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### A Message from Kal Mistry

You know the balance in your bank account. You also know when your car needs fuel because your dashboard tells you. Do you know the balance in your "health account" or the levels in your "health dashboard"?

One way to maintain good health is to know your health numbers, such as your cholesterol or glucose levels. If you don't know your health numbers, you might not know if your health is at risk. Health screenings are critical for recognizing your risk factors and alerting you of potential health problems.

In our next VITAS*Cares* Wellness Challenge, we ask every employee to take the VITAS Health Assessment to find out his/her overall

health and wellness score. Also, in this edition of our newsletter, we provide you with a "crib sheet" that explains the meaning behind key health numbers—such as blood pressure and triglycerides—and gives you a healthy range for those numbers.

It's important for VITAS to know its "financial health" so it can continue to grow and succeed. It's just as important for our employees to know their health numbers, so they can continue to lead a happy, healthy and prosperous life. Knowledge is power. Let's arm ourselves with our health numbers, so we can achieve optimal power as individuals—and as a company!

*Kal Mistry,*  
Chief Administrative Officer/SVP



### New Wellness Challenge is Easy to Win!

The next VITAS*Cares* Wellness Challenge runs from January 1, 2011, to March 31, 2011, and it's

easy to win. All you have to do is take the 15-minute VITAS Health Assessment (HA), and you get \$50.

Learning your health status can identify areas that might need improvement or inform you of possible risk factors. It doesn't matter what your final score is after taking the assessment; whether you're in perfect physical condition or you could afford to reduce your cholesterol, stop smoking or lose some weight, you can earn \$50.

"It's easy to do, and you don't have to see your physician beforehand, such as for your cholesterol or blood-pressure numbers," says VITAS Senior Director of Compensation and Benefits Mary Cuervo. "You will, however, get a more complete assessment if you have those numbers."

Once you complete the HA, you will receive a gift card in the amount of \$50 for one of several participating retailers.

All personal information shared in the HA is protected by federal and state laws and will not be shared with VITAS. Only aggregated statistics are provided to VITAS so it can develop a total-health profile of its workforce and determine its employees' healthcare needs.

### How Do I Take the HA?

Go to [www.vitas.com/benefits](http://www.vitas.com/benefits) and click on the link for your specific healthcare insurance carrier.

#### For United Healthcare Members:

- Log in or register in the "Site Login" box
- Click on the "Health and Wellness" tab at the top of the page
- Click on the "Health Assessment" link

#### For Kaiser-Permanente Members:

- Click on the "Your Rewards" tab at the top of the page
- Click on the "Total Health Assessment" link
- Log in or register in the "Sign On" box



Your personal HealthNote is seen by only you and UHC.

## Health-e News from United Healthcare

United Healthcare (UHC) has developed a way to communicate with its policy holders—personally.

“HealthNotes” (pronounced “healthy notes”) provides UHC’s policy holders and their family members messages containing health and wellness tips, cost-saving opportunities and reminders unique to their personal health issues. The messages are sent on an “as-needed” basis via regular mail, and policy holders needn’t do a thing to receive one.

“UHC automatically sends a HealthNote when it has a recommendation that could benefit a policy holder, based on analysis of that policy holder’s claims,” explains VITAS Senior Director of Compensation and Benefits Mary Cuervo. “For instance, if you’re a diabetic and your medicine

guidelines suggest lab tests twice a year, UHC might send you a HealthNote to remind you to schedule your tests. Or it might offer tips on how to remember to take your medication as prescribed.”

Or, as in Mary’s case, UHC might send a HealthNote about generic prescription medications available for a certain ailment.

“I switched to one of the generics, which actually works better and I saved on my out-of-pocket costs,” says Mary.

If you receive a HealthNote—which is seen by only you and UHC—take a few moments to read it and see if it might apply to your life. Then talk to your physician to find out what is best for you. You might save yourself time, money and future healthcare problems!

## ‘Happy’ Holidays?

*If during the holidays—or any day—you need a ‘lift,’ the VITAS Employee Assistance Program might help*

Full of shopping, decorating and general merry-making, the holiday season is often associated with “happiness” and “fun”—though not for everyone.

