



**Keystone First**  
VIP Choice

# VIP: Healthy VIEWS

WINTER  
2018-2019

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



## 2019 Survey Mailing Soon

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2018 Member Survey. We love getting your feedback. We will send a new 2019 survey soon. This survey will be sent to plans members chosen at random. It will ask you whether you're getting the care and service you need. If you get a survey, please help by completing and returning it in the postage-paid envelope.

## 'Tis the season for safety

### Winter. For some it's the most wonderful season.

For others, however, it can bring hardships. Emergency room visits are highest during the winter. With a few preparations, you can stay safe and out of the hospital this time of year.

#### At home

You need to make sure you're doing all you can to prevent falls outside and inside your home.

To avoid falls:

- Get your doctor's permission to do balance exercises
- Have your vision checked
- Ask your doctor about any medicines that may cause dizziness or drowsiness

If it snows where you live, make sure you have extra food and medication in your home before any storm is expected.

#### At play

Don't let cold weather and gray skies get in the way of exercising. Walking outdoors is a great way to be active. Your heart works extra hard when it's cold out. Avoid exerting yourself too much if you have a condition like heart disease or high blood pressure.

#### On the road

No matter where you're going, make sure you travel safely when the weather turns bad. Always check the weather report before hitting the road. Fully charge your cell phone before you go out. If you must travel, make sure you have some safety items in your vehicle:

- Spare tire, wheel wrench, and jack
- Shovel
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Blanket
- First aid kit

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#### Don't forget your flu shot

**Another important item on your winter safety checklist should be a flu shot. If you haven't gotten it yet, it's not too late.**

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# Make leaks less likely



**You have a sheet of muscle that helps control your bladder.** Normally, you don't notice it. But if the muscle is weak, you could have life-disrupting and unpleasant symptoms.

If you experience urinary incontinence (the involuntary passing of urine), lifestyle changes may help:

- **Avoid food and drinks that can irritate the bladder.** These include caffeine and artificial sweeteners.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Not doing so can irritate your bladder.
- **If you smoke, quit.** Chemicals found in cigarette smoke potentially irritate the bladder. Plus, coughing strains the pelvic floor muscles.
- **Try bladder training.** This means emptying your bladder at regular intervals. Keep track of how

much you're drinking and your fluid output. Share the log with your health care provider. This can help him or her develop a bladder-training program that is right for you.

Although you may find it hard to discuss your symptoms, even with a trained medical professional, you don't have to suffer. The problem won't go away on its own, and if left untreated, it may get worse.

If you have signs of a urinary tract infection—frequent urination, burning, blood in urine, or foul odor—contact your provider immediately. If left untreated, a UTI can worsen and become a serious condition.

Having a conversation with your health care provider is a crucial first step toward living your life without pain, discomfort, or the fear of accidents.

## Why you should schedule your annual checkup

When was the last time you saw your primary care provider (PCP)? A checkup can help you stay healthy. Here are five reasons to schedule one in 2019:

- 1. Your medical records will be current.** Your medical history—including your family medical history—changes over time. This may affect your risk of developing conditions like stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.
- 2. You can stay up-to-date on specialized exams.** Your PCP can tell you about screenings you're due for, such as eye exams, mammograms, and other tests. You can schedule them at your checkup.
- 3. You'll get a look inside your body.** Some potentially serious conditions, like high blood pressure, may have no symptoms. At a checkup, your PCP will check your blood pressure and do other exams that may alert you to hidden health conditions.
- 4. You'll stay up-to-date on vaccines.** Regular immunizations aren't just for kids—they're for adults, too.
- 5. You'll be able to have conditions treated.** Minor or annoying symptoms may signal a bigger health issue. Your PCP can diagnose and address the problem before it gets worse.



# Land safely at home— and stay there— after a trip to the hospital

**One day, you're happily flying through life.** The next, you find yourself taking an emergency landing—you've wound up in the hospital.

A hospital stay can be a vulnerable time. And once you are home, the recovery period can feel overwhelming and confusing. You are not alone. Nearly one in five Medicare patients returns to the hospital within a month of leaving.

## Mind your medicines

One reason why? Patients who recently left the hospital don't fully understand their medications. Some patients may wind up taking their medicine incorrectly. Others are not clear which medicines they still need to take once they are home.

By being proactive with your medicine, you can avoid a readmission. Plan to review a list of the medicines you need to take with your health care provider before and after you leave the hospital. Your provider should talk with you about which high-risk medicines are no longer needed once you are home.

## Your flight plan

To prevent landing in the hospital again, you should also:

- Take note of your discharge instructions. Ask a family member to write them down. Have a nurse check your notes to make sure you have them right.
- Make an appointment with your provider within a week of



## Nearly one in five Medicare patients returns to the hospital within a month of leaving.

leaving the hospital. Follow-up appointments are important to prevent a return trip to the hospital. See your provider sooner if you have any worrisome symptoms.

