



Simply, the right choice.

COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN

My CHP Connection

A quarterly health publication for Community Health Plan members

Fall 2006

contents

2 **DIABETES** | the do's and don'ts

3 **FASTER REFERRALS** | for HMO members

4 **MISSING OUT** | on mammograms

5 **HIGH RISK** | care management

6 **WELLNESS RECIPE** | brought to you by Wellness Connections

7 **ALCOHOL** | how much is too much?

TOBACCO TAX | vote for a healthier Missouri

On Election Day, Tuesday, November 7, 2006, Missouri voters will have an opportunity to help stop the devastating effects of smoking on the health of smokers and non-smokers (through secondary smoke). They can do this by voting "yes" in support of the Tobacco Tax proposal for a constitutional amendment that will add 80 cents a pack to the tax on cigarettes in our state.

Missouri's current tax of 17 cents a pack ranks forty-ninth in the nation and is far below the national average of one-dollar a pack. At the same time, Missouri ranks tenth highest of all the states in number of lung cancer cases. Nearly one-quarter of Missourians smoke costing taxpayers nearly \$2 billion a year in health care expenses and \$2.3 billion in lost productivity. Additionally, Missouri ranks last in the

nation in funding smoking prevention programs.

If approved, the new tax would be effective on January 1, 2007, and will result in an additional \$351 million in State revenue in its first full year of implementation. This money will be utilized to fund Missouri public education campaigns and community programs to reduce tobacco use and to provide access to medically necessary healthcare coverage for low-income and uninsured Missourians.

To improve the health and access to healthcare for Missourians, we urge you to join us in supporting the Tobacco Tax on Tuesday, November 7, 2006.

Robert Chabon, MD
Community Health Plan
Medical Director

Vote for a healthier Missouri
on Tuesday, November 7

www.mychp.com



Yes Tobacco Tax

DIABETES | the do's and don'ts

There's no question that managing diabetes is a serious challenge, but it can be done. Keep this guide to help remind you of the important basics that can protect your health:

- Do get the tests you need on schedule. Topping the list is the hemoglobin A1c test. It shows how well your blood sugar has been controlled over the past several months. Your doctor will determine your goal, but generally a good A1c reading is less than 7 percent. Get the A1c test every six months.

Because diabetes increases your risk for heart disease, be sure to have a full cholesterol screening at least once a year. Have your blood pressure checked at every doctor visit as well.

Diabetes can also cause serious kidney problems. Ask your doctor which kidney function screenings you need to have and how often.

- Don't skip your regular exams. Your doctor should check your feet for sores and nerve damage at every

visit. Have your vision tested, along with a dilated eye exam, every year. And have a dental exam and professional teeth cleaning twice a year.

- Do follow the meal plan your doctor or dietitian sets for you. A healthy diet should include whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and low-fat dairy and lean meats. Pay attention to portion sizes too.
- Don't be afraid to exercise. Being active offers many benefits, including helping your body use insulin better. (See sidebar.)

© 2006. Redspring® Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.

Another important "don't" is "don't smoke." Smoking is particularly dangerous for people with diabetes. If you smoke, ask your doctor to help you quit now.

Diabetes-Safe Exercise Tips

Physical activity is important for everyone, including people with diabetes. Since exercise can have immediate, as well as long-term, effects on your blood sugar, you need to add a few extra safety precautions to your fitness routine.

First, ask your doctor what kind of exercise is safe for you and when is the best time to do it. Also, ask how your medications or insulin injections will be affected, and whether you'll need to make adjustments before exercising.

Before you're ready to work out, test your blood sugar. A safe pre-exercise reading for most people is between 100 and 250 mg/dL. If it's less than 100, get a snack first. Don't exercise if your blood sugar is 300 mg/dL or higher. You should also test your blood sugar after you're finished, and every 30 minutes if you'll be exercising longer than a half hour. Ask your doctor for specific guidelines.

Finally, be prepared to deal with low blood sugar. Keep glucose tablets, hard candy, or fruit juice close by.

FASTER REFERRALS | for HMO members

Community Health Plan (CHP) is changing the way we handle referrals to make the process faster for you and easier for our providers. Effective January 1, 2007, HMO members will no longer receive approval and denial letters from CHP regarding referrals to a specialist. Your primary care provider will continue to grant referrals to specialists and will arrange your initial appointment with any newly approved specialists designated to oversee your care.

We will continue to send approval and denial letters for services that require prior authorization. If you have any questions or require additional information about referrals or prior authorizations, please contact Customer Service at (816) 271-1247 or (800) 990-9247.

SMOKING | what it does to you

Most people know that smoking is bad for them. But do you know why? When you know what's in tobacco, you might see why it's so important to quit.

