

# HEALTH MATTERS

Fall 2013

## Give Your Medication Routine a Checkup

Tips for keeping track and staying safe.

**The older you get, the more likely it is that you'll need prescription medicine.** If you take multiple medications, be smart and follow some basic safety rules.

Always stick with the medication plan your doctor prescribed. Take every medication exactly as directed by your doctor or pharmacist.

Forgetting to take medicine for a chronic condition like high blood pressure or diabetes can lead to serious complications. You may need to be weaned off some medications slowly to prevent side effects. If you're prescribed antibiotics, be sure to finish the entire bottle even if you feel better. And keep printed information that comes with your medication in case you need a reminder about dosage instructions.

If you take a lot of medications, keeping track of when and how to take them all can be a challenge. Come up with a system that works for you. Some people like daily pill reminder boxes, especially if they take medications at various times of day. Others use checklists, or set alarms on their phones or computers. Another trick? Turn the bottle upside down after you've taken a daily dose to remind you that you've done it.

Medicine can be expensive. If paying for everything you need is a problem, don't skip doses or split pills. Instead, ask your doctor or pharmacist about generic or combo medicines. Also ask about programs and organizations that can help you get medications at a reduced cost — or even for free.

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The benefit information provided is a brief summary, not a complete description of benefits. For more information, contact EmblemHealth. Limitations, copays and restrictions may apply. Benefits, formulary, pharmacy network, premium copays and coinsurance may change on January 1 each year.

# Get the Most From Your Health Plan



When you feel healthy and you're busy, sometimes it's hard to focus on your health. Think of your health as an investment. A yearly trip to the doctor can help you stay well. So here's a checklist of things you should do.

- See your doctor at least once a year.
- Review your maintenance medicines with your doctor and confirm you are taking them the right way. Tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking including vitamins and over-the-counter drugs.
- Talk to your doctor about how you are feeling so he or she can guide you to services that best meet your needs.
- If you have problems urinating or you had a recent fall, your doctor can help. Make a list of concerns and share them with your doctor.
- Ask to have the next steps in your treatment in writing before you leave the office if you feel it will help you.
- Get your shots. Ask your doctor if you should get the flu and pneumonia shots.
- Call us. We have Customer Service representatives who can speak to you in your preferred language. Just ask.
- Visit us at [www.emblemhealth.com/our-plans/medicare](http://www.emblemhealth.com/our-plans/medicare). Our site has a fresh new look and it's easy to use. You'll get full-site experience from any device (desktop, mobile, tablet). There are fewer clicks to get to where you want to go and you have easy access to doctor searches and pharmacy tools from the homepage.

Your health and satisfaction are important. Please use the benefits available to you through EmblemHealth.

## Annual Review of Your Health and Prescription Needs

Each fall, it is important to review your health and prescription needs because your health, finances or plan's coverage may change. Your plan's Annual Notice of Changes (ANOC) and Evidence of Coverage (EOC), mailed to you by the end of September, can help you with this review. The ANOC will explain how your plan will change next year. Your EOC will give you details about your coverage and how to get the services you need.

You can make changes to your Medicare coverage each year, during the Annual Enrollment Period. When you receive your ANOC and EOC it is important for you to:

- Check the changes to your plan's benefits and costs.
- Check to see if your doctors and other providers will be in your plan's network.
- Check to see if your prescription drugs will be covered.

The Annual Enrollment Period begins October 15 and ends on December 7. If you change your plan, coverage under the new plan will begin on January 1.

If you want to remain in your current plan, you do not have to do anything. Any changes to your plan's benefits or coverage will automatically start on January 1.

# Visit EmblemHealth Neighborhood Care

## We offer you:

- **Face-to-Face Care** — On-site solution specialists, community liaisons, registered nurses and pharmacists to answer your questions and connect you to the resources and care you need. And there's no charge.
- **Blood Pressure and Body Mass Index (BMI) Machines** — So you can get a mini health check. We encourage you to take your printed results to your next doctor's visit.
- **iPads and Touch Screen Computer Panels** — Available to show you how to use technology to stay healthy.
- **Xbox Kinect Stations** — A fun way to keep healthy and engage in different games, including sports and dance, while getting physical activity.
- **Neighborhood Rooms** — A space used to bring the community together, for one of our classes or a meeting held by a local organization.
- **Resource Library** — We have resources to help you eat healthy and support other healthy behaviors as well as resources for caregivers, seniors and others in need.
- **Kid's Corner** — Filled with books, toys and board games.