- Bring all your medicines with you to your follow-up appointments. Go through the medicines with your provider and double-check which ones you should continue taking.

Self-care can help prevent hospital readmission. This means

you are responsible for taking your medicine correctly after a hospital stay. But remember that your provider can support you over the long term. He or she will ensure that you take your medicine correctly and safely.

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## Nurse advice line

**If you have any questions about your care, call our 24-hour nurse line for advice at 1-888-765-6375.**

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# Know the signs and symptoms of shingles



**If you've had chickenpox before, then you're at risk of developing shingles.** In fact, one out of three people in the United States will develop shingles at some point in their life.

## Causes and symptoms

The varicella zoster virus causes both chickenpox and shingles. After you recover from chickenpox, the virus stays in your body. Years later, it can become active again and cause shingles.

Shingles appears as a painful rash on one side of your face or body. It may be a stripe that wraps around the left or right side of your body. The rash may cover one side of your face. Once the rash shows up, it contains blisters. The blisters scab over within about seven to 10 days. It can take two to four weeks for the rash to go away.

Other signs and symptoms of shingles include:

- Fever
- Headache

- Chills
- Upset stomach

Some people have a higher risk of getting shingles. Your risk rises as you age. If you have a weakened immune system due to a medical condition or medicine that suppresses your immune system, then your risk for shingles is higher.

## Treatment

There are a few antiviral medicines that can treat shingles and shorten how long your symptoms last. Pain medicine can help reduce the discomfort you may experience. You can also try soothing measures such as wet compresses, calamine lotion, and baths with colloidal oatmeal to help control the itching.

If you think you may have shingles, contact your health care provider right away. The antiviral medicines work best when you start taking them as soon as the rash appears.

## New shingles vaccine

The most common complication from shingles is called postherpetic neuralgia (PHN). This is severe pain where the shingles rash appeared. A new vaccine called Shingrix prevents both shingles and PHN. Because of this, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends Shingrix over another shingles vaccine called Zostavax. Shingrix is approved for adults ages 50 and older with a healthy immune system. Ask your doctor if the vaccine could be right for you.



## Show your body some TLC to prevent pneumonia

**In some people, symptoms of pneumonia can be serious. You can prevent this infection with a few healthy habits:**

1. **Get a pneumococcal pneumonia shot.** Talk with your health care provider about which vaccine to get, and when you should get it.
2. **Don't forget your flu shot, either.** It can help prevent pneumonia from developing after a case of the flu.
3. **Take good care of yourself.** Healthy habits such as regular exercise, handwashing, and a nutritious diet help prevent the milder illnesses that can lead to pneumonia.
4. **If you smoke, quit.** Tobacco makes your lungs less able to fight off an infection. Avoid secondhand smoke too.
5. **Wear a mask in dusty and moldy areas.** This will protect your lungs.

# Keep sadness in check this winter

**Wintertime can get to even the hardiest folks.** Shorter daylight hours and chilly weather may make you feel down in the dumps. But there are steps you can try to lift your spirits:

- **Keep on the sunny side.** A specific type of depression—seasonal affective disorder—actually may stem from too little sunshine. Even if you don't have depression, you might feel blue during these darker months. Step outside when you can. Cold and cloudy days can still help. Increase your indoor light with lamps and sheer curtains.
- **Make a move.** Speak with your health care provider about the exercise that is right for you.
- **Stay in touch.** Call family members and friends to set up plans, volunteer in your community, or join a social group.

## Depression: More than just the blues

Feeling sad from time to time is a part of life. But for people with

depression, these feelings interfere with daily living. Work, friendships, and self-care may suffer.

Extreme sadness is one symptom of depression, but there are many others. Talk with your doctor if you have any of these signs for more than two weeks:

- You don't enjoy the things and activities that you used to like, or they're not as fun as they used to be.
- You feel empty, worthless, or helpless.
- You have trouble concentrating or making decisions.
- You're fatigued nearly all the time.
- You're thinking of hurting yourself.

## Speak up to get help

Many people hesitate to ask for help with depression, anxiety, stress, or another mental health issue because they believe they will be judged. Seeing that you need help is a sign of strength.

Even people with severe depression can recover. Treatment may involve medication, counseling, or a combination of both.

Talk with your doctor if you think you might have a mental health condition. Mental health conditions are treatable. Your doctor may suggest medication or counseling. Many people benefit from both.

## Keystone First VIP Choice Cares about You

**Our team of Care Managers and Personal Care Connectors are here to help you. We can:**

- Answer questions about your health and medicines.
- Schedule provider appointments and arrange transportation for you.
- Help you find community resources for housing, food, and clothing.

**Call our Care Management team at 1-866-533-5490 to get started.**



# Keep your binge-watching habit under control

Shorter daylight hours and chilly weather are perfect conditions to binge your favorite show this winter. When you fire up Netflix or your favorite channel, take steps to avoid these common health hazards.

