

Important Information to Know

Prospective Members: 1-800-944-1247 • Current Members: 1-800-942-0247

For assistance with claims, billing, appeals questions, and coverage decisions for Part D prescription drugs, contact Community HealthFirst Customer Service at 1-800-942-0247, TTY/TDD: 1-866-816-2479, 8 am to 8 pm, 7 days a week.

For more information about Community HealthFirst's mail order service, call 1-888-823-1968.

For more information about the Federal Medicare program, contact Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), TTY/TTD: 1-877-486-2048, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

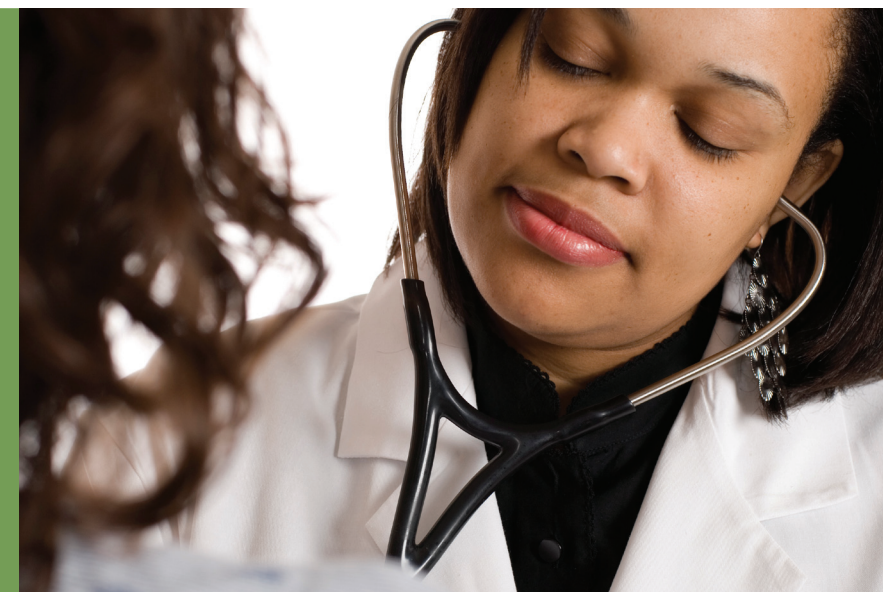
Community HealthFirst™ Medicare Advantage Plans are offered by Community Health Plan of Washington, which contracts with the Federal Government as a Medicare approved HMO. The Plan contract is renewed annually and availability of coverage beyond the current contract year is not guaranteed. You must be entitled to Medicare Part A and enrolled in Medicare Part B, and reside in the plan service area. You must continue to pay your Medicare Part B premium. Benefits, premiums, cost sharing and limitations may vary by county or plan.



Your Health Matters

Medicare Newsletter

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month



Currently, about 74.5 million people in the United States have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart failure, or kidney disease. Of those with hypertension, about 68 percent are aware of their condition, estimates the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). Just 27 percent have it under control.

To draw attention to the problem and spread information on the risks of uncontrolled hypertension, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has designated May as National High Blood Pressure Education Month. The goal is to reduce death and disability related to high blood pressure through programs of professional, patient, and public education. The NHLBI has established the National High Blood Pressure Education Program and a website at

www.nhlbi.nih.gov where you can read and download educational materials, recipes for healthy living, and much more.

In short, lifestyle changes that get blood pressure under control are:

- lose weight (if necessary)
- be physically active
- choose foods lower in salt and sodium
- limit alcohol intake.

You can find videos on Community Health Plan's website that help you understand and control high blood pressure, decrease your sodium intake, learn—and use—the DASH diet, select healthy foods, cook healthy meals, and much more at www.chpw.org. Click the Health and Wellness link at the top right corner of the page.

Health or wellness or prevention information
Inside Your Member newsletter: Allergies, Blood Pressure, and Better Balance...