Pay us a visit at  
215 West 125th Street,  
Harlem or 206-20  
Linden Blvd., Cambria  
Heights, NY. You'll be  
greeted by a friendly  
face, eager to show  
you what care feels  
like! [ehnc.com](http://ehnc.com).

## CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

We want you and your family to live life to its fullest, even if you have a serious illness, injury or condition. That's why we offer programs to assess, plan, implement, coordinate, monitor and evaluate medical and mental health care options on your behalf.

While your primary care doctor is the one who determines your care needs, your plan's case managers can work closely with your doctor to help you make the most of your treatment. As part of the case management program, registered nurses and social workers offer:

- A better understanding of your condition
- A link between you and the doctors and nurses on your care team
- A liaison with community agencies
- A health care advocate
- More personalized attention
- Expert guidance on effective self-care

For conditions that call for a higher level of care coordination, we have case managers to help you get the right care in the right setting. If you think you may be a candidate for our case management program, speak with your doctor or call **1-800-447-0768**.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Yours and Ours

Understanding your rights and responsibilities as a plan member can help you and help us help you make the most of your membership. Visit [www.emblemhealth.com/rights](http://www.emblemhealth.com/rights) and read your Member Rights and Responsibilities. You'll also find it in your Evidence of Coverage. It outlines what you can expect of us as well as what we expect from you. Becoming familiar with your rights and responsibilities will make it easier for us to provide you with access to the best health care possible.

## CALL US

If our Customer Service number is on your speed dial or saved in other places, please check to see if you need to make an update. Our most recent change is to the number for the hearing- or speech-impaired. TDD users should contact us through Telecommunications Relay Services.

For all your Medicare plan needs and direct connection to customer service representatives, call us Monday to Sunday, 8 am to 8 pm.

- HMO: 1-877-344-7364
- PPO: 1-866-557-7300
- TDD: 711



## Skip the Trip to the Drug Store

Save time and make filling prescriptions hassle-free.



Do you know you can have your prescriptions filled right at the doctor's office? That's right — 12 locations of Physician Group Practices (Manhattan's Physician Group, Preferred Health Partners, Queens-Long Island Medical Group and Staten Island Physician Practice, now part of AdvantageCare Physicians) have an EmblemHealth drugstore in the same building! Wait times are shorter than at most retail drugstores and our process for filling prescriptions is quick and easy.

EmblemHealth pharmacies are staffed by friendly, caring pharmacists. They always make a

point to explain your medication and how to take it, provide medication therapy management and show you how to use any medical device your doctor prescribes.

If any of your medicines are not covered by insurance, they work closely with your doctor and health plan to make sure you get the most affordable medication. And you'll find that drug prices are in line with or lower than other retail drugstores.

For EmblemHealth pharmacy locations and hours of operation, please visit [www.emblemhealth.com/pharmacy](http://www.emblemhealth.com/pharmacy).

## Go Paperless

Do you have computer access? If you do, go paperless. Having all your health plan information online is a great way to get rid of clutter, stay organized and keep everything in one safe place. It's also a great way to save trees! Sign up today at [emblemhealth.com](http://emblemhealth.com).

We now have a redesigned myEmblemHealth, so when you sign in, you can search for claims right from your homepage. You can also use one-click tools to access the Message Center, Find a Doctor, Print ID Card, Bill Pay and more. If you're already a paperless member, thank you.

## STAND TALL THIS FALL

No one likes taking a tumble. Here are a few steps to stay steady on your feet.

- Wear shoes that fit properly and have non-skid soles.
- Keep your front steps and walkways clear of fallen leaves, and keep an eye out for them whenever you're walking. Wet leaves can be slippery.
- Even as the days get shorter, stick with a regular exercise program, which can help prevent falls.
- Think twice before climbing ladders to clean your gutters. Raking leaves is a safer activity.

