

HEALTH MATTERS

A Newsletter for EmblemHealth, GHI and HIP Members

Summer 2011

LET'S TALK HEALTH CARE



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Stay Safe This Summer

Take a few precautions to make the most of the season.

Summertime means fun in the sun. And it also means staying safe in the sun. Try these ways to prevent sunburn and heat-related illness.

Protect Your Skin

Wearing sunscreen should be a daily routine all year long — but especially in the summer, when you may be outdoors for longer periods of time.

The American Academy of Dermatology recommends applying sunscreen to any exposed skin 15 to 30 minutes before you go outside. Pay special attention to your face, ears, hands and arms, and follow package directions about how much to apply. Help kids apply sunscreen correctly.

Use waterproof sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. Look for sunscreen labeled “broad-spectrum,” which means it protects against both the A and B types of the sun’s ultraviolet rays. Reapply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming or sweating. And take special care if you’re on the water or the sand, where direct sunlight and its reflection both send rays toward your skin.

To play it even safer, avoid the sun between 10 am and 4 pm. Seek a shady spot instead. If you must be in the sun, wearing long-sleeved shirts, pants, wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses can help protect you.

Keep Your Cool

Summer’s high temperatures can be dangerous. To prevent heat stroke, the most serious kind of heat-related illness, stay hydrated on extremely hot days. Wearing lightweight, light-colored clothing and avoiding strenuous exercise can help, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Know the signs of heat stroke, such as a high fever, rapid heart rate, nausea, vomiting or headache. If someone has these symptoms, call **911** and move him or her to a cool place to rest. Apply cool water and fan the skin until help arrives.

PRIVACY NOTICE REMINDER

We respect the confidentiality of your health information and we are committed to ensuring that this information is kept private and secure. The Privacy Notice explains how we use information about you and when we can share that information with others. It also informs you about your rights under our privacy practices. To get a copy, visit www.emblemhealth.com, call Customer Service or write to us, as shown below.

EmblemHealth program members

1-877-842-3625
M-F, 8 am-5 pm
Corporate Compliance
PO Box 2878
New York, NY 10116-2878

GHI members

1-800-624-2414
M-F, 8 am-5 pm
Corporate Compliance
PO Box 2878
New York, NY 10116-2878

GHI HMO members

1-877-244-4466
M-F, 8 am-6 pm
Corporate Compliance
PO Box 4443
Kingston, NY 12404-4443

HIP and HIPIC members

1-800-447-8255
M-F, 8 am-6 pm
Corporate Compliance
PO Box 2878
New York, NY 10116-2878

A Better Online Experience

GHI and HIP members now have access to www.emblemhealth.com.

The GHI and HIP Member Web sites are moving to www.emblemhealth.com. Access your same plan and benefits information, while taking advantage of new tools, like care reminders and a treatment cost estimator. We invite you to visit www.emblemhealth.com today and get familiar with its innovative content — designed just for you.

You can **use your current login** to gain quick access to detailed statements and easy-to-understand

explanations about your coverage. Our Web site is loaded with features that make it easier to stay healthy! You can even get personalized information about preventive screenings and take a health assessment. After you take the HRA, you can print out the report, save a copy or e-mail it to your doctor.

Get the most from your health insurance by using these convenient online features. Experience the www.emblemhealth.com difference today.

A Site to See

Visit www.emblemhealthreform.com, our health reform Web site.

Within the Affordable Care Act's 2,409 pages are provisions that will directly affect you and your family for years to come. Our health reform Web site, www.emblemhealthreform.com, lets you know what short- and long-term changes to expect. Already, the federal health reform law has:

- Eliminated cost-sharing for certain preventive services for new plans started on or after Sep. 23, 2010.
- Allowed for the creation of a temporary program to provide health coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions.

- Provided new tax credits for small businesses that offer employees health insurance.
- Begun closing the "donut hole" in Medicare Part D drug coverage.
- Extended coverage for young adult children for plan years beginning on or after Sep. 23, 2010.

In the years ahead, you'll see more changes. EmblemHealth will be here to help. Our new site is full of information and resources to help you better understand what reform means to you. Visit www.emblemhealthreform.com today!