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Medicare Advantage Plans
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Seattle, WA 98101-1830

Community HealthFirst™
Medicare Advantage Plans



Achoo! Spring Is Here

We look forward to the sunshine and flowers that arrive with spring, but for some people it also brings sneezing. Allergens are things in the environment such as pollen, dust, mold that are usually harmless. In the immune systems of allergy sufferers, however, these are seen as harmful agents, sending the body into overdrive. Annoyingly common, allergies affect two out of every 10 Americans.

Sneezing, wheezing, coughing, and itching are the most common allergic reactions. If you have allergies or suspect you do, but don't know what triggers them, pay attention to when they flare up. Do they hit at a certain time of the year? At home? Outdoors? This gives you a clue to the trigger. Symptoms that happen at the same time each year—like spring—are often tied to pollen. Allergies that continue through the year can be linked to dust, mold, or animal dander. Allergies in the home can be to mold or your beloved pet.

If you are allergic to pollen, close your car and home windows, limit the time you spend outside when pollen counts are high, and wash your pets (who bring in pollen on their fur and paws).

If you are allergic to dust, remove "dust collectors" from your home—heavy draperies, knickknacks, and other decorative items where dust settles in. Vacuum regularly to remove dust. Wash rugs and bedding. Use an air purifier fitted with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter.

If mold allergies are your problem, keep your home aired out and dry. Use exhaust fans in the bathroom and kitchen. Consider getting an air conditioner, which removes mold from the air, and a dehumidifier.

If pets get you sneezing, keep them out of your bedroom, so you can get a good night's sleep. Vacuum regularly to pick up pet dander.

If these measures don't relieve your allergy symptoms, talk to your doctor about allergy shots. You will have to undergo skin and blood tests to pinpoint the allergies first. The shots themselves take time—often years—to complete. They don't begin working right away and they don't work for everyone.

Seniors Make Great Volunteers



It's one thing to look forward to your retirement years, and another to feel productive and fulfilled when work no longer fills your days. With your wealth of knowledge, skills, and experience, seniors make ideal volunteers.

Volunteering might be for you if retirement has you feeling more isolated than you like. Often retired people report feeling cut off from others beyond their regular circle of family and friends. Some say they miss contributing to something larger than themselves.

Volunteering can help you stay in touch with people of all ages and provide an outlet for your talents and knowledge—all while boosting your mood and improving your health. A Health and Retirement Study, done in 2002, found that seniors who volunteer may even live longer.

Who needs you? Your community center, church, animal shelter, and political organizations all rely heavily on volunteer workers. If you love animals, you could walk dogs or care for cats. If you feel strongly about an issue, volunteer to collect signatures. If you want to support a political candidate, call that person's office to learn what you can do. If you love art and want to learn more about it, you could become a docent at a museum.

Try these volunteer organizations to get started:

Senior Corps is a national organization that matches seniors with volunteer work in their state. Its programs include Foster Grandparents, who work with special needs children and youth; Senior Companions, who help adults with special needs; and RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), community-based work such as neighborhood watches, home renovations,

teaching English to immigrants, and more. Find out more at Senior Corps www.seniorcorps.gov.

Volunteer Match aims to match good people with good causes. It connects people with jobs, from research assistants to art camp helpers to forest and wildlife restorers and more. This website is flush with volunteer opportunities. Simply input your ZIP code to find local volunteer jobs. Any nonprofit or tax-exempt organization can post at VolunteerMatch. www.volunteermatch.org.

If you want to work with animals or support people who do, check out these organizations:

PAWS helps care for and find homes for companion animals and it helps rehabilitate wildlife and return animals to nature from its shelter in Lynnwood. Find out more at www.paws.org.

The Humane Society has volunteer opportunities at its shelter and needs people to provide foster care for animals waiting to be adopted. Find your local chapter at www.humanesociety.org.