Sometimes the holidays come with feelings of stress, sadness and loneliness. Maybe we’re pushing ourselves too hard; maybe we’re remembering holidays past with family and friends who are no longer with us. Maybe we’re spending beyond our means (thus burying ourselves in debt), or maybe the season’s “shorter” days (due to less sunlight) have sapped our energy. During all this, we’re also working, trying to do our jobs well.

If any of these feelings ring true for you and you’re a VITAS employee, help is at your fingertips. Through the click of a mouse or a toll-free telephone call (see *box for details*), you can access mental health and other counseling services or referrals, childcare and eldercare referrals, financial and legal advice and tips on balancing work and life through the VITAS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions.

Of course, feelings of stress, sadness or loneliness aren’t unique to the holidays. Those feelings can occur any time, and VITAS’ EAP

services are available any time, with agents who—through free and confidential screenings and assessments—will help you determine the best resources, courses of action or further referrals that you might need.\*

If you think you might be suffering from sadness or depression, or if you’re just feeling “out of sorts” and need a lift, or if you need financial advice, take advantage of your VITAS benefits and contact OptumHealth.

**Use Your Employee Benefit**  
All VITAS employees can use the VITAS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions. Call toll-free—866.374.6061, or 866.216.9926 TDD/TTY; or log on to [www.liveandworkwell.com](http://www.liveandworkwell.com) (access code: Vitas).



\*An EAP mental health screening won’t tell you if you’re depressed, but it will identify if you are experiencing symptoms of depression and should seek further medical or professional care.



## Diabetes: 5 Common Misconceptions

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recently surveyed more than 2,000 Americans and found there are many common misconceptions surrounding the disease. Here are the top five misconceptions:

**1 Eating too much sugar causes diabetes.** Consuming too much sugar doesn't cause diabetes; however, it can contribute to weight gain, and carrying excessive weight can increase a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

**2 Being overweight causes diabetes.** Being overweight is just one of several risk factors of diabetes; it doesn't preclude that a person will develop the disease. Other risk factors include being older than 45, lack of regular physical activity or a family history of the disease.

**3 Diabetics must eat foods different from everyone else's.** Diabetics should follow the same diet guidelines as everyone else, including choosing low-fat, nutrient-rich foods with an appropriate amount of calories.

**4 A diabetes diagnosis automatically means you need insulin.** That's true with type 1 diabetes, in which the body's immune system destroys the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. Individuals with type 2 diabetes do not necessarily need insulin; through proper diet and exercise, they might be able to control their diabetes.

**5 Only older people get diabetes.** Today, children as young as 5 are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. It used to be that kids got just type 1 diabetes; now the split between type 1 and type 2 in people 18 years of age and younger is about 60-40.

Sources: *US News & World Report, WebMD*

## Diabetes: VITAS Success Stories

The American Diabetes Association estimates 7.8 percent of Americans have type 2 diabetes. Meet three VITAS employees who experienced "wake-up calls" about their health and are either controlling their diabetes or taking steps to reduce their diabetes risk.

**Jerome Weaver, MDiv, Chaplain, Cincinnati**



For years Jerome lived with diabetes by just "taking two pills a day, not exercising and eating whatever, whenever I wanted." Then his father died—at 58.

"I was mad at my dad," says Jerome, who has two sons. "He knew he had diabetes yet he did nothing about it. Instead, he ate ice cream at 2 a.m." He died because of complications due to diabetes, including congestive heart and kidney failure.

Jolted to reality, Jerome signed up for the VITAScares Lose-to-Win Challenge in August of 2009. He followed Weight Watchers® and exercised. He lost 40 pounds.

Today, Jerome takes one diabetes medication, "and my doctor says if I lose another 20 pounds, I can get off medication completely." He still follows Weight Watchers® and still exercises, both of which help control his blood sugar levels. Having recently played in a father-son soccer game, Jerome says: "I've recaptured some of my youth! I feel great!"

**Sarah Speier, Receptionist, Inland Empire**



"My family tree is ripe with diabetes," says Sarah. "All of my relatives with diabetes could have prevented the disease through diet and exercise." But they didn't.

Sarah's father lost his eyesight and a toe because of diabetes. "A year ago, I looked at how limited my dad's life has become and the impact it's had on my mother as his caregiver," says Sarah. "I realized I needed to do something—about my

weight and my risk of diabetes."

