Avoid the Flu: Get Vaccinated

Having a flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu. It’s especially important if you have a chronic health condition like asthma, diabetes or heart disease, or if you’re over age 65.

It can take about two weeks from the time you get vaccinated for your body to start building the antibodies it needs to protect you from the flu. So, call your doctor today to schedule your vaccination.

Questions?
Call the EmblemHealth Flu Information Hotline at 1-877-859-9001 or visit emblemhealth.com/flu.

Fighting Pneumonia
In addition to being vaccinated for the flu, there is also a vaccine to protect you from pneumonia. It’s called the pneumococcal vaccine. If you have chronic health problems or are over 65, ask your doctor if this shot is right for you.
# Time for a Checkup

Have you had your well visit yet this year? Regular checkups are important at all ages. During your doctor visit, ask which preventive screenings and tests you and your family need to stay healthy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td>• Needed immunizations, including a flu shot</td>
<td>• Six preventive care visits between birth and 15 months</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(birth to age 12)</em></td>
<td>• Body mass index (BMI) with counseling for nutrition and physical activity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Help managing chronic conditions like asthma and diabetes</td>
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<td>• Help managing medications, like those for ADHD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Six preventive care visits between birth and 15 months</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• One preventive care visit annually</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescents</strong></td>
<td>• Needed immunizations, including a flu shot, and by age 13 a meningococcal shot and a Tdap booster shot to prevent tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis</td>
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<td><em>(age 12-21)</em></td>
<td>• Body mass index (BMI)</td>
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<td>• Counseling for risky behaviors such as sexual activity, drug and alcohol abuse, tobacco use and screening for depression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Help managing chronic conditions such as asthma and diabetes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Help managing medications like those for ADHD and depression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• One preventive care visit annually</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adults</strong></td>
<td>• Needed immunizations, including a flu shot and tetanus vaccine</td>
<td>• One preventive care visit annually</td>
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<td><em>(age 18 and up)</em></td>
<td>• Body mass index (BMI)</td>
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<td>• Blood pressure and cancer screenings such as breast, cervical, colorectal and skin, as recommended by the doctor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help managing chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Help managing medications like those for depression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Discuss quitting smoking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One preventive care visit annually</td>
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When you take your children for their back-to-school checkup, be sure they get any needed shots. Don’t forget to schedule an appointment with their dentist, too. Remember, you and your family should get a checkup every year. For more information, visit [emblemhealth.com/preventivehealthguidelines](http://emblemhealth.com/preventivehealthguidelines).

**REMEMBER ABOUT LAB SERVICES**

To ensure coverage, all lab samples should be submitted to Quest Diagnostics laboratories. It's a good idea to remind the technician who performs the lab services.

**Get Coordinated Care at AdvantageCare Physicians**

Team-based care at AdvantageCare Physicians helps ensure all doctors know your care plan. Patients are assigned a personal Care Team of a primary care doctor, nurse, medical assistant and patient service representative — all focused on your optimal care. Visit [acpny.com](http://acpny.com) to schedule an appointment or for more information.
It’s normal for teens to have mood swings. So, it can be hard to tell if your child is just feeling down — or is depressed. That’s why it’s important for all teens to be screened for depression. Screening can be done as part of your teen’s yearly checkup.

If your child is showing signs of depression, the doctor might:

• Refer your teen to a therapist or doctor with special training in helping young people deal with emotional or behavioral problems.

• Talk about medicines or other treatments.

• Order tests to check for other health problems.

Have questions or need a referral? Your doctor may be able to recommend a behavioral health specialist. We can help find you one, too. Call Emblem Behavioral Health Services at 1-888-447-2526, or visit our website at emblemhealth.com/findadoctor.

Get Help for Depression — Medicine May Be an Option

Unlike sadness, depression is a medical condition resulting from a chemical imbalance and can be treated with medications like antidepressants. Ask your doctor what’s right for you.

Medication needs time to work. You may start to feel better in a week or two, but it could take 4 to 8 weeks before you feel the full effects. Ask your doctor what you can expect.

It may be helpful to combine medication with talk therapy. A behavioral health specialist can help patients cope with stress and symptoms as the medicine builds strength in the body.

Tips for taking an antidepressant:

• Don’t stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor first.

• Get a refill before the medicine runs out. Ask your doctor if a 90-day supply is right for you.