SIGN UP TO GO PAPERLESS

Going paperless is a great way to reduce clutter and organize your coverage information in one safe place. It's easy! Sign up to go paperless today by visiting www.emblemhealth.com and start taking advantage of exclusive online benefits.



Spotlighting Our Shining Stars

EmblemHealth would like to congratulate and thank **Roseann Hoffman** from QLIMG in Richmond Hills and **Amelia Scalici** from PHP in Brooklyn for the exceptional service they provide to our members. Here are comments from letters sent to us about Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Scalici:

M.P. of Ozone Park writes “Roseann lives next door and noticed my husband’s vision problem. She took the time to discuss options with him and recommended a doctor at QLIMG, where she works. Understanding the natural apprehension people feel when faced with surgery, Roseann brought my husband to Dr. Friedman’s office, where the surgery was successfully completed. This is why I commend her to be a Shining Star.”

R.S. of Brooklyn, New York writes: “I would like to commend Amelia for her sunny outlook in frustrating situations. She patiently and thoughtfully assists the patients who come to the office. Amelia is diligent and her positive attitude makes a difference in this center. She is a sensitive and attentive listener. Amelia is a special advocate for the people at the Kings Highway Center. For this reason, I would like to see Amelia made a Shining Star.”

Thank you Roseann Hoffman and Amelia Scalici! To recognize these Shining Stars for their caring and superior service, they have each been awarded a \$100 gift card.



Tell Us About Your Shining Star

Is there a staff member in your EmblemHealth, GHI or HIP network doctor’s office whom you’d like to acknowledge? Tell us about him or her! Mail your thoughts to:

EmblemHealth
Attn: John McConnell
55 Water Street, Sixth Floor
New York, NY 10041-8190

Or e-mail providercomm@emblemhealth.com. Include your name, member ID number, address and daytime phone number. Your letter may be edited for clarity.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Our Quality Improvement Program has a mission to continually improve the medical and behavioral health care and services that our members receive from our network of doctors, practitioners, hospitals and other providers.

We do this by:

- Helping you stay healthy through information in our newsletters and on our Web site. We include screening and prevention reminders and encourage healthy behaviors.
- Helping you get better quickly or live well with chronic illness through our PATH programs. These programs are for members with arthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cancer, coronary artery disease, diabetes, heart failure, kidney disease and rare chronic diseases. We also have a PATH prenatal care program.
- Providing our doctors with tools and resources so that they can deliver the best care.

Please visit

www.emblemhealth.com for more information on our Quality Improvement Program and achievements. GHI PPO members should also visit the ValueOptions® Web site, **www.valueoptions.com** (click the *GHI PPO Members* link below *Spotlight*), for information on their behavioral health quality program and achievements.

TALKING WITH YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT TREATMENT

Has your doctor suggested treatment for your condition? Unless it's an emergency or life-threatening situation, you can and should take time to ask questions. Knowing the answers will help you prepare for and get the most from treatment.

- What are my treatment options?
- Which one do you recommend?
- Is the treatment painful?
- How can the pain be controlled?
- What are the benefits and the risks?
- How much does this treatment cost?
- Will my insurance cover the treatment?
- What are the expected results?
- When will I see results?
- What are the chances the treatment will work?
- Are there any side effects?
- What can be done about them?
- How soon do I need to make a decision about treatment?
- What happens if I decide to have no treatment at all?

For more information, consumer guides to treatment of 15 different conditions are available at www.ahrq.gov/consumer/compare.html.

A Healthy Start To the School Year

It's not too soon to schedule your child's back-to-school well visit.

Summer is a good time for the doctor to assess your child's overall health and development. Be sure to ask if your child's vaccinations are up-to-date. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains that protecting against vaccine-preventable illnesses is one of the most important ways you can keep your child healthy.

If you have a teen in the family, ask his or her pediatrician to administer the free Teen Screen mental health checkup. Also talk to the doctor about lead testing for your young children, especially if you live in an older apartment or home that may have lead-based paint. Lead exposure can cause serious health problems, but it can be treated. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that most children have their blood lead levels checked as toddlers.

