



# HEALTH Partners TALK

PUBLISHED FOR MEMBERS OF HEALTH PARTNERS

Domestic violence

## Your doctor can help



Did you know that nearly one-third of American women will experience abuse by an intimate partner during their lifetime? Or, that domestic violence is the leading cause of female homicides and injury-related death during pregnancy. Looking beyond the physical harm, domestic violence is connected to risk factors for chronic health problems. Women with a history of abuse and children raised in violent homes are more likely to experience a wide array of physical and mental health problems, ranging from stomach trouble, smoking,

substance abuse and obesity to serious depression.

Talk to your doctor or health care professional if you feel frightened in your home. Early identification of domestic violence can help victims escape before the violence gets out of control. Your doctor

can help you think about your options before things get worse. Victims of domestic violence say that the most important factor in talking with health care providers was being listened to about the abuse. Give your doctor a chance to help.

Domestic violence is an important health care issue. Talk to your doctor about domestic violence—it could save your life.

If something about your relationship scares you or you are worried about your children and you need to talk, call us.

### National Domestic Violence Hotline



● 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

● 1-800-787-3224

(TTY for the deaf)

● [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

Help is available in English and Spanish and many other languages. All contact with the hotline is free and confidential.

## How to keep healthy We want to help!

As a woman, you mean so much to so many people. Because someone cares about you or may depend on you, it is important that you take care of yourself.

From prenatal care during pregnancy to mammograms as you age, at every stage in your life, routine doctor visits and preventive health screenings will help you live a healthier and longer life.

### Prenatal Care

Prenatal care is the health care you need to make sure you have a healthy pregnancy. It is health care during your pregnancy before your baby is born. As soon as you find out that you are pregnant, you should begin prenatal care. It is important for you and the health of your baby. The earlier you get prenatal care, the better chance your baby has to be healthy.

### Postpartum Care (Checkups After Delivery)

Checkups after delivery are

important for every mother and every newborn. Doctor visits do not stop once you've had your baby.

To keep both you and your baby healthy, you will need to schedule a doctor's visit for both you and your baby after you have your baby.

### Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Screening

STDs are among the most common diseases in the United States. STDs are diseases that you get from having unprotected sexual contact (vaginal, oral or anal) with someone who already has an STD.

**It is very common for women to have an STD without having symptoms (signs).**

Not getting treated early can cause serious problems, like infertility (not being able to get pregnant). Some STDs can also be passed, during pregnancy or birth, to a baby.

It is important for women to

learn about STDs—the ways they are spread, their symptoms, how they can be treated and how they can be prevented. There are a number of tests for STDs. And the only way to be sure that you do not have an STD is to see your doctor for testing.

### Cervical Cancer Screening (Pap Test)

A Pap test is the test used to check for cancer of the cervix, the opening of a woman's womb. The Pap test can find cancer early. If it is found in its early stages, it can be easier to treat.

### Breast Cancer Screening (Mammogram)

A mammogram is the test used to check for breast cancer. The test is used to find breast cancer earlier than waiting to find a lump. If breast cancer is found in its early stages, it can be easier to treat.

At Health Partners, we understand that a Pap test and mammogram can be a little uncomfortable. But cancer treatments can take months and are much more uncomfortable. Take some time out for yourself and get screened. It may save your life!

The "Women's Keeping Healthy Quick Guide" at left lists when you should receive preventive health screenings. These screenings are covered under your Health Partners benefits. If you have any questions, call your doctor for more details. Health Partners has brochures on health concerns just for women. If you would like a brochure mailed to you, please call the Member Relations department at **1-800-553-0784** or **(215) 849-9600**.

The Member Relations department can also help you find an office where you can get a mammogram.

## Women's Keeping Healthy Quick Guide

Pregnant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ One visit a month for the first six months</li> <li>■ Two visits a month during month seven and month eight</li> <li>■ One visit a week at month nine until delivery</li> </ul>
Just had a baby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The first visit is for the baby—two to four weeks after birth.</li> <li>■ The second visit is for you—three to eight weeks after you have your baby.</li> </ul>
STDs (sexually transmitted diseases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Testing for STDs should be done every year, starting at age 15, for anyone who is sexually active.</li> </ul>
Cervical cancer screenings (Pap tests)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A Pap test should be done every year, starting about three years after you become sexually active but no later than age 21.</li> <li>■ Ages 21 to 29. You should have the Pap test every year.</li> <li>■ Age 30 years or older. Every year for three years in a row. If the results are normal, then you should have the test every three years. If the results are not normal, you should continue to have the test every year.</li> </ul>
Breast cancer screenings (mammograms and breast exams)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If you are 20 or older, you should do a monthly breast self-exam and call your doctor if you notice a change or feel a lump.</li> <li>■ Between ages 21 and 39, you should have a breast exam by a doctor at least every three years to detect any problems.</li> <li>■ If you are 40 or older, you should have a breast exam by a doctor and a mammogram every year.</li> </ul>



## Steps to take if you get a bill

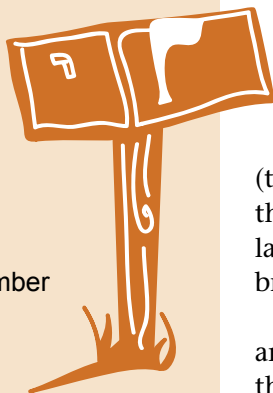
Sometimes, by mistake, you may get a bill in the mail from your hospital or doctor. If this happens, here's what you need to do.