• Talk to your doctor if you notice any side effects. You may need another medication or a change in dosage.
Stay True to Your Heart

Heart disease is serious, but you can take control:

- **Follow your doctor’s advice.** Your doctor may recommend lifestyle changes like increased physical activity, reduced salt in your diet and quit smoking.
- **Handle your stress.** Spend time every day doing things you enjoy.
- **Take prescribed medication.** Your doctor may prescribe medicine to lower your blood pressure. Make sure you (1) know how to take it correctly, (2) refill it before you run out, and (3) don’t stop taking this or any other medication without talking to your doctor.
- **Is aspirin right for you?** Ask your doctor about the risks and benefits of daily aspirin therapy.

Together, you and your doctor can decide what’s best for your heart. To learn more, visit heart.org and emblemhealth.com/healthy.

Breathe Deep

Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) affect your lungs and may cause shortness of breath and a cough. While asthma and COPD appear to be alike, the care needed for each is very different. Your doctor may have you take a spirometry test, which measures how much air you breathe in and out and how fast you can breathe out.

Stay healthy by treating your condition and taking medicines as needed.

- **For asthma,** you’ll need to use a long-term controller medicine and a quick-relief rescue medicine.
  - **Long-term controller medicines** are used each day to prevent an asthma attack.
  - **Quick-relief rescue medicines** provide fast relief at the first signs of an asthma attack, but will not prevent an attack.
- **For COPD,** you may need to use a bronchodilator. It will help to relax the muscles around your airway. You may also need an inhaled corticosteroid to get rid of inflammation and avoid flare-ups.

  When you start taking controller medicines, you may not notice a difference right away. It may take a few weeks before the inflammation in your airways is reduced. **Do not stop taking your controller medicine unless your doctor says it’s okay.**

**Have an action plan.** Visit emblemhealth.com/asthma to download and print an Asthma Action Plan. Bring it to your next doctor’s appointment and fill it out together.

To join our free Better Breathing PATH program for COPD, please call 1-888-881-3112, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 7:30 pm; Saturday, 9 am to 7:30 pm. If your member ID has a Montefiore logo, please call 1-866-996-6683.

Provider Directories Are Available

Sign in to emblemhealth.com and follow the links to search our most up-to-date listings for a pharmacy or medical provider. Our online directories are updated daily. Or call Customer Service for assistance locating a provider near you.

We Speak Your Language

Our language translation service offers free phone interpretation in more than 100 languages, including but not limited to Spanish, Russian, Chinese, French, Japanese and Korean. If you need help, please call the Customer Service phone number on the back of your member ID card. Your relationship with your provider is important. When selecting a provider, consider exploring the language spoken in the office and by your provider.
Know the Signs of “Baby Blues”

Bringing home a baby is a joyful time. It can also bring emotional and physical challenges.

For example, some women have “baby blues,” also known as postpartum depression. This condition is caused by changes in women’s bodies and hormones after birth.

It’s normal to have a case of the “blues” that lessens over time — in some cases, even lasting up to six weeks after birth. Seek help if the symptoms last much longer:

- To find a doctor, visit emblemhealth.com/findadoctor or call the number on the back of your member ID card.
- Call the Postpartum Resource Center of New York at 1-855-631-0001 or visit postpartumny.org.
- Call 911 or 311 right away if you feel you may harm yourself or your baby.

Be sure you’re healing properly, too. See your doctor 21 to 56 days after birth.

Support Before and After Pregnancy

At no extra cost, join our Healthy Beginnings PATH program for help from maternity nurse case managers, a 24/7 BabyLine and other resources. Call 1-877-736-2229 once you know you’re pregnant, or up to your 37th week of pregnancy. You can also visit emblemhealth.com/hbpath.

24-Hour Nurse Line

Whether it’s 3 pm or 3 am, you can speak with an experienced, licensed nurse, anytime. Trained registered nurses give you 24/7 access to clinical support for everyday health issues and questions that can save you from an unnecessary trip to the doctor or emergency room. You’ll get confidential, one-on-one health counseling and accurate information to help you make informed health care decisions. And the call is toll free: 1-877-444-7988.
**Leaving the Hospital?**

Before leaving the hospital, your nurse or social worker will prepare discharge instructions explaining the steps you need to take when you get home, such as:

- List of all medications you've been prescribed
- Recommended changes for your daily activities, such as a low-salt diet
- Scheduled doctor appointments, if applicable
- Specialists you may need to visit, like a cardiologist or pulmonologist, if applicable

**Here are some tips:**

- Be sure you understand all instructions. Ask about anything that's unclear, such as unknown medical terms.
- Make doctor appointments as soon as you get home. Following up with doctors within a week of leaving the hospital can lower your chances of being readmitted to the hospital.
- See your primary care physician. He or she needs to know you were in the hospital and about any changes in your health or medications. Then you can work together on next steps.

**Need help making follow-up appointments?**

Call the Customer Service number on the back of this newsletter.