Before school begins, don't forget a visit to the dentist. Regular dental checkups and routine care can help prevent tooth decay and identify problems that are easier to treat if they're found early. Your dentist can tell you how often your child should come in, but scheduling an annual back-to-school checkup is a good place to start.





Health Talk **for Guys**

What men need to know about being well.

Every man needs periodic screenings and exams to detect certain conditions early, when they're most easily treated. Your doctor can tell you exactly when and how often you should have each test, but these general guidelines are agreed on by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health.

- **Blood Pressure:** At least every two years and, preferably, once a year, especially if your blood pressure is higher than 120/80 mmHg.
- **Cholesterol:** Once a year starting at age 35 or earlier if you have risk factors such as smoking, diabetes or a family history of heart disease.
- **Sexually Transmitted Diseases:** Ask your doctor if you should be tested, based on your sexual history and activity.
- **Blood Glucose:** Especially if you're overweight or have a family history of diabetes, ask your doctor if you should have your blood glucose levels tested.
- **Overweight and Obesity:** At least once a year, your doctor will check your weight and body mass index (BMI). If your BMI is above 25, talk to your doctor about how to lose weight.
- **Colorectal Cancer:** Starting at age 50, and earlier if you have certain risk factors including a family history. There are several different tests; your doctor will recommend the right one for you.
- **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm:** If you're between the ages of 65 and 75 and have ever been a smoker, ask your doctor if you should have this one-time screening.

During your annual checkup, you should also discuss prostate screenings and testicular self-exams with your doctor, and ask about any vaccinations you may need, such as a flu shot. Be honest about any symptoms you've experienced or changes you've noticed in your health since your last visit. Take advantage of your appointment to discuss any health concerns you have. Your doctor is there to listen, advise and help keep you well.

GET HELP TO QUIT SMOKING

When you're ready to kick the habit for good, our Tobacco-Free PATH program is available to members 18 years and older at no cost. You'll have unlimited access to a tobacco cessation specialist, plus coverage for nicotine replacement therapy. To join, call **1-866-611-QUIT** (1-866-611-7848) or TDD **1-877-777-6534**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

GHI Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HEREIU) and City of New York (employees and retirees) should call the New York State Quitline at **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) or TDD **711**. If you live outside New York State, call the National Quitline at **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669).





HEALTHY MEALS, Healthy Weight

Make nutritious choices on busy days to keep weight under control.

How big is America's obesity problem? Too big. More than one-third of American adults are obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). And more than 15 percent of children and teens are obese.

Overweight and obesity can lead to serious health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and more. But these

risks can be reduced by making sure you and your family stay at a healthy weight. Eating nutritious foods can help you do that.

The CDC recommends eating plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products. Stick to lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts for protein. Avoid sugary drinks, which are high in calories and low in nutrition. It takes

a little advance planning to watch what you eat, especially if you grab something on the go at breakfast and lunch, like a lot of people do.

Try these tips from the American Dietetic Association to boost nutrition while you cut calories — even on the run. And don't forget to pack snacks such as chopped-up veggies, fresh fruit and nuts to keep you away from the vending machine between meals.

BREAKFAST IDEAS

- Mix low-fat yogurt with crunchy cereal and sliced fruit or berries.
- Enjoy a toaster waffle topped with low-fat yogurt and fruit.
- Stuff a whole-wheat pita with a sliced, hard-cooked egg and low-fat shredded cheese.
- Spread almond butter on a whole-grain toasted bagel and top with apple slices.
- Try a peanut butter and banana sandwich on whole-grain bread.
- Mix raisins or dried cranberries into instant oatmeal and top with chopped walnuts.

LUNCH IDEAS

- Roll up fresh or roasted veggies and low-fat cheese or turkey in lettuce leaves or whole-wheat tortillas.
- Keep single-serving packages of crackers, fruit, peanut butter, soup or tuna at your desk.
- Pack a salad for lunch with beans and low-fat cheese for protein.
- Send kids to school with whole-grain crackers, turkey and low-fat cheese.
- If you're buying a sandwich, opt for lean beef, ham, turkey or chicken on whole-grain bread, with mustard, ketchup or salsa. Replace chips or fries with a side salad or fresh fruit.

