

health mattersSM



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FLU SHOTS



3

GO NUTS

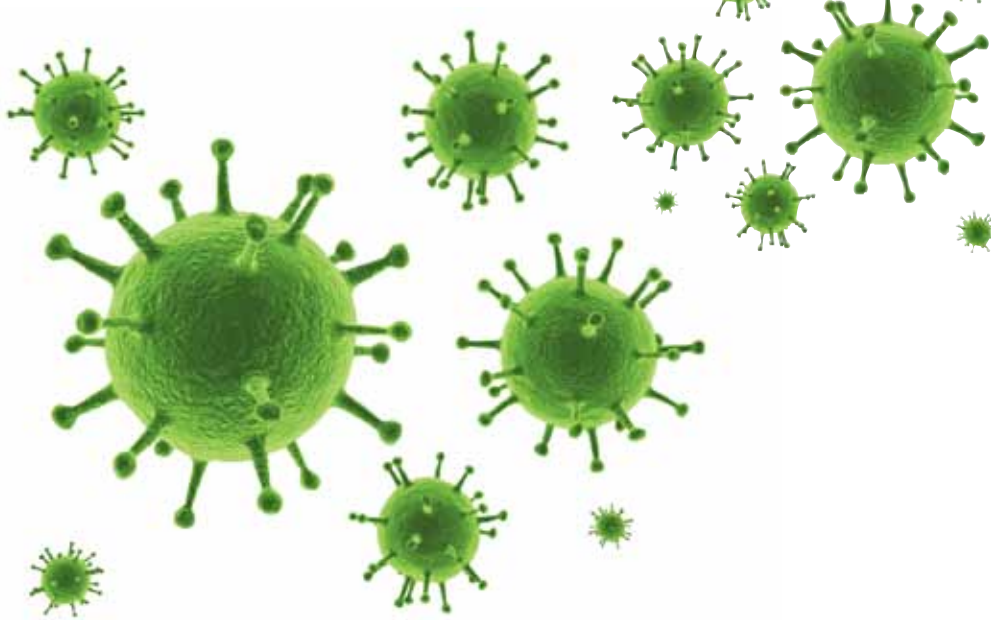


6

SWEET NEWS



healthy
HOLIDAYS



FLU SHOT time!

It's still essential to a healthy season

Getting a seasonal flu vaccine is one of the most important precautions you can take to avoid getting the flu. This year, the Centers for Disease Control recommends everyone older than 6 months get vaccinated. All forms of the flu vaccine protect against three types of influenza viruses, including the H1N1 virus.

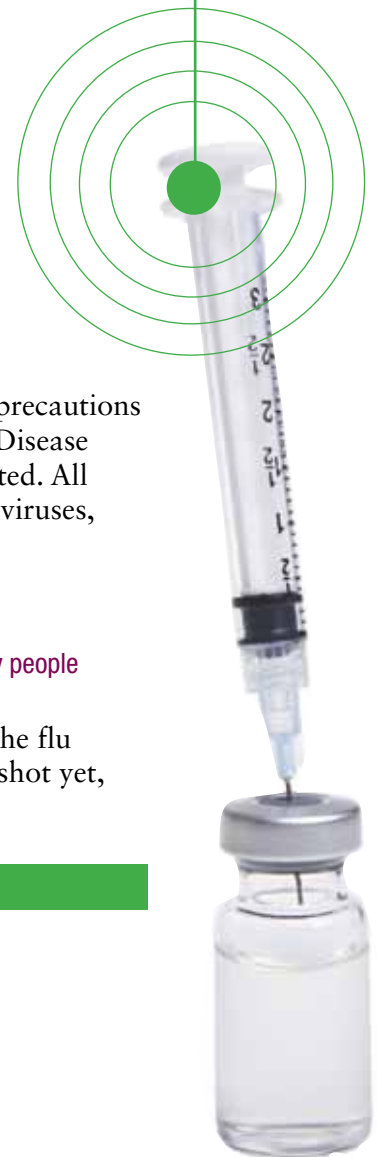
Two types of flu vaccines are available:

- REGULAR FLU SHOT, approved for ages 6 months and older.
- NASAL SPRAY FLU VACCINE, a completely needle-free alternative for healthy people ages 2 through 49 who are not pregnant.