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**Get Smart about Antibiotics**

Antibiotics don’t fight infections caused by viruses like colds, flu, most sore throats, bronchitis, and many sinus and ear infections. They should only be used to fight bacterial infections. Taking antibiotics incorrectly can actually strengthen bacteria, making these medications less effective.

It’s important to use antibiotics sensibly. For example, avoid taking them for illnesses caused by viruses; these conditions are best treated with rest and fluids.

If the doctor prescribes you an antibiotic:

- Don’t skip doses.
- Don’t stop taking the antibiotics early unless your doctor tells you to do so.
- Make sure you understand exactly how to take them:
  - How many times a day?
  - How much time should pass between each dose?
  - Should they be taken with food?
- Finish all the medicine, even after you feel better.

When you use antibiotics the right way, you do the best for your health, your family’s health, and the health of those around you.
Help When You Need It

A registered nurse or social worker (case manager) can help you sort through your health care options. This person will work closely with you and your primary care physician to:

- Help you better understand your disease or condition
- Be a link between you and your doctors
- Connect you to community agencies
- Be your health care advocate
- Offer expert guidance on effective self-care

Do you have a condition that needs a lot of care? Your case manager can help you get the right care, in the right setting.

Think this program may be right for you? Talk with your doctor or call 1-800-447-0768.

Ready to Quit Smoking? Join our Tobacco-Free PATH program. New York State residents please call 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487), nonresidents of New York State, please call 1-877-500-2393. TTY/TDD users should call 711. GHI NY City PPO (active and retirees) should call the National Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

IRS Requirements — The Impact on You

The Affordable Care Act requires most taxpayers to pay a tax penalty if they aren’t covered by health insurance. Health insurers must submit annual filings to the IRS reporting the health coverage of most of their members. This helps the IRS verify whether a taxpayer had coverage during the year and ensure they can match the coverage information reported by health insurers to each taxpayer. This is why it’s important the health insurer have each member’s most current and correct name and social security number on file. EmblemHealth may reach out to you with instructions on how to safely provide this information to us . . . look for more information, coming soon!

Get Appointments in Good Time

To help you get the care you need, when you need it, we set the following guidelines requiring our network doctors to schedule appointments within the given time frames:

- **Urgent care**: within 24 hours of calling your doctor
- **Nonurgent sick visits**: within 48 to 72 hours of calling your doctor
- **Routine mental health care or drug abuse concerns**: within 10 business days of your request
- **Routine care and specialty care**: within 4 weeks of calling your doctor

Want help finding a doctor? Visit emblemhealth.com/findadoctor or call Customer Service at the phone number on the back of your member ID card.

Don’t Miss Out on Important Information

Has your address or contact information changed? Please let us know so you’ll receive communications like benefit changes and incentive checks. If we send something out in the mail and it is returned, we can only reach you if we have the correct telephone number. Sign in to your secure online account at emblemhealth.com or call the number on the back of your member ID card to confirm that we have your correct contact information.
Convenient Access to Your Benefit Information

Are You Registered at emblemhealth.com?
Get started and register today on emblemhealth.com to review your benefits, check on claims, create a personal health record and more.

Go Paperless! Once registered, you can sign up to go paperless and choose which communications to receive electronically. It’s a great way to reduce clutter, stay organized and store your information in one safe place. Once you sign in, select Go Paperless under Tools That Help You.

Our myEmblemHealth mobile app provides easy access to useful benefit and plan information for members, anytime, anywhere:

- Search for a doctor or hospital
- See copay, benefit and claims information
- Access your ID card

Download it today. Available on all iOS and Android devices.

Who’s Caring for You? — our official blog on health and wellness in New York (blog.emblemhealth.com)

HOW TO CONTACT US

- EmblemHealth: 1-877-842-3625
- GHI HMO: 1-877-244-4466
- GHI PPO: 1-800-624-2414
- HIP: 1-800-447-8255
- Child Health Plus: 1-855-283-2146

Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- EmblemHealth CompreHealth
  HMO/EPO: 1-877-347-2552
- EmblemHealth EPO/PPO: 1-866-208-1424
- GHI PPO NYC residents: 1-800-692-2489
- GHI PPO non-NYC residents: 1-866-208-1424
- GHI HMO: 1-888-447-2526
- HIP: 1-888-447-2526

Quit Smoking
- 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487)
- 1-877-500-2392
- 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)

Report Insurance Fraud
- 1-888-4KO-Fraud (1-888-456-3728)

Web Resources
- emblemhealth.com
- questdiagnostics.com/patient (Lab)
- beaconhealthoptions.com (Mental Health)