

A MEMBERSHIP SERVICE FROM  
THE US FAMILY HEALTH PLAN

Fall 2023

# healthy Lifestyle

 US FAMILY  
HEALTH PLAN  
*at PacMed*

Upgrade  
your habits for  
better health.  
See page 7.

## Appropriate Antibiotic Use

# TRICARE Open Season for 2024: November 13 – December 12, 2023

Open Season is right around the corner. Now is the time to start thinking about your health care needs for 2024. TRICARE Open Season is an annual period when you can enroll in or change your health coverage for the next year. Open Season takes place each fall. During Open Season, you can:

- Enroll in a new TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select plan
- Change your enrollment (for example, switch from individual to family enrollment)
- Enroll in a FEDVIP vision or dental plan (available to certain categories of beneficiaries)

If you are a US Family Health Plan member older than 65, you have a special status. You were grandfathered into long-term membership with us when the federal government changed TRICARE membership standards, provided that you enrolled with USFHP prior to September 30, 2012. Open Season does not apply to you.

Regardless of age, if you are satisfied with your current health care and service, you do not need to act. Your current enrollment with USFHP will be continued automatically.

If you feel that USFHP is a great fit for you, why not refer a friend? We love meeting our members' friends and sharing how USFHP works for military families. To learn more, they can call us at **1-800-585-5883, option 1**. Or visit **usfhpnw.org**.

Thank you for choosing US Family Health Plan for your TRICARE coverage.

## Our Network Is Growing

US Family Health Plan is pleased to announce the addition of the Providence St. Joseph Health Network in California. We are also excited to announce the addition of Providence Medical Group Southeast Washington (Walla Walla) and Kadlec Medical Group in Central Washington.

US Family Health Plan offers an expanding network of providers in Western Washington, most of Central and Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho, Western Oregon, and most of California. To find a provider close to where you live or work, simply visit **usfhpnw.org** and click "Find a Provider." Call Member Services at **1-800-585-5883** to let us know who you would like as your primary care provider.

**988** SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE

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## Lowering Your Breast Cancer Risk

Having regular mammograms can lower your risk of dying from breast cancer, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Catching breast cancer early makes it easier to treat successfully.

The thought of breast cancer may be scary, but you can take steps to protect yourself:

- **Early detection.** Talk with your health care provider about when you should start receiving a mammogram—a kind of X-ray that finds cancer. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening every two years for women ages 50 to 74. The American Cancer Society recommends yearly screening for women ages 45 to 54, then every year or two for women ages 55 and older.
- **Information.** Find out all you can about breast cancer. If your mother, sister, or daughter has had breast cancer, you are at greater risk. Tell your provider about your family history. And ask about other risk factors that may affect you.
- **Prevention.** There are things you can do to lower your risk. For example, women who drink alcohol may be at greater risk than nondrinkers. Even small amounts of alcohol can increase risk. But regular exercise, at least 150 minutes a week, may reduce it.

## Protect Your Health with Annual Exams

Experts say that going for a regular annual exam is a great way to keep you healthy. They also stress that preventive care is one of the most important steps you can take for your health.

A yearly checkup can help you and your provider find problems before they start, which increases your chances for curing them. These exams may also include valuable preventive measures, such as cholesterol screenings and testing for cancer.

During your visit, you and your provider should discuss ways for you to improve your health. In the meantime, be sure to put these screenings and preventive measures on your calendar:

- Breast cancer screening
- Cervical cancer screening
- Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Colorectal cancer screening

Is outpatient care an option for you? Ask your provider how you can make the most of outpatient care services to meet more of your health care needs. Some services include:

- Lab work
- Imaging
- Some surgeries
- Pain management
- Chemotherapy
- Physical therapy
- Cardiac rehab
- Substance use rehab
- Routine medical care
- Screening exams
- Flu shots
- Wound management
- Kidney dialysis
- Mental health care

## Fall Health Observances

### National Pain Awareness Month

The American Chronic Pain Association shines a spotlight on National Pain Awareness Month every September. Find resources and support for better pain management at [acpanow.com](http://acpanow.com).

### Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

For Childhood Cancer Awareness Month this September, view support resources and possible care options at [cancer.gov/types/childhood-cancers](http://cancer.gov/types/childhood-cancers).

### Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

During Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month this September, visit [cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian](http://cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian) to learn about the CDC's Inside Knowledge campaign.

### Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Take a stand this October for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Go to [cdc.gov/cancer/breast](http://cdc.gov/cancer/breast) for advice on risk factors, screenings, and more.

### Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Spread the word about Lung Cancer Awareness Month this November. [Cancer.gov/types/lung](http://Cancer.gov/types/lung) offers valuable materials for prevention, screening, treatment, and research.

### American Diabetes Month

Let's renew our diabetes prevention and management efforts for November's American Diabetes Month. Tips can be found at [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org).

# Appropriate

*People often get chesty coughs or stuffy noses this time of year. They go to the doctor for an antibiotic. But the doctor doesn't prescribe it. It can be disappointing. But it's important to understand why this happens. The main reason: Appropriate use of antibiotics is important to everyone. It impacts you and the entire community.*

## Why Is This So Important?

The doctor prescribes antibiotics to kill the bacteria causing an infection and help you get well. But antibiotics **don't** usually kill just one type of bacteria. They can kill or damage other bacteria. The bacteria they don't kill are stronger. The antibiotic doesn't work on them. So, they can grow and multiply. They become an army of even more powerful bacteria. These bacteria know how to fight the antibiotic. They become what are called antibiotic-resistant germs, or superbugs.

Bacteria move from person to person, people to surfaces, and surfaces to people. If someone takes an antibiotic they don't need, superbugs can develop. Those bugs move around and can enter other people in the community. Not everyone gets sick from them. Many times, the bugs just peacefully co-exist.

But, other times, they do cause an infection and illness. When that happens, doctors can't use standard antibiotics. The standard antibiotics don't work because of resistance.

## What Is Antibiotic Resistance?

When was the last time you saw a TV commercial for a

new antibiotic? Since 2017, only 12 new antibiotics have come on the market. Of these, 10 are basically the same as existing "standard" types of medication. So, if the old ones don't work, the new ones won't either.

Antibiotic resistance is a top public health threat, according to the CDC and the World Health Organization. In the United States, antibiotic resistance causes more than 2 million infections and 23,000 deaths every year. In the Pacific Northwest, for example, most urinary tract infections (UTIs) are caused by the E. coli bacteria. It used to be successfully treated with the Bactrim DS antibiotic. But years of use have caused resistance. Many UTIs are now unresponsive to Bactrim DS. They have to be treated with drugs that are less effective and produce more side effects.

## When Should You Not Use an Antibiotic?

When the illness is caused by a virus, you don't need an antibiotic. Many people request antibiotics when they have a common cold.

# Antibiotic Use

They think antibiotics will help them get better faster. In fact, it is one of the most common reasons antibiotics are prescribed. But science shows that the common cold is caused by a virus. Viruses don't respond to antibiotics. Taking antibiotics for a cold doesn't help. And it promotes antibiotic resistance.

## What Can You Do?

You and your healthcare providers can help reduce antibiotic resistance. Here are a few steps you can take:

**1. Don't use antibiotics for viral infections.** Most runny noses and coughs are caused by viruses, not bacteria. Good examples are the common cold, COVID-19, and the flu. It's tempting to "just take something." But research shows that antibiotics don't improve cold symptoms any better or faster than a placebo.

**2. Push your doctor; ask questions.** It's OK to feel uncomfortable when an antibiotic is prescribed. Don't be afraid to ask your doctor: "What kind of infection do I have?" "Do we know it's bacterial?" "What's the basis of treating me with an antibiotic?" "Will I be creating antibiotic

resistance in my body?" Always pursue a dialogue with your physician.

**3. Don't use antibiotics for certain bacterial infections.** Some bacterial infections, like sinusitis and bronchitis, are not treated with antibiotics at first. Remember, your immune system fights infections first. The human immune system clears these types of infections in the same amount of time with or without an antibiotic.