Most organizations offer orientation and training programs before you begin volunteering. This gives you the chance to test-drive the job and be sure it's a good fit.

Volunteering is good all the way around. It gives you the chance to be physically, mentally, and socially active. Often volunteers report increased happiness from the work they do.

Too Much Pressure?



As many as two in three adults with diabetes also have high blood pressure, or hypertension. High blood pressure increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States. If you have high blood pressure, you can make lifestyle choices that lower it. Some people also need medication.

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of your arteries. Your doctor measures and expresses it as two numbers, ideally a number that looks like this: 130/80. The first number is the systolic pressure or the force of blood when the heart beats. The second number, diastolic pressure, is the force of blood between heartbeats, or when the heart is at rest. High blood pressure means your heart has to work hard to move blood, and it can cause complications in diabetics.

Your doctor must test for high blood pressure because often it has no symptoms.

Lower your blood pressure—or keep it low, if it's already in a healthy range:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Make fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, and low-fat dairy products mainstays in your diet. These foods help you get potassium, calcium, and magnesium—all essential minerals.
- Limit your salt intake. Read food labels. Packaged food can be surprisingly high in salt.
- Limit saturated fats. These fats come from animal products, such as milk, cheese, and meat.
- Do not smoke and limit your alcohol intake.

Medications that control blood pressure:

- **ACEI and ARB** lower blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels. They also stop the production of a hormone that narrows blood vessels. Both help protect your kidneys and reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack.
- **Beta blockers** help lower blood pressure by relaxing the heart so it beats more slowly and with less force.
- **Calcium channel blockers** help keep blood vessels relaxed by keeping calcium out of the blood vessels and heart.
- **Diuretics** rid the body of extra water and sodium.

Talk with your doctor to determine the best way to manage your blood pressure. If you currently take a medication and are experiencing side effects, your doctor can best advise you on a treatment plan.

Better Balance Is Easy



The benefits of regular exercise are well known and documented. A lesser-known part of exercise that is of special interest to seniors is balance. We take it for granted when we're young, but balance can become a problem as we age.

Good balance is a combination of several factors—sensory input from the eyes, the correct functioning of the inner ear, and a sense of the position of your body in its surroundings (call proprioception). Studies show that we begin losing balance in our 40s and 50s. Medications can throw us off kilter, too, leading to falls.

More than 1.6 million elderly Americans go to the emergency room each year with injuries related to falls, according to the National Institute on Aging, NIA. Improving balance can help you stay agile and be less likely to fall. Thankfully, balance is something you can improve. No special equipment required.

Any exercise that builds and maintains muscle strength, particularly in the lower body, will help with balance. As part of its Go4Life program, the NIA offers a free exercise guide and video at www.nia.nih.gov/go4life or by calling toll-free, **1-800-222-2225**. Both are available in English and Spanish. Go4Life is an exercise campaign designed to help you fit exercise and physical activity into your daily life.

The NIA recommends Tai Chi because it improves balance, strength, and agility. And these three simple at-home exercises, done regularly, will put you on steadier footing. Do them anytime, ideally as part of a strength-training routine. As always, talk with your doctor before starting an exercise plan.

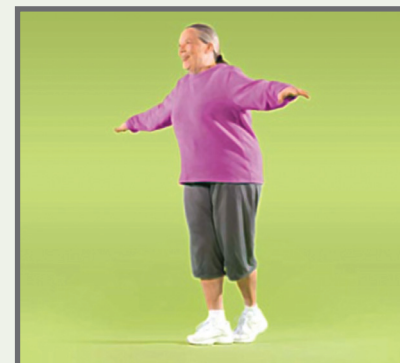
(All exercises are compliments of the National Institute on Aging, www.nia.nih.gov.)



Chair Balance:

You can do this exercise while waiting for the bus or standing in line at the store.