Tobacco smoke has about 4,000 chemicals in it. More than 100 of them are poison. More than 60 cause cancer. One of the chemicals in tobacco is also used to kill insects. Another is in a toilet cleaner. Another is used to preserve dead bodies.

Smoking is known to cause disease in nearly every part of your body. It's linked to:

- Heart disease.
- Ten different kinds of cancer.

- Leukemia (blood disease).
- Cataracts (eye problems).
- Pneumonia.
- Broken hips.
- Complications from diabetes.
- Problems getting pregnant, during pregnancy, and birth.

Quitting isn't easy. But it can be done. Ask your doctor to help you make a plan. A doctor's help makes it much easier for you to kick the habit.

© 2006. Redspring® Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.

COMMUNITY
health
LINE

If you would like more information about how to quit smoking, contact Community Health Line at (816) 271-4000 or (800) 455-2476.

MISSING OUT | on mammograms

Mammograms are considered the most reliable breast screening tool available today. Regular mammograms can spot a tumor while it is still small and easier to treat. The American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org recommends that women get a mammogram every year, starting at age 40. Sadly, too many women fail to heed this call.

Researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School studied more than 72,000 women who received mammograms at Massachusetts General Hospital between 1985 and 2002. The researchers found that just 6 percent of the women who got screened in 1992 returned for another mammogram each of the following 10 years. Among women who got screened in 1996, only 16 percent returned for another test in each of the next five years.

“The medical community has done a great job communicating that it’s important to get a mammo-gram,” said lead researcher James Michaelson, Ph.D., “but it hasn’t done as great a job communicating that it’s important to return promptly {for subsequent mammograms}.”

Surprisingly, even some women who had already been treated for breast cancer didn’t get checked every year.

Michealson called the results, “disappointingly low.” They also are potentially deadly. For every missed mammogram, the risk of death from breast cancer rises. While 12 percent of those screened every year would die from the disease, more than 25 percent of women screened only once in five years would succumb.

Be sure you’re up-to-date with your mammogram schedule.

© 2006. Redspring® Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.

CHP Mammography Sites

For mammography, contact one of our participating providers from the list below to make an appointment.

Facility	Address	Phone number
Heartland Women’s Health	802 N. Riverside Rd., Ste. 200-A, St. Joseph, MO 64507	(816) 271-1200
Heartland Mammography Center	802 N. Riverside Rd., St. Joseph, MO 64506	(816) 271-1278
Northwest Medical Center	705 N. College, Albany, MO 64402	(660) 726-3941
Harrison County Community Hospital	2600 Miller Street, Bethany, MO 64424	(660) 425-2211
Cameron Regional Medical Center, Inc.	1600 E. Evergreen, Cameron, MO 64429	(816) 632-2101
Hedrick Medical Center	100 Central St., Chillicothe, MO 64601	(660) 646-1480
Community Hospital	405 E. Main, Fairfax, MO 64446	(660) 686-2211
Wright Memorial Hospital	701 E. First St., Trenton, MO 64683	(660) 359-5621
St. Francis Hospital and Health Services	2016 S. Main St., Maryville, MO 64468	(660) 562-7900
St. Francis Family Health Care	114 E. South Hills Dr., Maryville, MO 64468	(660) 562-2525
Saint Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City	4401 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO 64111	(816) 932-2600
Saint Luke’s Northland Hospital	5830 NW Barry Rd., Kansas City, MO 64154	(816) 891-6000
North Kansas City Hospital	2800 Clay Edwards Dr., Kansas City, MO 64116	(816) 691-2000
Medical Imaging, Inc.	9501 N. Oak Trfy., Ste. 100, Kansas City, MO 64155	(816) 455-0661
Imaging for Women, LLC	630 N.W. Englewood Rd., Kansas City, MO 64118	(816) 453-2700
Diagnostic Imaging Centers, PA	6724 Troost, Ste. 900, Kansas City, MO 64131	(816) 333-8420
Saint Luke’s South Hospital	12300 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS 66213	(913) 317-7000
Johnson County Imaging Center	12000 W. 110 th St., Ste. 500, Overland Park, KS 66210	(913) 469-8998
Shawnee Mission Medical Center	9100 W. 74 th St, Shawnee Mission, KS 66204	(913) 676-2000

HIGH RISK | care management

The Community Health Access, Resource and Education (CARE) program, known as CARE Connections, consists of care management services for members who have a complicated diagnosis or need assistance in managing multiple medical conditions. Examples of these conditions include: diabetes, congestive heart failure, organ transplants and cancer. CARE Connections also provides services for members with a behavioral health diagnosis such as chronic depression.