**4. If you are prescribed an antibiotic, take the entire course of therapy.** Sometimes, antibiotics are necessary. When prescribed, it's important to finish the course as directed. Some people stop taking the antibiotic when they start feeling better. Stopping in the middle of the course can leave a significant amount of bacteria in your body. If they are not wiped out, they can grow stronger and develop into superbugs.

## Being Part of the Solution

Everyone needs to work together to prevent antibiotic resistance. Be an informed patient and health care consumer. If you go to the doctor and appropriately don't get an antibiotic, it's OK. You may be doing your part to keep antibiotics working for serious infections. And you'll help fight one of the most serious public health threats we face today.



## Lemon Lover's Cornish Hens

You can use the lemon-garlic herb mixture with any skin-on or skin-off poultry, but little birds look especially pretty. The flavoring will stick to the meat and you can discard the skin.

### Ingredients

- 2 Cornish hens
- 2 tbsp. lemon peel
- 1 tbsp. fresh rosemary, chopped
- 2 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 to 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tsp. olive oil

4. Cut hens in half and serve with pan juices.

**Per Serving** Serves four. Each serving provides about: 150 calories, 5 g total fat (1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 110 mg cholesterol, 85 mg sodium, 1 g total carbohydrate, 0 g dietary fiber, 0 g sugar, 24 g protein.

### Instructions

1. Remove skin and giblets and cut any visible extra fat from Cornish hens. Rinse inside and out and pat dry.
2. Zest the lemon by lightly grating the lemon peel. Cut the remaining lemon in half and put each half in the cavity of the hens. Add the lemon zest and garlic to the chopped herbs. Mix in the olive oil.
3. Gently rub on the herb mixture, pushing it into the legs. Roast the Cornish hens in a 350-degree oven for about an hour. Meat should be golden and instant-read thermometer should show 180 degrees.



## Lemon-Walnut Green Beans



### Ingredients

- 8 c. small green beans
- cooking spray
- 2 c. sliced green onions
- $\frac{1}{3}$  c. chopped walnuts
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp. chopped fresh or
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tbsp. crushed dried rosemary
- 5 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp. grated lemon rind

### Directions

1. Arrange green beans in a steamer basket over boiling water. Cover and steam eight to 12 minutes or until crisp-tender.

2. Plunge beans into cold water to stop the cooking process; drain.
3. Spray a sauté pan with cooking spray. Over medium-high heat, add green onions and sauté until tender.
4. Add green beans, walnuts, rosemary, and lemon juice; cook, stirring constantly, until thoroughly heated. Sprinkle with lemon rind.

**Per Serving** Makes eight 1-cup servings. Each serving provides about: 80 calories, 4 g total fat (0 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 10 mg sodium, 11 g total carbohydrate, 5 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugar, 3 g protein.

# Healthy Mind & Body: What's the Connection?

Mental health and physical health are two halves of total well-being. When either half is out of whack, it can throw off the other half, too. Here's a look at how your mental health and your physical health work together and against each other.

## How Your Mind Affects Your Body

When you're feeling down, worried, or stressed, it can be tough to focus on anything else. It's harder to keep good health habits on track. You may be more likely to reach for junk food, skip a workout, smoke, or drink too much alcohol.

When you have untreated depression, it raises your risk for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Depression, anxiety, or stress can cause your body to have physiological changes, such as:

- Faster heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Reduced blood flow to the heart
- Higher levels of cortisol (a stress hormone)

Over time, these physical changes and poor health habits can take a toll on your health.

## How Your Body Affects Your Mind

Due to the challenges of physical illnesses, it's common to feel a range of emotions—such as sadness, discouragement, or worry. In some cases, those feelings may deepen into a serious mental health condition, such as depression or an anxiety disorder.

