

# HEALTH MATTERS

2020, Volume 3



## Healthy Holidays

Being home for the holidays takes on new meaning this season as we prepare to celebrate with friends and family. We may not be able to celebrate our favorite holidays the same way we always have, but we have an opportunity to get creative and start new traditions.

Whether you're hosting or attending, first consider what will make you and other guests feel most comfortable. If you can, find ways to gather outside. If you have to bring the party inside, limit your guest list. Bigger families or friend groups can also break off into smaller gatherings based on location to cut down on travel.

The most important to-do this year is to set expectations. Either on the invitation or over the phone, rules should be communicated ahead of time. When in doubt, don't be afraid to ask questions. For example, you may want to know if you'll be asked to wear a mask or take special precautions. Keep an open mind, be patient with one another, and always have extra supplies like hand sanitizer handy.

Remember, just because you host every year, or you brought everyone's favorite dish last year, doesn't mean you need to do the same this year. Our comfort levels may be different, but there are lots of other ways to feel connected.

If you're staying home, set the mood by decorating the table with your best dishes or try your hand at a family recipe.

The little things are what make this time of year feel so special, no matter where you are.



### Access to a Doctor — Wherever You Are

For updates about telehealth services with your in-network doctor for the rest of 2020 — such as a phone call or virtual visits on Skype, FaceTime, or another type of video exchange — see our Benefit and Care frequently asked questions on [emblemhealth.com/covid19](https://www.emblemhealth.com/covid19). You may have a cost-share to use these benefits, like a copay (the flat fee you pay for certain services such as doctor visits or prescriptions).

For members with a benefit plan that includes Teladoc<sup>®</sup>, you have access to doctors by phone or video to diagnose and treat non-emergency conditions such as cold and flu symptoms, allergies, and more. All of this when you need it, 24/7/365, from the comfort of your home. They can even send a prescription to your local pharmacy. Teladoc copayments have been waived until Dec. 31 for members with this benefit.

## Make the Most of Your Mask



To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, your mask should fit snugly over your face — from the bridge of your nose to under your chin — to prevent germs from entering and leaving as you breathe. The sides should be flat against your cheeks with no gaps. Here are tips on how you can make your mask more comfortable and safe.

**Make your mask fit better.** If it's too large, shorten the ear loops by tying a knot in each loop. Make sure the knot is behind your ear and doesn't pull the top and bottom of the sides together. If it's too small, tie a piece of string to each ear loop and tie the strings together behind your head.

**Prevent your glasses from fogging up** by rubbing dish soap onto both sides of each lens and rinsing off. This will create a clear layer that will reduce temperature changes to your lenses that cause fogging. When wearing your mask, shape the fabric around your nose and place your glasses over the mask.

**Give your ears a break** by attaching a paper clip to the ends of each loop, then pull the loops to the back of your head and fasten together with the clips — like a headband.

Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the latest mask guidance.

## Defend Against Winter Blues

During the winter months, you may feel moody, anxious, or less energetic. It's also common to feel the need to sleep and eat more and be less social. These symptoms are part of a condition called seasonal affective disorder (SAD), or winter blues, that's likely caused by a mismatch between your body's natural rhythms and the timing of sunrise and sunset.

After several months of lockdowns and limited social gatherings, this winter may be especially difficult. You can prevent or relieve SAD by getting the right amount of sleep, eating right, and exercising daily. If those things aren't helping you feel better, talk to your doctor.

## Choose the Right Doctor for You

Choosing the right primary care doctor, who will manage your everyday care, is one of the most important things you can do for your health.

You can begin by searching for in-network doctors who accept your insurance plan by signing in at [emblemhealth.com/sign-in](https://emblemhealth.com/sign-in). Selecting an in-network doctor will usually result in less out-of-pocket costs. You can also narrow your search by doctor type, and select and save a primary care doctor to your account for easy access in the future.

Make sure the office locations and hours of operation fit your lifestyle. Whomever you choose as your doctor, be sure you both communicate often.

## Define This — Referrals

Some insurance plans require that you get permission from your primary doctor to see a specialist. This permission is called a referral. During a public health emergency, EmblemHealth Medicare members do not need referrals to see an in-network specialist. Your 2021 member ID card will have information on whether your plan requires a referral when this public health emergency is over. If you're unsure, call the number on the back of your ID card.

## It's not too late to get your flu shot!



If you haven't gotten this year's flu shot, now's the time. Visit your doctor for your flu shot or go to a local pharmacy. Learn more at [emblemhealth.com/flu](https://emblemhealth.com/flu).

Also talk to your doctor about the **pneumonia** and **shingles** vaccines. Pneumonia is a bacterial infection that can cause many illnesses. If you're over 65, you're at the greatest risk. Shingles is a painful rash on the face or body. If you've had chickenpox, you can get shingles, and your risk increases with age.

## Consider AdvantageCare Physicians\* (ACPNY)

At ACPNY, you can get your flu shot during a regular medical visit or by scheduling a specific flu shot appointment. Go to [acpny.com/flu](https://acpny.com/flu) to schedule an appointment or call **646-680-4227**. For a BronxDocs\* appointment, call **646-680-5200**.

Source: CDC

*\*AdvantageCare Physicians is part of the EmblemHealth family of companies. BronxDocs is an affiliate of AdvantageCare Physicians.*