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COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN

# My CHP Connection

A quarterly health publication for Community Health Plan members

Summer 2007

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## THE HUES | of good health

**H**ow colorful is your mealtime plate? We're not talking about your taste in tableware, but rather what you're putting on it. If most of your food falls in the neutral-color range — like the dark brown and beige of a burger and fries — you're missing out on an easy way to help prevent cancer.

Dr. David Heber, author of *What Color Is Your Diet?*, says that people who eat more than seven servings of colorful fruits and vegetables per day cut their cancer risk by 50 percent. Think of these "cancer-fighters" in terms of color groups.

**Red**  
Tomatoes and tomato products contain lycopene, an antioxidant that may reduce tumor formation.

**Red-Purple**  
Fruits like raspberries, blueberries, strawberries and grapes contain cancer-preventers called polyphenols.

**Green**  
Vegetables like broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cabbage help the body remove carcinogens.

**Green-Yellow**  
Foods like spinach, kale, collards and mustard greens contain lutein, which may inhibit tumor development.

**White-Green**  
Allyl sulfides, found in pungent foods like garlic and onions, also help prevent cancer.

**Orange**  
Carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash and other golden gems are full of beta-carotene, an antioxidant.

**Orange-Yellow**  
The citrus fruit group, which includes oranges and grapefruits, provides flavonoids and vitamin C.

Choose at least one food from each of these color groups every day and you'll not only fight cancer but you'll enjoy better overall health too.

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

## WHAT'S WHAT | with cholesterol control

With heart disease as the number one cause of death in the United States, cardiovascular care should be everyone's top health priority. One of the most important components of heart health is cholesterol control.

In recent months, the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) has updated its guidelines on cholesterol control. These new guidelines could help thousands of Americans in the fight against heart disease.

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy substance naturally produced by your liver. The human body needs a certain amount of cholesterol to function properly. However, too much can clog arteries and lead to heart disease, heart attacks, and stroke. There are various types of cholesterol. LDL, or low-density lipoprotein, is often called "bad cholesterol" because it leads to a buildup of plaque in arteries. HDL, or high-density lipoprotein, is the "good cholesterol" because it helps remove the plaque buildup.

What are the guidelines?

The latest NCEP guidelines recommend that everyone age 20 and older have a lipid profile test done every five years.

- Total cholesterol should be 200 mg/dL or less. That hasn't changed.
- HDL cholesterol should be 40 or higher.
- LDL cholesterol is more complicated. The best level is under 100. A reading of over 160 is considered high. Your personal LDL target level depends on your risk factors for heart disease. Major risk factors include

smoking, high blood pressure, HDL cholesterol level under 40, family history of heart disease, and age (over 45 for men, over 55 for women).

If you have no major risk factors other than age, an LDL of 160 is the goal. With two risk factors, your healthy LDL target is 130. Those with heart disease, diabetes, or more than two risk factors need an LDL below 100. For those considered very high risk, LDL levels below 70 should be reached through drug therapy.

The guidelines also suggest lifestyle changes that can make a big improvement in lowering LDL levels:

- Diet. No more than 7 percent of total daily calories from saturated fats. No more than 200 mg of cholesterol per day. Ten to 25 grams of soluble fiber daily (fruits, oat bran, beans).
- Weight. Lose excess weight, especially abdominal fat.
- Exercise. Increase HDL levels with regular physical activity.

On the Web

Check out the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) Web site at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep). It has links to many other sites and fact sheets about cholesterol control.

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## YOUR RIGHTS | and responsibilities

Community Health Plan members have:

- A right to receive information about Community Health Plan, its services, its practitioners and providers and members' rights and responsibilities.
- A right to be treated with respect and recognition of their dignity and their right to privacy.
- A right to participate with practitioners in making decisions about their health care.
- A right to a candid discussion of appropriate or medically necessary treatment options for their conditions, regardless of cost or benefit coverage.
- A right to voice complaints or appeals about Community Health Plan or the care it provides.
- A right to make recommendations regarding Community Health Plan's members' rights and responsibilities policies.
- A responsibility to supply information (to the extent possible) that Community Health Plan and its practitioners and providers need in order to provide care.
- A responsibility to follow plans and instructions for care that they have agreed on with their practitioners.
- A responsibility to understand their health problems and participate in developing mutually agreed upon treatment goals to the degree possible.

## FITNESS | the fountain of youth

It's been said that growing old is not for the timid. Most of us can expect to experience decreased abilities as we age. With poor physical health often comes poor mental health. It's natural to feel sad or depressed when our bodies struggle. It's also natural to wish for that Fountain of Youth that might return us to our former vitality.