After having tried weight-loss programs that were effective but unsustainable over the long haul, Sarah tried—and liked—the well-balanced Weight Watchers® plan. She also started walking several times a week.

"My weight loss is slow, but I've taken charge of my life. I'm doing it one day at a time in a healthy way," says Sarah. "Also, my blood sugar is consistently well below the recommended level, and that gives me peace of mind."

**Jennifer Gibson, RN, Patient Care Administrator, San Francisco**



Two years ago, as Jennifer looked at an old photo album, her young son peeked over her shoulder.

"He said, 'Wow, mom, you've really gained weight!'" That's when Jennifer, who had developed diabetes 10 years earlier, wondered where her life was headed.

"I was taking two medications for diabetes. I didn't like the way I looked or felt ... I was always tired ..." and she smoked and ate sweets

when stressed. She had to take back her life.

Jennifer kept a food journal "to track what, when and why I ate what I ate" so she could plan ahead and pack healthy snacks. She also vowed to eat only whole grains, fiber, lean protein and lots of vegetables. She also started exercising and stopped smoking.

Jennifer now takes one diabetes medication and checks her blood sugar just four times a week. When stressed, "I just close my eyes, breathe and tell myself, 'All will be well.'"



## Low Fat Spinach Dip

This low-fat spinach dip makes a terrific appetizer. Serve with a platter of fresh vegetables or with some baked chips or breadsticks. Use frozen chopped spinach if you prefer. You can spice it up a little by adding a dash of hot sauce.

### Ingredients:

- 10 ounces fresh baby spinach, steamed until wilted
- 1 cup plain fat-free yogurt, drained of excess water
- 4 ounces fat-free cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup finely chopped scallions
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

### Directions:

Place wilted spinach in a colander and squeeze out excess water. Chop finely and place in a medium bowl.

Stir yogurt and cream cheese together until smooth. Add to spinach.

Stir in remaining ingredients and blend thoroughly. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes about 2 cups.

**Nutrition Information:** Per serving (¼ cup): 55 calories; 11 calories from fat; 1.3g total fat (0.7g saturated fat); 3mg cholesterol; 186mg sodium; 4.7g carbohydrate; 1.1g fiber; 6.2g protein.

Source: *About.com Low-Fat Cooking*

## How to Have Healthy Holidays

Ah, the holidays. Buffets of food and high-calorie beverages beckon you at work, church and school parties. At family gatherings, gravy laced roast turkey and Aunt Velma's sweet potato casserole (with marshmallows) whisper, "Come hither." And at every turn, sweet treats entice you with dustings of powdered sugar, swaths of frosting and oodles of colorful sprinkles. Ooh, sprinkles ...

It's said there are no "good" or "bad" foods—only good and bad eating habits. And during the holidays, many of us let our good habits slide. So here are some tips for staying healthy during the holidays, so you won't have to triple your time on the treadmill in January (unless you want to).

**Take control.** Before a holiday event, eat a healthy snack or light meal. Foods high in protein, such as lean chicken or cottage cheese, will help curb your appetite. Many people "fast" before a holiday event in anticipation of a big meal, but this could lead to overeating, so be careful.

If you're hosting a party, offering non-alcoholic beverages and healthy hors d'oeuvres such as fruits and vegetables helps everyone avoid overdoing it on the higher-fat, higher-calorie fare.



**Find balance.** Holiday foods taste good because they're loaded with fat and sugar. Enjoy them, but practice restraint. Eat small portions.

**Drink responsibly.** Alcoholic beverages are high in calories; eggnog and spiked hot chocolate are drowning in them. Sodas, punch and fruit juice aren't so innocent, either. For a lower-calorie beverage, try hot cider, diet soda or flavored water.

**Be realistic.** Take a walk after eating, and don't stand around the buffet at a party; if you do, you'll likely eat more.

When you're on the go, burgers and pizzas are tempting. Avoid the fast-food trap by preparing and freezing healthy meals in advance.

Finally, don't try to diet during the holidays. Just maintain your present weight and enjoy yourself!

