

## Flu Complications

Most people who get influenza (flu) will recover in a few days to less than two weeks. Some people will develop complications as a result of the flu. The flu can make chronic health problems such as asthma and COPD worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu.

Examples of flu complications include:

- Pneumonia
- Bronchitis
- Sinus and ear infections

### Who is at risk?

Anyone can get the flu, even healthy people. Serious problems from the flu can also happen at any age. Some people are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications. These include:

- People 65 years and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions such as:
  - asthma
  - COPD
  - Heart Disease
  - Diabetes
- pregnant women
- young children

### How do I reduce my risk?

Flu is unpredictable and how severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next. Take the necessary steps to prevent from getting the flu. Start by getting the flu shot. The flu shot can reduce your risk of getting the flu. People you live with should get a flu shot too. Then they won't increase your chance of getting the flu.

Here are other tips that can help you stay healthy this flu season:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home and rest.

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This newsletter is part of a Disease Management Program. If you do not want to get this or be part of any Disease Management Program please let us know. Call us at 1-866-891-2320.

### Need Help to Quit Smoking?

Molina members can take part in a quit smoking program. It is free to Molina members. Call our Health Education Team at 1-866-472-9483.

### Need Help Losing Weight?

Molina members can enroll in a weight loss program. It is free to you. To join, call our Health Education Team at 1-866-472-9483.

### Do You Speak a Language Other Than English?

You have a right to an interpreter (including sign language). There is no cost to you. Please call our Member Services department, 1-888-665-4621 (TTY/TDD 1-800-479-3310), Monday – Friday, 7:00 am – 7:00 pm for more information.

All material in this newsletter is for information only. This does not replace your doctor's advice.

To get this information in other languages and accessible formats (Braille, Audio and Large Font) please call Member Services at 1-888-665-4621.

Keeping your blood sugar in a healthy range can be hard. We can help. Call 1-800-730-9887 to get set up with our FREE home delivery service. Our partner, Advanced Diabetes Supply, can deliver your diabetes supplies right to your home every month!

## Important Tests to Keep in Mind

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a broad term that describes diseases of the heart and blood vessels. Blood tests can check the state of your CVD. It can also tell how well your treatment plan is working. Some of the blood tests are listed below. Knowing a little bit about these tests is a good way to take part in managing your CVD. Your provider can tell you which test you need and why. The more you know about your condition the more you can do to stay healthy.

1. C-reactive protein (CRP) is one test. CRP is made by your liver when there is inflammation in your body. Inflammation plays a part in atherosclerosis. This is when fatty deposits clog your arteries. High levels of CRP are linked to a higher risk of heart attack and stroke.
2. A lipid panel (also known as a cholesterol test) tests the amount of fat in your blood. It has three (3) parts.
  - a. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) carries cholesterol from your liver to the rest of your body. Too much LDL means fatty deposits end up in your arteries. This can lead to plaque and reduce blood flow.
  - b. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) carries cholesterol back to your liver so your body can get rid of it. A high HDL level is a good thing.
  - c. Triglycerides are another type of fat in the blood. High levels raise your risk of heart disease. Total cholesterol means a sum of your blood's cholesterol.
3. Brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) is made by your heart and blood vessels. It sends messages to your kidneys. It tells your kidneys that it is okay to get rid of sodium. Your body will secrete high levels of BNP into your blood when your heart is damaged. BNP levels can tell the progress of heart failure treatment.



## Holiday Eating Strategies

During the holiday season it can be hard not to eat sugary treats. Just how do you avoid gaining a few extra pounds AND keeping your blood sugar under control? It is not easy but it can be done.

Here are a few tips for treating yourself without getting out of control:

- Plan ahead and save your calories for parties.
- If you are going to a party, bring a low calorie dish to share.
- Don't forget to exercise. It will help burn off those extra calories and lower your blood sugar.
- Check your blood sugar more often. This will help make sure that you are staying in your target range.
- Don't go to a party on an empty stomach. Have some yogurt or other low fat snack. Drink a large glass of water with it.
- Don't make it harder for yourself by keeping tempting foods around the house.
- Follow your diabetes meal plan.

- Use less sugar when making baked goods. No one will know the difference!
- Socialize away from the food table.
- Use a smaller plate at parties to ensure that you eat smaller portions.
- Do some extra walking to help make up for extra calories.

You are in control of what you eat. You don't have to eat what is handed or offered to you. With these suggestions you can eat and have fun while keeping your blood sugar under control.



## Diabetes and CVD

If you have diabetes, you are at risk of having cardiovascular disease (CVD). That means that your chances of having a heart attack or stroke are high. In addition, many people with type 2 diabetes also have high blood pressure, high cholesterol and are obese. These add to the risk of CVD. If you have diabetes and you smoke, it doubles your risk of CVD.

The good news is that you can lower your risk. The first step is to know what your risk factors are. These include smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high blood sugar. Other risk factors include overweight or obesity, lack of activity, and a family history of CVD. The next step is to reduce your risk. Some factors you cannot help, like your age and family history. But others you can do something about.