1. Stand on one foot behind a sturdy chair, holding on for balance.
2. Hold position for up to 10 seconds.
3. Repeat 10-15 times.
4. Repeat 10-15 times with other leg.
5. Repeat 10-15 more times with each leg.

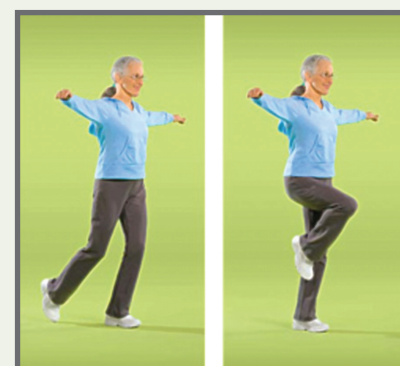


Heel-to-Toe Walk:

Having good balance is important for many everyday activities, such as going up and down stairs.

1. Position the heel of one foot just in front of the toes of the other foot. Your heel and toes should touch or almost touch.
2. Choose a spot ahead of you and focus on it to keep you steady as you walk.
3. Take a step. Put your heel just in front of the toe of your other foot.
4. Repeat for 20 steps.

Safety tip: If you are unsteady on your feet, do this exercise near a wall so you can steady yourself, if necessary.

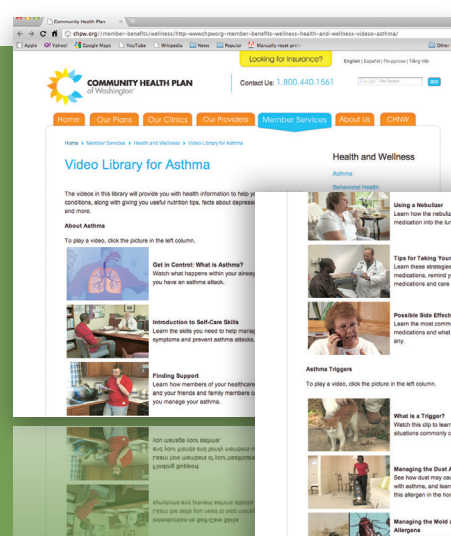


Balance Walk:

Good balance helps you walk safely and avoid tripping and falling over objects in your way.

1. Raise arms to sides, shoulder height.
2. Choose a spot ahead of you and focus on it to keep you steady as you walk.
3. Walk in a straight line with one foot in front of the other.
4. As you walk, lift your back leg. Pause for 1 second before stepping forward.
5. Repeat for 20 steps, alternating legs.

Get Health and Wellness Information Online



At Community Health Plan's website, you can watch health and wellness videos to learn facts about diabetes, asthma, depression, stress, and other health subjects. Each short video is designed to help you understand, treat, and live with these conditions. There are more than 180 videos to choose from to help you set up an exercise routine, revamp your diet for better health, reduce your cholesterol, take your medications, and other ways to boost your health. After viewing the video, you can download a transcript of it. Find health and wellness videos under the "Member Services" tab on our website at www.chpw.org/member-benefits/wellness/health-and-wellness-videos. Or look for the video library link on our home page at www.chpw.org.

Frequently Asked Questions Pharmacy Benefits



My drug was not covered at the pharmacy. What should I do?

Answer: Talk to your provider about an alternative drug or contact Community HealthFirst Customer Service at 1-800-942-0247. Customer Service can help you and your doctor get a coverage determination for the drug. Your provider can also contact Community HealthFirst's pharmacy benefit manager, Express Scripts Inc., at 1-800-417-8164 for a coverage determination 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Can I get a 90-day supply of prescription drugs from a retail pharmacy?

Answer: Some retail pharmacies can dispense up to a 90-day supply of drugs. Please contact Customer Service at 1-800-942-0247 for a list of these pharmacies. You can also identify pharmacies that can dispense up to a 90-day supply of drugs by using the Directory of Network Pharmacies: www.healthfirst.chpw.org/pharmacies/ Look for this mark "▼" which shows the pharmacies that can offer a 90-day supply.