Source: *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*

## Upcoming 2011 Health Observances

### January

- National Glaucoma Awareness Month
- Thyroid Awareness Month
- National Folic Acid Awareness Week (2-8)

### February

- American Heart Month
- National Wear Red Day (4)
- National Donor Day (14)
- National Wise Health Consumer Month

### March

- National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- National Nutrition Month®
- Workplace Eye Wellness Month
- American Diabetes Alert Day (25)

## New Acupuncture Benefit

Starting in January 2011, United Healthcare will carry an acupuncture benefit. VITAS employees will have a co-pay for in-network acupuncturist office visits.

There will be no limit on the number of visits allowed nor on the dollar value of those visits.

For more information, go to [www.myuhc.com](http://www.myuhc.com).



Editor: Kal Mistry

Graphic Designer: Iramy Garcia

Send stories or ideas to: Christine Lyall at [Christine.Lyall@vitas.com](mailto:Christine.Lyall@vitas.com). *VITAScares Wellness* is published quarterly by the VITAS Benefits Department for VITAS employees and volunteers. It is not intended for general distribution outside of VITAS. For more information on articles appearing in *VITAScares Wellness*, please contact the Corporate Communications Department at 305.350.6337 or V-net 8.010.5337.



We're on the web at **VITAS i-Net**

VITAScares Wellness Benefits Department  
100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 1500  
Miami, FL 3313  
305.350.6043





# Reading Your Health 'Dashboard'

Regular health screenings are recommended for maintaining good health. Your doctor should discuss your results with you—especially if there are signs of potential problems—but just what do all those numbers mean? This “dashboard” lists the key vitals typically measured in a health screening, along with a range of values for each. If your numbers aren’t what they should be, consult your doctor. It might be time for a tune-up! *(Except where noted, all values are expressed as milligrams per deciliter of blood, or mg/dL.)*

Health Screening Measurement	Value (< is less than; > is greater than)
<p><b>Total Cholesterol</b> Our cells need this fatty substance to function properly; it is carried to and from our cells by Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL) and High Density Lipoproteins (HDL), which, together with our triglycerides, contribute to our total cholesterol level. High total cholesterol is associated with an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.</p>	<p>Normal: &lt; 200 mg/dL Borderline high: 200–239 mg/dL High: &gt; 240 mg/dL Very high*: &gt; 300 mg/dL</p>
<p><b>LDL Cholesterol</b> Called “bad cholesterol,” this is the main source of cholesterol build-up and blockage in our arteries, which can lead to heart attack and stroke. To determine what your LDL level should be, your doctor will consider your personal risk factors; a healthy level for you might not be the same for someone else.</p>	<p>Optimal: &lt; 100 mg/dL Near/above optimal: 100–129 mg/dL Borderline high: 130–159 mg/dL High: 160 mg/dL Very high*: &gt; 190 mg/dL</p>
<p><b>HDL Cholesterol</b> Called “good cholesterol,” this seems to protect against heart attack; low levels indicate a higher risk for heart disease. HDL cholesterol is thought to help reduce cholesterol build-up in the arteries by carrying cholesterol to the liver (where it's passed from the body). Men and women have different healthy levels.</p>	<p>Normal (male): 40–50 mg/dL Normal (female): 50–60 mg/dL</p>
<p><b>Triglycerides</b> These chemicals are produced from the fat and other energy sources, such as carbohydrates, that we eat. High levels are often linked to lifestyle factors such as diet, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and lack of exercise, but underlying diseases or genetic disorders can contribute.</p>	<p>Normal: &lt; 150 mg/dL Borderline high: 150–199 mg/dL High: 200–499 mg/dL Very high*: ≥ 500 mg/dL</p>
<p><b>Glucose</b> The blood glucose test is the standard test for diabetes and measures the level of sugar in a person's blood after fasting. A measure of 100–126 mg/dL could indicate a condition of pre-diabetes; a measure of 126 mg/dL or higher could indicate diabetes.</p>	<p>Normal: &lt; 100 mg/dL High: 100–126 mg/dL Very high: &gt; 250 mg/dL</p>
<p><b>Blood Pressure</b> The force of blood against the walls of our arteries and other blood vessels. Our systolic pressure is our blood pressure when our heart is pumping; our diastolic pressure occurs when the heart is at rest (between beats). These two pressures are expressed as one “over” the other, such as “120 over 80,” or 120/80 mmHg (millimeters of mercury, a unit for measuring pressure). When blood pressure stays high over time, it becomes hypertension; the heart works harder, your arteries take a beating and your chances of a stroke, heart attack, kidney problems and other diseases are greater.</p>	<p>Normal: &lt; 120/80 mmHG A higher reading indicates pre-hypertension. A reading of 140/90 mmHG or higher is considered Stage 1 hypertension, or high blood pressure. A reading of 160/100 mmHG or higher is considered Stage 2 hypertension.</p>
<p><b>Body Mass Index (BMI)</b> BMI measures a person's relationship between height and weight and, for most people, is a fairly reliable indicator of body fatness (it might overestimate body fat in athletes and others who have a muscular build). BMI is calculated by dividing one's weight in pounds by one's height in inches squared, then multiplying by 703. For example, a person who is 5 feet, 6 inches tall (66 inches) and weighs 130 pounds has a BMI of 21.</p>	<p>Underweight: &lt; 18.5 Healthy weight: 18.5–24.9 Overweight: 25–29.9 Obese: 30–39.9 Severely Obese*: &gt; 40.0</p>