The fact is, there really is a Fountain of Youth. It's staying fit. Scientific research continues to prove that regular exercise can improve anyone's physical condition, from age 8 to 80 and beyond. What's more, a fit body also leads to a fit spirit.

A recent study at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore confirms this. The study tested men and women between the ages of 55 and 75 using treadmills and strength exercises. Researchers also measured the subjects' body fat. Those who scored better on these tests and kept their bodies lean also scored better on tests of mood and mental health.

"People who are more fit and lean may have a better self-image," said one of the researchers. "They may be involved in more recreational activities and be more independent." These are some of the traits that usually lead to happiness.

### The Well-Rounded Workout

Better fitness is within anyone's reach. It doesn't matter what your current fitness level is, or if it has been 30 years since you last exercised. All you need is the motivation to get started now.

Your first step is to talk to your doctor. Your primary care physician knows your health history. He or she can tell you what forms of exercise are appropriate for you. Any fitness program should contain three elements:

- **Aerobic exercise.** This includes any exercise that works your heart and lungs to improve stamina and endurance. Walking, swimming, and dance are some examples of low-impact aerobic activities.
- **Strength training.** Weight lifting and other resistance workouts build muscle and bone strength. This helps with balance, coordination, and handling the daily tasks of life like carrying groceries and climbing stairs.
- **Stretching.** Stretching exercises like yoga maintain flexibility. Stretching works with the other two elements to create a total workout package.

If you're looking for the Fountain of Youth, look no further than your local gym. A stronger body, a happier mind, and an optimistic spirit are there for the taking.

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## IMPROVING HEALTH | through disease management

Community Health Plan offers Community Connections Disease Management programs to members who have been diagnosed with diabetes, heart disease, asthma or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder). We focus on member education and instruction on how to self-manage a chronic disease. Our goal is to promote overall health and increase quality of life for our members.

What you can expect from participating:

- Regular contact with a registered nurse
- Communication with your doctor
- Individualized goal setting
- Educational mailings on topics such as diet, medications and a healthy lifestyle
- Quarterly newsletters

These programs are provided at no cost to Community Health Plan members. If you have been diagnosed with one of the conditions mentioned above and you would like

more information, please contact Community Connections at 816-271-7862 or 800-447-3617.

Our program includes the following:

- **Asthma Connections** – for adults and children with asthma.
- **Cardiac Connections** – for adults with coronary heart disease, heart failure, high blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmia, or heart attack.
- **COPD Connections** – for adults with chronic airflow obstruction due to chronic bronchitis or emphysema.
- **Diabetes Connections** – for adults with type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

For more information about each of these, visit [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com), click on Health Improvement on the left side of the screen, then select Community Connections from the list provided.

## DON'T WAIT | vaccinate

With serious vaccine-preventable diseases only a plane ride away, it's crucial to make sure your kids get their shots.

Immunization is vital to the health and survival of our nation, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Without a high vaccination rate, we could expect tragic, unnecessary deaths from vaccine-preventable disease.

America's immunization program has gotten the major epidemic diseases under control. But they have not been eliminated. In countries where vaccination has been disrupted, these illnesses have come back with a vengeance. Though cases of pertussis (whooping cough) and measles are at record lows in the U.S., they flourish elsewhere.

The rise in international travel has increased the importance of immunization. As one public health

official put it, "serious, vaccine-preventable diseases are only a plane ride away."

All states have laws about the vaccinations a child needs before entering school. But there are many vaccines that should start being given in infancy. And a series of booster shots are needed all the way through the early teens. Check with your child's physician to be sure all immunizations are up-to-date.

For the CDC's 2007 childhood and adolescent immunization schedules, visit [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com), click on Members on the top of the screen and select Childhood and Adolescent Immunizations from the list provided.

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### Smart Move

Don't just depend on your doctor to keep your child on a vaccination schedule. Ask the doctor for an immunization card and keep it with your other important medical papers. Bring the card to the doctor's office for updating at each visit.

## STUDENT STATUS VERIFICATION: for those with dependents in college

Once a year, in June, Community Health Plan mails letters and forms to members who have a dependent who is a current student according to our records. By completing and returning the mailed form or the online form by August 31, 2007, you have notified us of the status of your dependent for the entire year. If you have a student and did not receive a letter, please contact the Enrollment Department at (816) 271-1247 or (800) 990-9247.

When you receive the Student Status Verification form, you can either complete the mailed version or visit

[www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com) and complete the online version. Just go to Members and select Student Status Verification. If you complete the mailed version, please return the form in the self-address stamped envelope. If you do not notify Community Health Plan of your student's verification, your dependent's insurance benefits will be termed effective August 31, 2007.