- Timers on your lamps are a great way to keep your home well-lit. Remember to change the settings when daylight saving time begins.

For more tips to prevent falls, enter Steps-4-Safety PATH program in the search window at [emblemhealth.com](http://emblemhealth.com).



### 24-Hour Nurse Line — Speak with a registered nurse, anytime

Whether it's 3 pm or 3 am, you can speak with an experienced, licensed nurse. 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**; TDD: **711** or **1-800-255-0135**.

## EmblemHealth Creates AdvantageCare Physicians

Four New York City and Long Island medical groups joined forces earlier this year to form AdvantageCare Physicians, one of the largest physician-led practices in the New York area. If you receive care at Manhattan's Physician Group, Preferred Health Partners in Brooklyn, Queens-Long Island Medical Group or Staten Island Physician Practice, you have a lot to look forward to.

AdvantageCare Physicians brings together more than 450 primary care and specialty physicians in 39 locations. The introduction of care teams across all locations will help you proactively manage your care and shorten your wait time. Your care team will include

your PCP, a nurse, medical assistant and patient service representative. They will help you get medicines you need and tell you how it should be taken. You'll also get help with medical follow-ups and trips to your appointments, if needed.

Joined by a common mission, AdvantageCare Physicians will continue to improve your coordination of care, health and satisfaction. Plus, you will still be able to see your current health care providers and all insurance plans will continue to be accepted at your medical group.

We're working hard to continue bringing care closer to you and your community.

## QUIT FOR GOOD

Smoking is bad for every part of your body, and causes nearly one in every five deaths in the United States.

Smoking can lead to serious illnesses including heart disease, stroke and lung diseases like emphysema, chronic bronchitis and COPD. It also contributes to more than 10 different kinds of cancer. Smoking can even decrease bone density and increase the risk of fractures in older women.

Smoking just isn't worth it. And since it's not an easy habit to kick, you should ask for help so you can quit for good.

Talk to your doctor about smoking cessation resources, including support groups and nicotine replacement. Or join our Tobacco-Free PATH Smoking Cessation program, which offers members coverage for smoking cessation medications, plus ongoing support, including a customized quit plan, around-the-clock phone counseling, educational materials and more. Call **1-866-611-7848** to enroll.

## BETTER BACKS

Simple home remedies can relieve your aching back.

**H**as this ever happened to you: You tried to lift something too heavy or overdid it playing with the grandkids and wound up with low back pain?

Many factors can contribute to low back pain, including poor posture, being overweight, injuries, osteoporosis and arthritis.

If your aching back is getting you down but you're not in serious pain, you might try some home remedies, first. Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medicine can help, as can the use of ice packs for the first couple of days followed by heat therapy, like a hot water bottle or warm baths.

Bed rest for a day or two may help, but exercises like stretching, swimming or walking can be beneficial, too. If your back starts acting up within 15 minutes, it's time to stop.

If your symptoms don't go away after three days, visit the doctor. Go sooner if you have pain along with a fever or loss of bowel or bladder control, progressive leg weakness or pain when coughing. Also call your doctor right away if you have diabetes and develop pain radiating down your leg. The sooner these symptoms are diagnosed and treated, the better.

## F is for Fall (and Flu)

Older adults are at higher risk of getting the flu this time of year. That's because your immune system weakens with age. Getting the flu can lead to serious, life-threatening illnesses. Your best defense is an annual flu vaccine.

Get a flu shot or spray as soon as it's available. There are two kinds available, so ask your doctor whether the regular vaccine or the high-dose vaccine designed specifically for people over age 65 is the best choice for you. To find out how to get a flu shot, call the EmblemHealth Flu Hotline at **1-877-859-9001**.

While you're at it, talk to your doctor about getting a pneumonia vaccine. Most people over age 65 need to be vaccinated only once, but your doctor may recommend a periodic booster shot.

And simple steps like washing your hands often can help you stay healthy.





## Eat Well for Less

Seasonal produce is healthy and affordable.