\*Individuals falling in very high classifications might require urgent attention and should seek immediate medical assistance.

Sources: American Heart Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



# Where should I go for care?

## Helping you choose the right care center

Care center:	Why would I use this care center:	What type of care would they provide*:	What are the cost** and time considerations?***
<b>Doctor's Office</b> 	<b>You need routine care or treatment for a current health issue.</b> Your primary doctor knows you and your health history, can access your medical records, provide preventive and routine care, manage your medications and refer you to a specialist, if necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Routine checkups</li> <li>▶ Immunizations</li> <li>▶ Preventive services</li> <li>▶ Manage your general health</li> </ul>	Often requires a copayment and/or coinsurance Normally requires an appointment Little wait time with scheduled appointment.
<b>Convenience Care Clinic</b> 	<b>You can't get to your doctor's office, but your condition is not urgent or an emergency.</b> Convenience care clinics are often located in malls or retail stores offering services for minor health conditions. Staffed by nurse practitioners and physician assistants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Common infections (e.g.: strep throat)</li> <li>▶ Minor skin conditions (e.g.: poison ivy)</li> <li>▶ Flu shots</li> <li>▶ Pregnancy tests</li> <li>▶ Minor cuts</li> <li>▶ Ear aches</li> </ul>	Often requires a copayment and/or coinsurance similar to office visit Walk in patients welcome with no appointments necessary, but wait times can vary
<b>Urgent Care Center</b> 	<b>You may need care quickly, but it is not an emergency, and your primary physician may not be available.</b> Urgent care centers offer treatment for non-life threatening injuries or illnesses. Staffed by qualified physicians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Sprains</li> <li>▶ Strains</li> <li>▶ Minor broken bones (e.g: finger)</li> <li>▶ Minor infections</li> <li>▶ High fever</li> <li>▶ Minor burns</li> </ul>	Often requires a copayment and/or coinsurance usually higher than an office visit Walk in patients welcome, but waiting periods may be longer as patients with more urgent needs will be treated first.
<b>Emergency Room</b> 	<b>You need immediate treatment of a very serious or critical condition.</b> The ER is for the treatment of life-threatening or very serious conditions that require immediate medical attention. Do not ignore an emergency. If a situation seems life threatening, take action. Call 911 or your local emergency number right away.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Heavy bleeding</li> <li>▶ Large open wounds</li> <li>▶ Sudden change in vision</li> <li>▶ Chest pain</li> <li>▶ Sudden weakness or trouble talking</li> <li>▶ Major burns</li> <li>▶ Spinal injuries</li> <li>▶ Severe head injury</li> <li>▶ Difficulty breathing</li> <li>▶ Major broken bones</li> </ul>	Often requires a much higher copayment and/or coinsurance Open 24/7, but waiting periods may be longer because patients with life-threatening emergencies will be treated first.

If you have questions or need more information, you can speak with a registered nurse at anytime by calling the number on the back of your UnitedHealthcare member ID card.

\*This is a sample list of services and may not be all-inclusive.

\*\*Costs and time information represents averages only and is not tied to a specific condition or treatment. Your out-of-pocket costs will vary based on plan design.

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