# APPEALS PROCESS | selecting a PCP

Community Health Plan supports a robust network of providers, specialists, hospitals and clinics. Within this network, HMO members will need to select a primary care provider (PCP). The purpose of having a PCP is to build a trusting relationship with a health care provider who understands your medical history. Your PCP is in the best position to coordinate your medical care needs including annual physicals, lab tests, X-rays, physical therapy, authorizations for hospital admissions and referrals to specialists.

Members may select a PCP who is a general, family medicine or internal medicine practitioner, pediatrician, physician's assistant or advanced practice nurse.

If you have not visited your PCP yet or if it has been more than a year since you had an examination, schedule an appointment for a check up. Take a written list of your current medications and your top three to five health questions or concerns. Communicate with your provider by asking any remaining questions and make sure you have a clear understanding of his/her answers.

Members always have the option to change their PCP. You can do this by logging in to *MyCHP Service* at [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com). You may also contact Customer Service to help you select a new provider.

PPO members are not required to select a PCP and referrals to specialists are not required. Some medical services such as inpatient hospital admissions and home health care still require prior authorization. If you have a question about covered benefits or the need for authorization of services, please call Customer Service at (816) 271-1247 or (800) 990-9247.

To understand your full range of benefits, please use [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com), member handbooks and provider directories as sources of information to learn about your medical benefits and access to health care services.

Community Health Plan does have an appeal process for members to use if you find your concerns have not been resolved. To begin the appeal process, send a letter describing the problem directly to Community Health Plan. You or your chosen representative may submit related medical records, written comments, and documents with the appeal letter you are presenting. Your appeal letter needs to be sent within 180 days (within six months) of the claim denial or occurrence of the problem.

Please mail your appeal letter to:

Community Health Plan  
Attention: Appeals  
137 North Belt Highway  
St. Joseph, Missouri 65406

Your appeal will be reviewed and decided by the Internal Review Committee, which is composed of CHP management staff. This is the first level of the appeal process. You will be notified of the appeal decision by letter within 25 business days after receiving your appeal.

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Internal Review Committee, you may send a written request (again within 180 days) for an evaluation by an independent external review organization. This is the second and final level of review in the CHP appeal process.

An expedited appeal is an option, if your health could be jeopardized by the standard appeal process time frame. If your appeal is determined to be urgent in nature, the appeal decision will be made within 72 hours of receipt.

Select your PCP by visiting [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com) and clicking on the link to *MyCHP Service* on the home page. Simply log in to *MyCHP Service* using your username and password, then you have access to search the Provider Directory.

Urgent appeals may be requested by telephone to Customer Service, by faxing a written request to Appeals at fax number (816) 271-1266 or by delivering it in person to our office.

At anytime if you are not satisfied with a decision made by Community Health Plan, you have the right to contact the Department of Insurance. Contact the Missouri Department of Insurance at (800) 726-7390 or the Kansas Department of Insurance at (800) 432-2484. If your employer is self-insured contact your Human Resources department for further details regarding the appeal process.

# WELLNESS RECIPE | brought to you by Wellness Connections

## Salmon with Orange-Fennel Sauce

2 teaspoons grated orange rind  
1/2 cup fresh orange juice  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary  
1 teaspoon fennel seeds, crushed

4 (6-ounce) salmon fillets (about 1 inch thick)  
Cooking spray  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper

Combine first 4 ingredients in a large zip-top plastic bag; add fish. Seal and marinate in refrigerator 20 minutes, turning once. Prepare broiler. Remove fish from bag, reserving marinade. Place fish, skin sides down, on a broiler pan coated with cooking spray; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Broil 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Bring reserved marinade to a boil in a small saucepan. Reduce heat, and simmer 3 minutes. Serve sauce with fish.

### Nutritional facts

Serves: 4  
Calories: 244  
Total fat: 10.7 g  
Saturated fat: 2.5 g  
Cholesterol: 80 mg

Sodium: 214 mg  
Carbohydrates: 3.8 g  
Fiber: 0.4 g  
Protein: 31.3 g

## NOW ONLINE!

### Plan information now online!

You can now view plan information online. Just visit [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com), click on Member Newsletter on the left side of the home page and select Missouri DOI Plan Information to view the following topics:

New Technology: our member's care

*If you do not have Internet access, please contact Customer Service at (800) 990-9247 to receive a copy of this information.*

### Provider Directory: online

Search Community Health Plan's network providers online by visiting [www.mychp.com](http://www.mychp.com). Just click on MyCHP Service on the left side of the screen and log in. This directory offers real-time information related to the specific product you have purchased. If you would like a paper version of our Provider Directory, please contact Customer Service at 816-271-1271 or 800-990-9247.