Keep in mind that it takes two to three weeks after receiving the flu vaccine to build up immunity. So if you haven't gotten your flu shot yet, don't delay. Consider it an early holiday gift to yourself.

GET THE FACTS

For more information, contact your primary care provider.



go NUTTS

Good fats make a tasty slaw

Once banished from weight-loss regimens, nuts are making a healthy comeback. Nuts may be high in calories, but they also contain protein and vitamin E, as well as heart-healthy monounsaturated fats that help raise good cholesterol while lowering the bad. In fact, eating an ounce of nuts a day may help reduce heart attack risk.

Toss together this tasty broccoli slaw salad. It is low in calories and contains many nutrients, including calcium and vitamins A and C. For a heartier version, add some cold cooked shrimp or diced chicken.

3 ounces broccoli slaw

1 ounce peanuts

2 tablespoons low-fat Asian-style peanut vinaigrette

1 chopped green onion

1 tablespoon chopped cilantro (optional)



Check it off

New campaign educates members, public

If you haven't noticed our "Check It Off" public service campaign yet, you soon may. Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life's Passport to Living Healthy Program is sponsoring billboards, radio spots and other advertising materials to remind our senior members — as well as the public — about the importance of preventive screenings in identifying and managing chronic medical conditions.

This campaign highlights important screening exams, including colorectal cancer, breast cancer, diabetes and cholesterol. When's the last time you got a health screening and could check it off?

YOUR TO-DO LIST

To learn more about our new program, please call us toll-free at 855.85.CHECK.



healthy HOLIDAYS

Recipe makeovers put a healthy jingle in seasonal classics

It's hard to imagine the holidays without certain special foods. If you're watching calories, you do not have to go without them. Tweak your favorite family recipes with these clever substitutions:

- Replace whole eggs and whole-fat evaporated milk with egg whites and fat-free evaporated milk, respectively, in your favorite pumpkin pie recipe.
- Use applesauce, mashed banana or pureed pumpkin in place of oil or sugar to increase the fiber in your baked goods.
- Replace white flour with whole-wheat flour.
- Use low-fat or fat-free milk in place of cream.
- Baste poultry with low-sodium chicken stock or citrus juices with herbs, instead of butter.
- Choose white meat instead of dark.
- Season side dishes with herbs and pepper instead of salt.

You, your family and guests probably won't notice any difference, so if you don't tell — we won't either!



Baked

Destined to become holiday classics

Registered dietitian Natalie O'Bryant, from Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life's Health Education and Wellness Division, has cooked up the following recipes, which are both healthy and pleasing to the palate.



Garlic mashed "potatoes"



cranberry apples

Baked cranberry apples

Try this as an alternative to Dutch apple pie. The butter and brown sugar will satisfy your sweet tooth, while the cranberries add a little tartness. Raisins and dried cherries are also good choices. For each serving:

- 1 apple
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon dried cranberries
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Cut off top of the apple and hollow out the core, forming a bowl. Trim bottom so the apple stands upright in casserole dish. Place the rest of the ingredients into the apple in the order listed above. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes at 350° or until apple is tender. Serve warm with a scoop of vanilla frozen yogurt.



Holiday cocoa with cinnamon

Holiday cocoa with cinnamon

Have you ever tried almond or soy milk? Both have fewer calories than fat-free cow's milk, and a much creamier texture. Make your favorite cocoa recipe with almond or soy milk, and replace the sugar with stevia. Stevia is about 30 times sweeter than sugar, so you only need a little bit.

- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ teaspoon stevia (one packet)
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk or soy milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- dash cinnamon

Place first four ingredients in saucepan and heat carefully on stove. Add a dash of cinnamon before serving.