If you do get a bill:

1. Open it right away.
2. Do not pay it. Just write "Health Partners" and your Health Partners identification number on the bill.
3. Mail the bill back to the office that sent it to you. The address of the office is usually in the upper left-hand corner or lower right-hand corner of the bill.

If you follow these steps right away, you should not receive any more bills for your health care, as long as you are going to Health Partners participating doctors, specialists, hospitals and pharmacies.

If you do get another bill for your health care, or if you have questions about what to do when you get a bill, call Health Partners' Member Relations department at **1-800-553-0784** or **(215) 849-9600**.



# Keeping an eye on diabetes

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that affects your pancreas, an organ in your body that produces a hormone called insulin. Insulin helps the sugar from food get into your body's cells.

When you have diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin or can't use the insulin it does make. This usually makes you feel tired, thirsty and unable to see well.

## What is diabetic retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy (dye-a-bet-ik ret-i-nop-a-thee) is an eye disease that can be caused by having diabetes.

Diabetes can cause damage to the blood vessels (veins) that send blood to the retina (the seeing part at the back of the eye). These veins may grow larger and leak fluid, or they may break and bleed.

Diabetes can also cause new and abnormal veins to grow in the eye.

If left untreated, these changes can cause vision problems or blindness. Having diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in the

United States. There are no signs until it is serious.

Because diabetes can affect your vision, it is important that you take good care of your eyes.

*For more information, call (215) 991-4252.*

## What can you do?

If you have diabetes, it is important that you see your doctor regularly.

- Get your eyes checked at least once a year.
- Get your blood sugar checked on a regular basis.
- Exercise safely.
- Eat the right foods.
- Ask your doctor about your A1C test.

At Health Partners, we have diabetes disease management, quit smoking and fitness programs that can help you get started.

For more information, please call our Disease Management Department at **(215) 991-4252**.

If you keep an eye on your diabetes, you can enjoy years of good health and good vision.

## See your PCP every year

Here at Health Partners, we want to do all we can to help you and your family stay healthy. That's why we ask that you and every member of your family see your primary care provider (PCP) **at least once every year.**

Your PCP can help you with vaccinations (shots) for your children, and tests and checkups for you and your spouse. These visits with your PCP are important to test for things you can't see, such as diabetes,

high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

Your PCP can also help you manage any health problems you may have. So make an appointment to see your PCP.

Remember, the things you can't see can still hurt you, so make sure that you and your family see your PCP at least once every year.



## Call your PCP if you can't keep your appointment

Always try to keep your appointments with your PCP. Sometimes things come up and you can't keep your appointment with your PCP. If you have to cancel, please be sure to call your PCP as soon as possible and let him or her know that you cannot come in for your appointment. Please try to call your PCP at least the day before your appointment if you can.

It's important that your PCP know ahead of time if you can't keep your appointment. If you call your PCP ahead of time, he or she will be able to see another patient. This not only helps your PCP but another person as well.

## Take care of your teeth

Good dental care can help you keep your teeth for a lifetime. Remember to brush your teeth at least twice a day, and floss your teeth every day.

See your dentist twice a year for a checkup and cleaning. Your dentist can spot any problems with your teeth and work with you to help fix them.

If your gums bleed when you brush or floss, tell your doctor or dentist.

Taking good care of teeth begins early. If you have a child, remember good dental care begins when your baby is an infant.

You can brush your baby's teeth with water (not toothpaste) as soon as your baby gets his or her first tooth. Ask your doctor to examine your baby's mouth and gums at each regular checkup.

