. garlic powder, divided
- 3/8 tsp. onion powder, divided
- Olive oil spray
- 1 large carrot, diced (about 3/4 cup)
- 1 large celery stalk, diced (about 1/2 cup)
- 1/2 large yellow onion, diced (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 1/4 cups low-sodium chicken stock, divided
- 4 oz. package of white mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 small zucchini, diced (about 1/2 cup)
- 3/4 cup frozen peas
- 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1/4 tsp. sea salt
- Zest from 1/2 lemon (about 1/2 tbsp.)
- 1/2 tbsp. lemon juice

Directions

1. Toss chicken thighs with 1/4 teaspoon each thyme, paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder. Heat a large pot over high heat for one minute. Spray with olive oil spray, then sauté chicken thighs for about two minutes, scraping brown bits with spatula. Remove chicken thighs from heat.
2. In same pot, spray olive oil spray, and sauté carrots, celery, and onion, about five minutes, scraping brown bits with spatula. Add about 1 tablespoon of stock, and scrape bottom of the pot to remove all brown bits so that they flavor the stew.
3. Add mushrooms and zucchini, and sauté for about three minutes.

4. Stir in peas and diced chicken thighs.
5. Dissolve cornstarch into remaining chicken stock, and pour over chicken and vegetables. Add in remaining 1/8 teaspoons each of thyme, paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder. Season with salt, lemon zest, and lemon juice.
6. Reduce heat to low, and cook for 30 minutes, stirring frequently.

Per serving

Serves two. Each serving provides: 280 calories, 5 g fat (1.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 110 mg cholesterol, 550 mg sodium, 25 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber, 9 g sugars, 32 g protein.



Q&A: The Facts on Chlamydia

Chlamydia is an infection that you can get through sexual contact. Anyone who has sex is at risk for chlamydia, but young adults are at very high risk. They may be less likely to use condoms during sex and are more likely to have more than one sex partner.

The CDC says chlamydia is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria.

Q. What are the symptoms?

A. Most people with chlamydia have no symptoms. An early sign of the disease in women is a mucus-like vaginal discharge. These are other symptoms that women may have:

- Pain or burning when urinating
- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Pain in the lower belly or lower back
- Nausea
- Fever
- Bleeding between menstrual periods
- Painful intercourse

Symptoms that men with chlamydia may have:

- Discharge from penis
- Frequent urination
- Pain or burning when urinating
- Watery or mucus discharge
- Painful, swollen testicles

Q. How is it treated?

A. Health care providers can test for chlamydia easily and it can be cured quickly with antibiotics. Don't have sex until you and your sex partners are done with treatment.

Q. Can it be prevented?

A. You can lower your risk by practicing safe sex and limiting the number of sex partners you have.

Q. Are screenings needed?

A. Yes, screening is a good way to diagnose chlamydia. The CDC recommends screening every year for all sexually active women ages 24 and younger. It also recommends yearly screenings for women older than age 24 who are at higher risk. Men who have sex with men should be screened regularly as well.



Have You Been Screened for Cervical Cancer?

As a woman, it's important to guard against cervical cancer. Thanks to effective testing, deaths among U.S. women from cancer of the cervix are now lower. Screening cannot only catch the cancer in its earliest, most treatable stages, but also prevent the disease by detecting abnormal cells before they can turn into cancer.

Screening guidelines can vary somewhat depending on a woman's health, risk factors, and medical history. In general, the American Cancer Society recommends that women at average risk follow these guidelines:

- Women should begin cervical cancer screening at age 25. Between ages 25 and 65, women should have a primary HPV test every five years.
- If primary HPV testing is not available, screening may be done with either a co-test (Pap test combined with an HPV test) every five years or a Pap test alone every three years.
- Women older than age 65 who have had normal test results for the past 10 years and are not at high risk for cervical cancer should stop screening.

Keep in mind that women at higher risk for cervical cancer may need to be tested earlier and more often. Ask your health care provider when and how you should be screened.



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Ask Member Services

Q. What should I do if I need care outside the Plan service area?

A: If you become ill and need urgent care (non-life threatening), call your primary care provider to have your care authorized and coordinated. If it is after hours, call your clinic's main number to reach the after-hours service. If you have a life- or limb-threatening emergency, seek care as soon as possible. Be sure to notify the Plan within 24 hours or within the next business day of when you receive care.

Suppose you are outside of the United States (OCONUS) and have an emergent or urgent situation. Get care. Then be sure to submit your bills, receipts, and treatment information to Member Services within seven days of return to get reimbursed. If you fail to notify us within the required time period, you may be responsible for the cost of your care.

REMEMBER: Routine or unapproved follow-up care received outside of the service area is not covered.

Q. How do I get my prescriptions filled when traveling?

A: MXP Pharmacy can mail your prescriptions anywhere in the United States. If you are going to be away from home, call MXP in advance.

Allow 14 days for delivery. The number is **1-866-408-2459**. Ask them to set up an alternative mailing address for delivery. The address must be within the United States.

If you receive emergency or urgent care while you are traveling, you might be prescribed a new medication. In that case, you can use any MaxorPlus pharmacy location and pay applicable copayments. If a MaxorPlus pharmacy is not close by, use the nearest pharmacy and pay the full out-of-pocket cost. Be sure to save your receipts and send them to Member Services. You will be reimbursed for the amount you paid, minus any applicable copays.