## Keeping Your Overall Well-Being in Mind

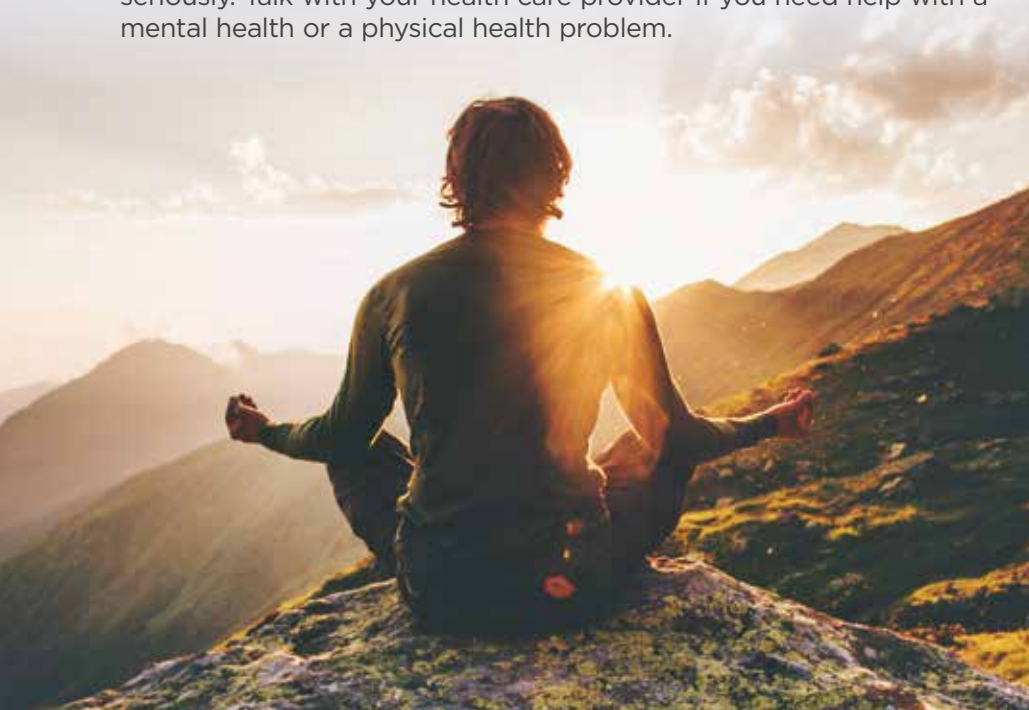
People with both mental health and physical health problems tend to have worse symptoms of each illness. Take both types of conditions seriously. Talk with your health care provider if you need help with a mental health or a physical health problem.



## 3 Ways to Benefit from Better Habits

When we axe our negative habits, our health gets a big boost. Take drinking alcohol in moderation, not smoking, and curbing soda intake, for instance. These three habit changes are associated with a lower risk for chronic diseases and a host of other benefits. Adopting these healthy habits can help you:

- 1. Drop pounds.** By not drinking soda (even diet soda) and alcohol, it's simpler to shed extra pounds. If you smoke, quitting can make exercising easier.
- 2. Spend less.** The costs of alcohol, nicotine, and soda can all add up quickly. You'll save money by cutting out these expenses. You'll be saving on long-term health costs too!
- 3. Sleep sounder.** Alcohol can make you feel drowsy, but you'll get lower quality sleep. Caffeinated sodas can keep you up at night. And people who use tobacco are much more likely to report poor sleep compared with nonusers. Eliminate these habits and you'll sleep better.





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# Ask Member Services

## Q: Where can I get my flu shot?

**A:** You may receive your flu shot from your primary care provider or any MaxorPlus retail pharmacy. You can find a list of MaxorPlus retail pharmacies on our website: [usfhp.azurewebsites.net](https://www.usfhp.azurewebsites.net). Click the drop-down menu under Service Type and select “Pharmacies.” Be sure to bring your US Family Health Plan insurance card to present at time of service.

## 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: My child is getting ready to go off to college. Are they still covered by USFHP?

**A:** While enrolled in college, children may continue to be covered by USFHP until their 23rd birthday or graduation, whichever comes first. The “student status” must be reflected in DEERS, and you will need a letter from the school’s registrar’s office stating that your child is enrolled full time in an accredited college in pursuit of an associate’s degree or higher. Take this letter to an ID card facility to update your child’s ID card.

Your child must receive their care from a USFHP network provider, unless they sign up for a student health plan. In this case, USFHP would be the secondary payer. Emergent and urgent care coverage still applies while your student is away at school.