Garlic mashed "potatoes"

You can enjoy this tasty side dish any time of year.

- ½ head of cauliflower
- 1 wedge of light garlic and herb cheese spread
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- dash pepper

Steam or boil cauliflower until fork tender. Remove from heat and drain well. Mash cauliflower and then mix in wedge of cheese and garlic powder. Season with pepper, to taste.

Shaving off
3,500 calories
in a week will
help you shed
a pound.



SWEET

HEW diabetes program receives ADA accreditation

Less than a year after opening, the Diabetes Self-Management Education Program administered by Health Plan of Nevada (HPN) and Sierra Health and Life's (SHL) Health Education and Wellness (HEW) division has been accredited by the American Diabetes Association. This voluntary accreditation recognizes HEW for providing state-of-the-art, high-quality education services and tools for managing diabetes.

Self-management education is vital to the success of a diabetes program. At HPN/SHL, the program begins with a one-on-one consultation with a certified diabetes educator. Next is a comprehensive three-week class covering important topics related to diabetes management, including:

- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Medications
- Preventing, detecting and treating complications



Put your best foot forward

As many as 60 to 70 percent of individuals who have diabetes also have some form of nervous system damage, which may include a loss of feeling in the feet. If you have diabetes, professional foot care is a must. Be sure to visit your podiatrist at least once a year.

Because of lost sensation, it is possible to have a foot injury without knowing it. Carefully inspect your feet every day for cuts and sores. If you find anything, contact your PCP or podiatrist immediately.



diabetes news

- Goal setting and problem solving
- Psychological coping strategies

Members return for additional individual consultation every three months for a year.

Dramatic results

Some members reported dramatically improved test results right away after the Diabetes Self-Management Education Program opened.

The A1c test measures the average level of blood sugar over the last three months to assess how effectively an individual is controlling diabetes. An A1c result of less than 7 percent is recommended.

“One member began our program with an A1c of 13, and reduced it to 5.7 in just three months,” says Kara Speer, clinic and worksite supervisor for Health Education and Wellness. “The member also reduced triglyceride levels from 718 to 276, and total cholesterol from 254 to 159.”



FEEL FREE TO JOIN

The Diabetes Self-Management Education Program is provided at no cost and members may re-enroll as often as desired. For more information, contact Health Education and Wellness at 702.877.5356 or 800.720.7253.



health at HOME

Anticoagulation
Clinic offers
home
monitoring

Home monitoring is now available for health plan members taking Coumadin® (also known as the generic warfarin) or other blood-thinning medications requiring frequent testing. Members simply put a drop of blood on a plastic test strip, insert it in a provided monitor, and call it in on a dedicated phone line at any time of the day or night. It is very convenient for those who work during the day or who have younger caregivers who do.

“Our members can now call in the test whenever it is convenient for them, even if it is after midnight,” said Susan Courtney, R.N.,

supervisor of the Anti-coagulation Clinic for Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life.

Coumadin prevents coagulation of the blood — the formation of clots — by inhibiting the production of clotting factors by the liver.

However, too much increases the risk of bleeding. Members enrolled in the Anticoagulation Clinic are tested regularly for the internal normalized ratio (INR), which measures how long it takes for blood

to clot. The clinic follows up with primary care providers to ensure the INR is within a safe range, which depends upon the diagnosis.

Courtney and her team manage testing for about 2,220 members to ensure they are receiving the proper dose of Coumadin. Additionally, they provide education for members and their families several times a month at the Southwest Medical Associates Henderson and Tenaya locations.

“Members often have questions about the medication, how often they need to be tested, and what their INR numbers should be,” Courtney added. “They may also have concerns about their diagnosis and diet.” And members who miss a blood test may count on a follow-up call the very next day. A letter is also sent as an initial reminder. If there is no response within a week, Courtney and her team send a certified letter to the member and notify the primary care provider. They continue working with the provider until the member completes the necessary lab work. If you are taking a blood thinner, please ask your provider about participating in the Anticoagulation Clinic.