Is Your Asthma Under Control?

Try these strategies to breathe easier.

If you or someone you love has asthma, you're familiar with the symptoms of an asthma attack, such as wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness or coughing. These symptoms can be brought on by triggers, which are different for everyone, but include dust, molds, outdoor air pollution, pets and secondhand smoke.

The first step to getting your asthma under control is to see your doctor. You can work with your doctor to develop an asthma action plan that will help you manage your condition. This customized plan, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explains, outlines your daily treatment and tells you what to do when your symptoms are more severe. This plan can be downloaded from our Web site, www.emblemhealth.com, by typing *asthma action plan* into the search field. Keep a copy of your plan with you and make sure family members, friends and — in your kids' case — teachers have one, too.

Each person's treatment plan is different. For most people, controller medicine works best to keep asthma under control. According to the CDC, long-term control medicines help reduce the number of asthma attacks you have and may make them less severe — although they won't stop an attack once one starts. Quick-relief medicines help relieve symptoms right away when you're having an asthma attack. Remember to fill all prescriptions and do not stop taking the medicine without speaking to your doctor.

Tell your doctor if you're having a lot of asthma attacks and need your quick-relief medicine more and more often. Your doctor may try different medicines to find a combination that gets your asthma under better control.

And if you smoke, quit! See page 5 to find out about free programs to help you stop.



SAVE MONEY With Online Coupons

EmblemHealth offers coupons for leading brand products and services that can help you and your family save money and stay healthy. The coupons may be used at supermarkets, drugstores and other retailers nationwide.

Go to www.emblemhealth.com, log in and click the coupon icon at the bottom left side of the page. Or, call your plan's Customer Service number (shown on the back page of this newsletter) to request that coupons be mailed to you. New coupons are added regularly.

Celebrating Family Caregivers

Don't forget to take care of yourself.

The Administration on Aging has declared 2011 "The Year of the Family Caregiver," to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the National Family Caregiver Support Program. As part of this celebration, communities around the country will be recognizing the important role family and friends play in caring for loved ones.

If you're a family caregiver, it's also a good time to recognize the impact these efforts can have on you. You're a caregiver if you take care of someone with a chronic illness or disease, manage medications or talk to health care providers on behalf of someone else, or help someone who is unable to perform daily tasks, such as bathing, cooking, chores or paying bills. Being a family caregiver can be physically, emotionally and spiritually

challenging. It may mean juggling work and caregiving duties, making tough decisions or having to ask for help from family and friends.

It's essential to take good care of your own health so you're able to continue serving as a caregiver. Stick to a healthy routine, take breaks and keep up with activities you enjoy. And don't hesitate to seek out support resources that can help ease the load that may sometimes feel heavy.



FAMILY CAREGIVERS: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Care for the Family Caregiver: A Place to Start is a booklet full of resources and tips designed to empower you in successfully navigating through this stressful time with courage and support. Read it online at www.emblemhealth.com/familycaregiver or request a free copy by calling **1-646-447-6285**.

HOW TO CONTACT US

- **EmblemHealth:** 1-877-VIA-EMBLEM (1-877-842-3625)
- **GHI HMO:** 1-877-244-4466
- **GHI PPO:** 1-800-624-2414
- **HIP:** 1-800-447-8255

Quit Smoking

- **1-866-611-QUIT** (1-866-611-7848)
- **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487)
- **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669)

Lab Services

- **Quest Diagnostics Appointments:** 1-888-277-8772

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

- **EmblemHealth CompreHealth HMO/EPO members:** 1-877-347-2552
- **EmblemHealth EPO/PPO members:** 1-866-208-1424
- **GHI PPO NYC-resident members:** 1-800-692-2489
- **GHI PPO non-NYC resident members:** 1-866-208-1424
- **GHI HMO members:** 1-800-836-2256
- **HIP members:** 1-888-447-2526

Suspect Insurance Fraud?

- **1-888-4KO-Fraud**

Web Resources

- www.emblemhealth.com
- www.questdiagnostics.com/patient
- www.valueoptions.com
- www.magellanhealth.com