## **The problem: Not moving enough.**

One study found positive results in people who cut TV time by just 30 minutes a day. They had fewer feelings of depression and anxiety compared with those who spent more time being inactive. The same study found that adding 10 minutes of physical activity a day had a similar effect.

**A solution:** Hit the pause button and go for a walk or quick bike ride. Or try body-weight exercises like sit-ups or push-ups.

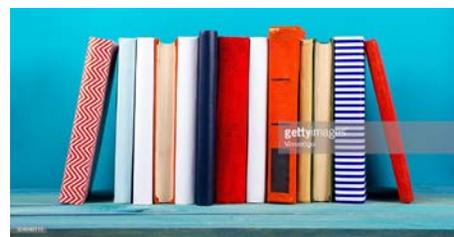
## **The problem: Mindless eating.**

A recent study found that the more time adults spent watching TV, the greater their risk of eating too much.

**A solution: Enjoy meals at your dinner table instead of in front of the TV.** It may also be helpful to cut all unhealthy snacks in your home.

**The problem: Screens disrupting sleep.** Blue light from glowing screens, especially late at night, awakens nerve pathways in your brain. This can affect your biological clock and leave you feeling awake when you should be on your way to a restful sleep.

**A solution:** Relax with a book or take a bath before bed. Removing all screens from your bedroom will help you get a good night's sleep.



## **Spend your day in other ways**

Remember that long periods of screen time can affect both your body and mind. If you're looking for something else to do this winter, try:

- Visiting a library and reading a new book
- Joining a church group
- Volunteering at a senior center, hospital, nursing home, animal shelter, or place of worship.
- Cooking a new recipe like the *low-sugar banana muffins on page 7*





## LOW-SUGAR BANANA MUFFINS

### Ingredients

2 ripe bananas, mashed  
½ cup unsweetened applesauce  
2 eggs  
¼ cup honey  
2 tsp. vanilla extract  
2 cups whole wheat or Einkorn wheat flour  
2 tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. baking soda  
2 tbsp. ground flaxseeds

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Grease and flour one-and-a-half muffin tins or place cupcake liners into each tin.
3. In a large mixing bowl, place bananas, applesauce, eggs, honey, and vanilla extract. Whisk (or use that balloon whisk attachment for a stand mixer) until well blended.
4. In a separate bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and baking soda. Stir flaxseeds into flour mixture.
5. Gradually whisk flour mixture into wet mixture until well blended. Pour into tins. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until brown on top.

### Per serving

Serves 18; serving size is one muffin. Each serving provides: 90 calories, 1 g total fat (0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 20 mg cholesterol, 95 mg sodium, 18 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 6 g sugars, 3 g protein.



## Got fruit?

The American Heart Association recommends you eat four to five servings of fruit every day. Here are some ideas to add more fruit into your diet:

- Mix them into your salads.
- Snack on dried fruit like raisins, dates, or apricots.



- Add sliced apple or banana to your peanut butter sandwiches.
- Sprinkle fruit, such as berries, into your pancake or waffle batter.
- Add sliced fruit to your cereal or oatmeal.



## Keystone First VIP Choice

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Philadelphia, PA 19113-9903

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# Member Information

Recursos  
en Español?

## Contact Us

We're here to answer **questions** and provide the information you need. Contact us to check your membership status, check a claim, or ask a question.

## Contact us by phone or by mail:

### Phone

Call **1-800-450-1166**

### Member Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Members

TTY: **711**

### Hours of Service

Seven days a week, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### Mail

#### Keystone First VIP Choice Member Services

200 Stevens Drive  
Philadelphia, PA 19113-9802

Keystone First VIP Choice is an HMO-SNP plan with a Medicare contract and a contract with the Pennsylvania Medicaid program. Enrollment in Keystone First VIP Choice depends on contract renewal.

## Recursos en Español

Para información en español, por favor llame al department de atención al cliente de **Keystone First VIP Choice**.

## Multi-Language Interpreter Services

If English is not your first language, we have free interpreter services to answer any questions you may have about our health or drug plan. To get an interpreter, just call us at **1-800-450-1166** (TTY: **711**). Someone who speaks English and your language can help you. **This is a free service.**

Tenemos servicios de intérprete sin costo alguno para responder cualquier pregunta que pueda tener sobre nuestro plan de salud o medicamentos. Para hablar con un intérprete, por favor llame al **1-800-450-1166** (TTY: **711**). Alguien que hable español le podrá ayudar. **Este es un servicio gratuito.**

## Member Rights and Responsibilities

We are committed to treating our members with respect and dignity. Keystone First VIP Choice and its network of doctors and other providers of services do not discriminate against members based on race, gender, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis. More information about member rights and responsibilities can be found in the *Evidence of Coverage* book you received when you became a member, and anytime at [www.keystonefirstvipchoice.com](http://www.keystonefirstvipchoice.com).

This information is available for free in other languages. Please call our Member Services number at 1-800-450-1166, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week. TTY/TDD users should call 711.