If you need help making an appointment or finding a dentist, please call Member Relations at **1-800-553-0784** or **(215) 849-9600.**



If you need help reading this information, please call the 24-hour Health Partners Member Relations line at 1-800-553-0784 or (215) 849-9600.  
Si necesita ayuda para leer esta información por favor llame a la línea del Departamento de Servicios para los Miembros de Health Partners, disponible las 24 horas, al 1-800-553-0784 o al (215) 849-9600.  
សំណួរអ្វីមួយអំពីព័ត៌មាននេះ សូមទាក់ទងទៅ Health Partners Member Relations តាមលេខទូរស័ព្ទ 1-800-553-0784 ឬ (215) 849-9600  
Nếu quý vị cần giúp đỡ để hiểu thông tin này, xin vui lòng gọi đường dây Liên Hệ Hội Viên Health Partners 24 tiếng tại số 1-800-553-0784 hoặc (215) 849-9600.  
Если Вам нужна помощь в прочтении данных информации, пожалуйста, позвоните, пожалуйста, в круглосуточную Службу Сервиса для членов организации по телефону 1-800-553-0784 или (215) 849-9600.  
您如果不諳此通知，請致電 Health Partners Member Relations，電話號碼：1-800-553-0784，(215) 849-9600。  
**TTY/TDD: 1-877-454-8477 or (215) 849-1579**



HEALTH PARTNERS TALK is published for the members of HEALTH PARTNERS, 833 Chestnut St., Suite 900, Philadelphia, PA 19107, telephone 1-800-553-0784, [www.healthpart.com](http://www.healthpart.com).

Information in HEALTH PARTNERS TALK comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

Editor **Teresa Mulligan**

[www.healthpart.com](http://www.healthpart.com)

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## Use 911 for "REAL EMERGENCIES" Only – and Help Save Lives!

If you have a medical emergency, you know you can dial 911 for help, and a Fire Rescue ambulance will come to take you to the hospital. But what is a "REAL EMERGENCY?"

Last year, the Philadelphia Fire Department's Fire Rescue service responded to 200,000 telephone calls requesting an ambulance. Of those, 50,000 calls – one-quarter of the total – were for ambulance services that were not a "real emergency." Sometimes, an ambulance was requested just to go get a prescription filled!

In a real emergency, minutes, even seconds, can make the difference between life and death. If Fire Rescue is taking care of your possible broken finger, then they cannot at the same time take care of your neighbor's heart attack.

### When should you dial 911?

- For a life-threatening medical condition that starts suddenly, and is acute (strong and sharp). Some examples are:
  - ✓ Severe chest pain
  - ✓ Trouble breathing
  - ✓ Heart attack
  - ✓ A lot of bleeding or hard-to-stop bleeding
  - ✓ Poisoning/Overdose
  - ✓ Pain or bleeding while you are pregnant, or if you are in labor and have no other means to get to a hospital
  - ✓ Choking
  - ✓ Unconscious
  - ✓ Cardiac arrest
  - ✓ Stroke
  - ✓ Fall from a high place

### When should you not dial 911?

- For a non-emergency medical condition that does not require immediate medical attention. Some examples are:
  - For routine medical check-ups like blood pressure
  - Paper cuts
  - Get "checked out" for documentation for a lawsuit
  - To get prescriptions filled
  - Frequent aches and pains
  - Provide routine supplies such as: Band-Aids; Tylenol; Doctor's notes; Oxygen tanks; or Sugar test strips

When you dial 911 for a medical emergency, Fire Rescue will take you to the hospital if you need to go. However, some things to keep in mind about Fire Rescue are:

1. **Arriving at the Emergency Room (ER) by Fire Rescue does not mean that you get moved up in the line and get treated faster.** The hospital ER staff must treat the most severe cases first. It does not matter whether you walk-in, or whether you come in by private auto or Fire Rescue. Call your doctor first or go to the clinic. This may prevent you from spending a lot of time in the ER for "non-emergencies".
2. **Fire Rescue does not take you to the hospital you choose.** Fire Rescue takes you to the **closest** hospital that can handle your **serious** life-threatening condition. In these cases, minutes, even seconds, count. You go to the closest hospital, where you are treated, and then, you can be transferred to the hospital of your choice. **Maternity patients** will be taken to the **closest** hospital that handles maternity. This may not be the hospital where you are registered, or where your doctor practices. Therefore, make private arrangements in advance, and you will be able to get where you want to go.
3. **Fire Rescue does not provide routine services, which do not require transportation to the hospital.** Fire Rescue **does not** come to your house to **just** check your blood pressure. They also do not provide routine supplies such as Tylenol, Band-Aids, sugar test strips, oxygen tanks, or doctor's notes. Fire Rescue cannot fill your prescriptions or provide transportation to get your prescriptions filled.
4. **Fire Rescue does not provide documentation to further lawsuits.** Fire Rescue's responsibility is to respond to life-threatening emergencies. Use other resources besides the 911 system if all that is required is documentation.
5. **Fire Rescue does not provide transportation to medical appointments.** Fire Rescue transports patients to the ER not to Dialysis Centers or doctor's offices at hospitals. Other alternatives are available such as (1) SEPTA, (2) Paratransit, (3) private auto, (4) taxi or (5) private ambulances within the City of Philadelphia.

**Remember, use 911 wisely,  
and help save lives!**