Where can I find information regarding prior authorization, step-therapy, quantity limits, or changes to the formulary that occur during the calendar year?

Answer: To get updated information about the drugs covered by Community HealthFirst, please visit our website at www.healthfirst.chpw.org/formulary or call Customer Service at 1-800-942-0247.

Why does my copay seem to change from pharmacy to pharmacy?

Answer: A few pharmacies have independently created \$4 generic drug programs. For some members, the \$4 generic copay is less than the Tier 1 copay.

Why does Community HealthFirst not cover over-the-counter (OTC) medications such as vitamin D or my prescription vitamins and mineral products?

Answer: Some drugs are excluded from Medicare coverage by law. Excluded drugs include OTC medications such as vitamin D and prescription vitamins and mineral products.

I would like to have my drugs mailed to my home. How do I get information about mail-order prescriptions?

Answer: For order forms and information about filling your prescriptions by mail, please call 1-888-823-1968. You can use the Community HealthFirst mail order service to fill prescriptions for any drug that is on the formulary lists. Our plan's mail-order service requires you to order at least a 30-day supply and no more than a 90-day supply of the drug.

What is the name of the mail-order pharmacy?

Answer: Express Scripts Pharmacy Home Delivery is the mail-order pharmacy contracted with Community HealthFirst.

Is there a fee to use the mail-order service?

Answer: No. The mail-order benefit is part of your prescription drug benefit and there is no additional fee for the service. There are no postage costs to you, either.

Your Community Health Centers

Columbia Basin Health Association
Adams and Grant Counties
(509) 488-5256
www.cbha.org

Columbia Valley Community Health
Chelan and Douglas Counties
(800) 288-7649
www.cvch.org

Community Health Association of Spokane
Spokane County
(509) 444-8200
www.chas.org

Community Health Care
Pierce County
(253) 597-4550
www.commhealth.org

Community Health Center of Snohomish County
Snohomish County
(425) 789-3789
www.chcsno.org

Country Doctor Community Health Centers
King County
(206) 299-1600
www.countrydoctor.org

Cowlitz Family Health Center
Cowlitz and Pacific Counties
(360) 636-3892
www.cowlitzfamilyhealth.org

Family Health Centers
Okanogan County
(800) 660-2129
www.myfamilyhealth.org

HealthPoint (formerly Community Health Centers of King County)
King County
(866) 893-5717
www.healthpointchc.org

Interfaith Community Health Center
Whatcom County
(877) 235-6850
www.interfaithchc.org

International Community Health Services
King County
(206) 788-3700
www.ichs.com

Moses Lake Community Health Center
Grant County
(509) 765-0674
www.mlchc.org

Neighborcare Health (formerly Puget Sound Neighborhood Health Centers)
King County
(206) 548-3019
www.neighborcare.org

N.E. Washington Health Programs
Ferry, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens Counties
(800) 829-6583
www.newhwp.org

Peninsula Community Health Services
Kitsap County
(360) 478-2366
www.pchswb.org

Sea Mar Community Health Center
Clark, Grays Harbor, King, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston, and Whatcom Counties
(206) 763-5277
www.seamar.org

Tri-Cities Community Health
Benton and Franklin Counties
(866) 574-2204
www.laclinicanet.org

Valley View Health Center
Lewis County
(360) 330-9595
www.vvhc.org

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic
Benton, Franklin, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima Counties
(509) 865-5898
www.yvfwc.org



Health Care Reminder: Schedule Your Annual Physical

Why is this so important? Preventive services can find health problems early when treatment works best and can keep you from getting certain diseases or illnesses. Medicare pays for many preventive services to keep you healthy. Talk with your health care provider to find out what tests you need and how often you need them to stay healthy.

Additional information on preventive services can be found in Medicare's publication titled, *Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services*. You can also visit the Preventive Services section at www.Medicare.gov.