“Our members can now call in the test whenever it is convenient for them, even if it is after midnight.”

— Susan Courtney, R.N.

Lunch and learn

Monthly talks at The SMA Lifestyle Center – East

Meet Health Educator Natalie O'Bryant, R.D., at the monthly "Lunch and Learn" at The SMA Lifestyle Center – East. Each month, Natalie discusses a healthy nutrition topic. In December, she presents "Don't Eat Your Heart Out." This free program is held the first Monday of the month at 10 a.m.



GET THE DETAILS

For details about this presentation and other activities at the SMA Lifestyle Centers, please visit the Southwest Medical Associates website at www.smalv.com or call 866.249.7674.

your PRIVACY is important!

Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life have a Notice of Privacy Practices. You may ask for a copy of this notice at any time by contacting Member Services at the number on the back of your member ID card. You may also obtain a copy of this notice at www.healthplanofnevada.com or www.sierrahealthandlife.com.



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CONTACT US

12 tips

Make the most of
your health plan

1 Know your rights and learn about the health plan's quality program.

To review your rights and responsibilities as a health plan member and to learn about the health plan's quality program and goals, please visit your health plan's website. If you would like a written copy of our quality program or a copy of your rights and responsibilities, please call Member Services. You may also find a written copy of the Rights and Responsibilities document on the Quality Corner of your health plan's website.

2 Read your benefit information.

Your benefit documents are a good source of information. The documents help you understand the benefits and services you have; the benefits and services you don't have (exclusions); how to get your prescription drugs and what drugs are covered; your share of cost or ways you pay for health care; what to do if and when you need to submit a claim; how to find out about participating providers; what to do if you need care when you are out of town; how and when to get routine, after-hours, specialty and emergency care; how to voice a complaint or appeal a coverage decision; and how to get care from specialists, hospitals and mental health providers. If you need another copy of this information, please call the Member Services phone number on the back of your health plan member identification card. You may also find a written copy of general benefit information on your health plan's website.

3 Know what to do if you have an issue.

We'll definitely want to know if you have an issue. We strive to meet your needs in every way. If you are unhappy with services or care, or with the health plan in general, please call Member Services or write a letter to Health Plan of Nevada or Sierra Health and Life. Either way, we will respond to your issue.

4 Know how to get information at your fingertips.

Did you know your health plan has online tools to help you? You can search our electronic provider directory, search for covered drugs in the Preferred Drug List and get personal benefit information at the online member center.

The online member center can help you day, night and even on holidays. You may access information about your benefits through HPN@YourService® or SHL@YourService®. Take advantage of these convenient service features to change your address; request replacement identification cards; verify your coverage for pharmacy, dental or vision services; check your copayment amounts for medical services; review the status of a claim; find out who is on record as your primary care physician; check the status of a prior authorization request; and find out how much has been applied toward your calendar-year deductible, if applicable.



5 Know that we research new medical technology.

For safety reasons, we formally evaluate new and emerging medical discoveries before including them in our member benefit package. Conducted by a highly-skilled technical staff, including physicians, our review process evaluates new technology against medical standards and clinical research to assess the effectiveness and safety of new medical procedures, drugs and devices; and new applications of existing technologies. If you, your providers or other interested parties would like to submit a request for the review of new medical technology, please contact Member Services.

6 Ask for help if you speak another language.

If you need help with communication, such as the services of a language interpreter, please call Member Services.

7 Know that the health plan does not offer incentives for prior authorization denials.

Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life prohibit the compensation of physicians, other health care professionals or staff to be based upon or used as incentive for the denial of benefits. All decisions regarding your benefits are given special consideration based on your medical needs and appropriateness of the care and service. Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life employees who perform utilization review duties do not receive any incentives, financial or otherwise, to encourage denial of benefits. That is, we provide no incentive for anyone on our team to restrict benefits for our members. For more information, please call Member Services.