The National Diabetes Education Program encourages people with diabetes to control their ABCs:

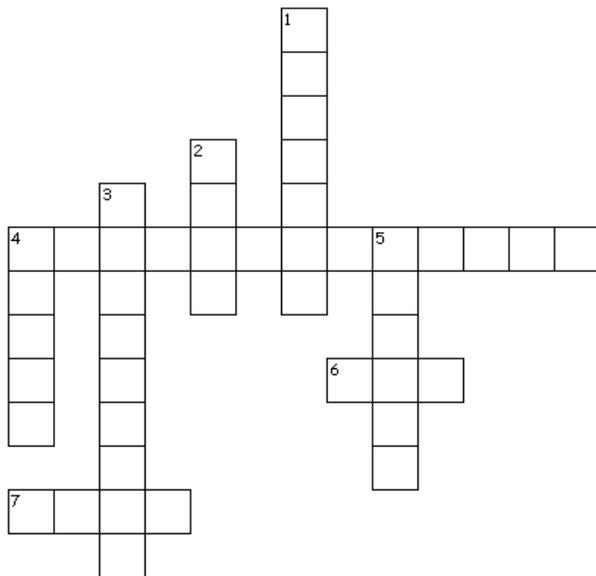
**A** is for A1C. Aim to keep your A1C (average blood glucose) test less than 7%.

**B** is for blood pressure. Aim to keep yours less than 130/80 mmHg.

**C** is for cholesterol. Aim for LDL less than 100 mg/dl.

Just how do you do all that? Add some activity to your day. Make healthy food choices. Choose low fat dairy, lean meats and whole grains. Stop smoking. Take your medicine as prescribed. Your efforts will make a difference! That's something to be proud of!

## What Do I Know About the Flu?



Test your knowledge of the flu by completing the puzzle on the left. Here are your clues:

### Across

4. If you can't wash your hands, you can also use alcohol-based \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Another name for influenza is the \_\_\_\_.
7. Use warm water and \_\_\_\_ when washing your hands.

### Down

1. Another name for the flu vaccination is the flu \_\_\_\_.
2. Another way to prevent the flu is to \_\_\_\_ your hands often.
3. If you get the flu, your doctor may prescribe you \_\_\_\_\_ drugs.
4. Clean your \_\_\_\_ often.
5. You should wash your hands for \_\_\_\_ seconds.

### Answers:

Across: 4. HANDSANTITIZER, 6. FLU, 7. SOAP Down: 1. VACCINE, 2. WASH, 3. ANTIVIRAL, 4. HANDS, 5. TWELVE

## Tips to Remember to Take Your Medicine

Do you forget to take your medicines? You are not alone. Here are tips to help you remember to take your medicine.

**Put your pills where you will see them.** For example, if you take a pill with breakfast, put your pills on the breakfast table.

**Put a reminder note where you will see it.** For example, put a note on your coffee cup or the bathroom mirror if you take the medicine in the morning.

**Get a pill box.** They come in many sizes and shapes. Your pharmacist can help you choose one.

**Set an alarm.** Use an alarm clock or set the alarm on your phone, watch, or computer.

**Ask for help.** Ask family or friends to remind you, especially when you first start taking the medicine.

**Mark your medicine bottles with different colors.** For example, blue for morning, green for midday and red for evening.

**Make sure to keep a list of all your current medicines.** Keep this list with you at all times in case of an emergency. At least once a year, be sure to review all your medicines with your doctor. This helps make sure that you:

- Take the medicines you need.
- Stop taking the ones you no longer need.
- Are taking medicines that are safe to take together.
- Keep the list updated.

Medicines are an important part of your treatment plan. Not taking them can affect how well your condition is managed.

## Sneak in Some Exercise

During the holiday season you might be extra busy. There is shopping to do, parties and school plays to attend and holiday decorations to put up. On top of all that, you have to manage your diabetes. It's easy to put yourself last.

Exercise is a great way to relieve stress. Exercise has many benefits such as:

- Keeps your heart strong
- Lowers your blood sugar
- Relieves arthritis pain
- Controls your weight
- Improves your mood

Getting in exercise does not mean that you have to give up hours of your day or become an athlete. Here are some tips on how to sneak exercise into your day:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Don't wait for the parking spot up front. Park farther away and walk.
- Do some gentle stretches.

- Take the dog for a walk, or catch up with a friend over a walk around the block.
- Do some squats or leg lifts while you wait for the food to cook.
- Do some arm lifts while you watch your favorite TV show. Use cans of soups or bottles of water for weights.
- Be active as a family. It's a great way to spend quality time together and be a good role model.

Being active is anything that gets you up and moving. Find out what it is that you enjoy. The goal is to get moving. A good way to keep you going is to track how much exercise you've added to your daily routine.

Keep track of:

- What you do
- When you do it
- How long you do it

Make sure to ask your provider which activities are ok for you. Remember, a little bit here and there really adds up.



_____ 's Exercise Log				
Date	Minutes	Activity	Who Joined Me	How I Felt After



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## Questions About Your Health?

*Call Our Nurse Advice Line!*

English: 1-888-275-8750

Spanish: 1-866-648-3537

**OPEN 24 HOURS!**

Your family's health is our priority!

For the hearing impaired, please call

TTY (English): 1-866-735-2929

TTY (Spanish): 1-866-833-4703

or 711