**Y**ou know eating veggies and fruits are good for you. Do you know that seasonal produce is more than nutritious? It's cost-effective, too. When you choose produce in season, you can often find locally grown goodies to buy. Especially around harvest time, bargains may be bountiful at produce stands and farmer's markets.

Plus, produce is fresher when it doesn't have to travel far. Produce is highest in vitamins, minerals and other nutrients at its peak of freshness.

Some fall favorites include apples, pears, grapes, pomegranates, broccoli, corn and Brussels sprouts. Butternut squash and acorn squash are other great options, along with sweet

potatoes, parsnips and carrots. And get your fill of onions and garlic — they can help boost your immune system.

When you visit a produce stand or farmer's market, be adventurous. See something you've never tried before? Ask about it. The seller will be glad to educate you and may even have recipes to share.

How you prepare your food can make a difference, too. Some experts believe there's a biological reason our bodies crave warm food in winter and refreshing treats in summer. Try roasting and baking, or put your wonderful fall produce into soups and stews for an easy but hearty meal.

## HOW ARE WE DOING ?

**Are you satisfied with your membership?** Are you receiving outstanding customer service? Do you think there are ways we can serve you better? Your answers to these questions will help us improve the service we give you.

Share your views by coming to one of our member forums. You can tell us about your experiences as a member and ask questions of management and Member Council representatives.

To make sure the entire membership is well-represented, we use age, gender, location and type of membership when selecting attendees. Due to space restrictions, we have to limit attendance. If you'd like to participate, call **1-800-447-6688**, Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm, starting September 16 through October 22. TDD users may call **711**.

To view the dates and locations of our upcoming forums, visit **[www.emblemhealth.com/forum](http://www.emblemhealth.com/forum)**. If you are selected to attend, you will receive an invitation by mail.



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HEALTH OR WELLNESS OR PREVENTION INFORMATION



## New Name — Same Value

Later this year, Davis Vision will be refreshing its company-owned retail stores, stocking up on the latest frames — and changing its name to Visionworks. For members who have their optical coverage through Davis Vision, this means you will soon have access to a national network of more than 37,000 vision locations.

All Visionworks stores offer designer and exclusive brand

frames, lenses, sunglasses and accessories, along with leading technology in vision correction. Their complete range of services includes contact lens dispensing, in-store labs with one-hour service and doctors of optometry at or next to every store.

For more information about Visionworks or to find a location near you, visit [www.davisvision.com](http://www.davisvision.com).

## Preventive Health Guidelines

Learn about all the exams and immunizations you and your family need to stay well. Visit us at [www.emblemhealth.com/preventivehealthguidelines](http://www.emblemhealth.com/preventivehealthguidelines). Visit the site often to stay on track with your health. And discuss the guidelines with your doctor to make sure you and your family get your recommended exams and immunizations.

HIP Health Plan of New York (HIP) and Group Health Incorporated (GHI) are Medicare Advantage organizations with a Medicare contract. HIP and GHI are EmblemHealth companies.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

### Customer Service

**PPO: 1-866-557-7300**

**HMO: 1-877-344-7364**

Ask to speak with someone in your preferred language.

Monday to Sunday, 8 am to 8 pm

### Tobacco-Free PATH Program

**1-866-611-7848**

**TDD: 1-877-777-6534**

### Lab Services — Quest Diagnostics

**1-888-277-8772** (appointments)

**1-866-697-8378** (customer service)

### Mental Health and Substance Abuse

**Emblem Behavioral Health Services Program (EBHSP) for HMO members:**

1-888-447-2526

**ValueOptions for PPO members:**

1-866-318-7595

### PATH Program

**1-866-447-8080**

### Report Insurance Fraud

**1-888-4KO-Fraud** (1-888-456-3728)

For TDD help, any of the above numbers can be reached by calling NYS Relay Services at **711**.

### Web Resources

[emblemhealth.com/our-plans/medicareexpress-scripts.com](http://emblemhealth.com/our-plans/medicareexpress-scripts.com)

(mail order pharmacy)

[questdiagnostics.com](http://questdiagnostics.com)

(lab services)

[valueoptions.com](http://valueoptions.com)

(behavioral health services)