8 Learn about the internal and external review for denial of benefits.

If a benefit is denied, we provide internal review to help ensure member satisfaction in the medical decision-making process. Additionally, external independent review is provided by a panel of impartial medical professionals for eligible denials that have already undergone internal review. Expedited appeals are available when decisions are needed quickly. For additional information, please refer to your plan documents or call Member Services.

9 Know that we have special programs available for members.

Are you eligible for extra help? You may be eligible for additional benefits from one of the programs below.

Health Management: If you have diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart failure or asthma, you are eligible to receive educational materials and calls from a Registered Nurse Health Coach. For more information, call the Health Management Program at 877.692.2059 on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. PST.

Case Management: This program provides additional assistance for members with extra special needs. For more information, contact Member Services.

10 Know that we evaluate the care you receive.

If you are admitted to a noncontracted facility or receive care or services outside of the Health Plan of Nevada or Sierra Health and Life service area, we may perform a retrospective review (after care was received) to evaluate the appropriateness of the medical care, services, treatments and procedures you received. As part of this process, we will review your medical records, admitting diagnosis and presenting symptoms.

11 Tell us about it. We want to hear from you.

You may get a survey in the mail about your health plan. We need your help so we can monitor our plan and improve the quality of care and services for our members. Some surveys you may get are called the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS), Health Outcomes Survey (HOS) for Medicare members, Patient Satisfaction Survey, Health Management Program Satisfaction Survey, Complex Case Management Program Satisfaction Survey and Telephone Advice Nurse Program Satisfaction Survey. Members are randomly selected for these surveys. If you get one, please fill it out. Your input is valuable to us.

12 Make an investment in your future.

It's one that pays solid dividends, too. Keeping up with recommended health screenings helps your primary care physician take care of the little things — before they become more serious. At your next appointment, please talk to your primary care physician about screenings and recommendations. Depending on your medical history, your provider may have additional medical advice. You can find the preventive guidelines on your plan's website.

MEMBERS ONLY

To go to the online member center, simply visit www.healthplanofnevada.com or www.sierrahealthandlife.com and click on the @YourService icon. First-time visitors will need to register for a username and password. Member medical information is confidential and is only available to you and your provider.

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HealthMatters is published quarterly as a community service for members of Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health and Life. Benefits discussed in this newsletter may vary by plan and geographic region. If you have specific questions regarding your coverage, please refer to your plan documents or call Member Services at the telephone number listed on your membership card.

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take charge

TENSE times

Anxiety more common than depression

These are indeed tense times. Anxiety disorders are now the most common mental health diagnosis. More than one in four individuals is likely to experience an anxiety disorder at some point in life, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. The feelings of intense fear associated with anxiety or panic attacks are very unpleasant.

However, effective therapies are available and some do not

require medication.

Cognitive behavioral therapy is a technique that is very successful in helping individuals cope with and overcome anxiety. This non-medication form of treatment is based on the concept that thoughts cause feelings. It teaches how changing the way one thinks about a stressful situation leads to feeling better — even if the situation itself doesn't change.

TIPS TO FEEL BETTER NOW

- **TUNE OUT THE NOISE.** Limit your intake of news and other negative media.
- **B-R-E-A-T-H-E.** Anxious people tend to be shallow breathers. Take a deep breath and hold it for about eight counts. Slowly exhale through your mouth.
- **WORK IT OUT.** Exercise is a great way to combat stress. Aim for five 30-minute sessions each week.
- **LIMIT ALCOHOL, CAFFEINE AND TOBACCO.** These substances only make anxiety worse.
- **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.** Make sure you are eating healthy, nutritious food and getting enough sleep.
- **SET ASIDE A DAILY "WORRY TIME."** Only allow yourself worry during the designated time.
- **ACCEPT LESS THAN PERFECTION.** Why expect the impossible from yourself?
- **VOLUNTEER.** Helping others will help distract you from stressful thoughts.