## WELL WOMEN | exams that save lives

**F**emale members of Community Health Plan (CHP) are strongly encouraged to have an annual well-woman exam from your primary care provider or obstetrical/gynecological (OB/GYN) provider. The exam includes a pap test and a clinical breast exam (see below). Your provider will also schedule a mammogram, if appropriate. In addition to the routine well-woman exam, sexually active women should consider chlamydia screening. Chlamydia screening is essential, since the majority of women do not experience symptoms. This sexually transmitted disease can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility and ectopic pregnancy. Simply contact your health care provider to schedule an appointment.

If a health care need is identified during this exam, you may continue to go directly to the OB/GYN for follow-up care. If you need specialized services, the OB/GYN can make the arrangements.

### Pap Test

Pap tests find cancer and precancerous conditions at the earliest stage, when they are easiest to treat. The American Cancer Society recommends that all women — including older women, who often fall behind on their screenings — be given this test starting at age 18 or when they become sexually active, whichever occurs first.

### Clinical Breast Exam

A clinical breast exam (CBE) is a physical screening in which a physician feels for lumps in the breasts. A more effective screening is the mammogram, an X-ray of the breast that detects tumors that are too small to be felt with a physical exam.

Women in their 20s and 30s should have a CBE at least once every three years. Women age 40 and older should have a CBE and a mammogram every year.

### Mammograms

According to the American Cancer Society, regular mammograms reduce a woman's risk of breast cancer death by 63 percent. Those are odds any woman should take.

What makes mammograms so effective? The screening can find breast cancer up to two years earlier than any other form of detection. And breast cancer is much easier to treat and cure when it's caught early.

We recommend that all women age 40 and older get a yearly mammogram. Those age 60 and older account for the highest percentage of breast cancer deaths. If you haven't had your yearly mammogram, schedule one now.

### Breast Self-Exam

Try to get in the habit of doing a breast self-exam once a month to familiarize yourself with how your breasts normally look and feel. Examine yourself several days after your period ends, when your breasts are least likely to be swollen and tender. If you are no longer having periods, choose a day that's easy to remember, such as the first or last day of the month.

Don't panic if you think you feel a lump. Most women have some lumps or lumpy areas in their breasts all the time. Eight out of 10 breast lumps that are removed are benign, non-cancerous.

### Women's Health Rights Act of 1998

Community Health Plan provides mastectomy-related services including reconstruction surgery to achieve symmetry between the breasts, prostheses and complications resulting from a mastectomy (including lymphedema). If you have questions, please contact Customer Service at (816) 271-1247 or (800) 990-9247.



## FACING DOWN

## depression

It was not very long ago when depression was suffered in silence. Today, depression is recognized as a medical disorder, like diabetes or high blood pressure. And it is not a rare disorder: Government statistics say that about 19 million Americans suffer from depression every year.

An equally large change is that depression is now highly treatable. Newly developed medications can successfully bring relief to at least 80 percent of depression sufferers, often easing symptoms within a matter of weeks.

### Reaching for Help

Unfortunately, most people with depression don't actively seek the help they need. Some don't recognize their symptoms, or are actually too depressed to seek help. Some think their depression will just go away on its own. And some are still too embarrassed to admit or talk about their feelings.

But depression is not a condition that can be wished away. People with a depressive illness cannot just "pull themselves together" and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years. Early treatment may keep depression from becoming more severe, or chronic. It can also keep the condition from recurring. The more episodes of depression you have, the greater the chance you will have another.

As with any medical illness, the first stop for help if you think you're suffering from depression should be your health care provider. Since about 15 percent of all depressions are caused by a general medical illness, you'll probably begin with a physical exam and some laboratory

tests. If there is no physical cause for your condition, be open with your doctor when it comes time to talk about your feelings.

### When to Talk With Your Doctor

Not everyone experiences depression in the same way. But there are a number of symptoms that typically indicate the condition.

See your doctor if you experience five or more of the following symptoms for longer than two weeks or if the symptoms are severe enough to interfere with your daily routine:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood.
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex.
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or being "slowed down."
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping.
- Loss of appetite and/or weight loss, or overeating and weight gain.
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts.
- Restlessness or irritability.
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, or chronic pain.

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This publication contains health information that is meant to complement your health care provider's advice, not to replace it. Before making changes in your medications, diet or exercise, talk to your doctor.

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