Initially, those members at risk will receive an introductory letter explaining this program. Next, members will receive a telephone call from their care partner, an experienced registered nurse. If the member chooses to participate in CARE Connections, the care partner will ask questions to better understand the member's health status. A personalized plan of care will then be developed with the member and his/her health care providers. The plan of care will establish short- and long-term goals around treating the illness and preventing additional problems. A letter explaining the plan of care will be sent to the member and the member's primary care provider (PCP).

Care partners will work with at-risk members to:

- Review their health status.
- Locate health care services to meet their needs.
- Help members and their families better understand the cause of their illness, the symptoms and treatments.

The member and providers will be contacted at regularly scheduled times to check the member's progress, follow up on the plan of care and answer the member's health care questions. The CARE program goal is to improve the overall quality of care received by our members through better communication between caregivers and a better understanding of the member's treatment.

A care partner is a registered nurse who is specially trained to coordinate care and services and provide education and support. Care partners work with those with high-risk conditions to ensure that they have all the tools and resources they need to improve their health and quality of life.

COPD | what is it?

COPD stands for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. In simpler words, this is a disease that damages your lungs and makes breathing harder. COPD is almost always caused by smoking.

People with COPD often have one or more of these symptoms:

- A cough that won't go away.
- A tight feeling in the chest.
- Shortness of breath.
- Lots of mucus.
- A need to clear the throat often.

COPD is a serious health problem. It causes more than 100,000 deaths and 600,000 trips to the hospital every year.

If you're a smoker, an ex-smoker, or were exposed to lots of smoke, tell your doctor. Even if you don't have

any symptoms now, you may need a simple test called spirometry (pronounced spy-ROM-uh-tree). Spirometry assesses your lung function and is easily completed in your provider's office. During the test:

- A tube is connected to the spirometer.
- You place your mouth on the tube and take the deepest breath possible.
- You then blow out as hard and as fast as possible.

This may be quickly repeated several times in one minute.

This test measures how much air you can blow out of your lungs and how fast you can blow it out. That can tell the doctor if your lungs are healthy.

© 2006. Redspring® Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.

WELLNESS RECIPE | brought to you by Wellness Connections

Asian Pasta Salad

- 2 tablespoons sliced almonds
- 2 tablespoons unsalted sunflower seed kernels
- 1 (8-ounce) package Chinese noodles, crumbled
- 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/3 cup less-sodium beef broth
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup chopped green onions
- 1 (10-ounce) package angel hair slaw

Heat a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add almonds, sunflower seed kernels, and noodles to pan; cook 3 minutes or until lightly toasted, stirring frequently. Combine vinegar, broth, sugar, oil, salt, and pepper in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Combine toasted noodle mixture, green onions, and slaw in a large bowl. Add vinegar mixture, tossing well to combine. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Nutritional facts

Serves: 12
Calories: 130
Total fat: 4 g
Saturated fat: 0.3 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Sodium: 165 mg
Carbohydrates: 20.9 g
Fiber: 1.5 g
Protein: 3 g

NOW ONLINE!

Plan information now online!

You can now view plan information online. Just visit 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:

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

Annual Physicals: a CHP benefit

New Technology: our member's care

Especially for Women: the well-woman exam

24-hour nurse line

Your link to health information

You have 24-hour access to experienced registered nurses, who routinely provide health information and assistance to our community. Community Health Line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This free, confidential nurse line is staffed with registered, certified nurses. If you have questions about symptoms, health issues, illnesses, medications, dosages or anything health related, they are here to help with accurate, timely information.

Our nurses have volumes of information at their finger tips and use medically approved guidelines to determine the level of care you need.

**To speak to a nurse, call
(816) 271-4000 or (816) 455-2476.**

ALCOHOL | how much is too much?

It's no secret that life is challenging. Whether it's a world situation or something closer to home, problems are everywhere. Loss of employment, health problems, or the death of a friend or family member can naturally cause anxiety, fear, and depression. And that can lead to alcohol abuse.

At first, a drink may offer some relief from stressful situations. Later on, though, drinking can cause trouble.

Statistics show that millions of Americans who have dependency problems don't get treatment. Recovery begins by recognizing the problem. Then, engaging your doctor in a frank and open discussion can put you on a healthier course.

Alcohol and Aging Don't Mix

Along with life changes, the simple fact of growing older changes your relationship with alcohol. As people age they become more sensitive to alcohol. The same amount of alcohol can have a greater effect on you now than it did when you were younger.

In addition, high blood pressure, ulcers, diabetes, and other health issues are made worse by consuming alcohol. And many medications, from aspirin and cold remedies to prescription drugs, should not be mixed with alcohol. If you take any medicine daily, this is a special concern for you.

Even small amounts of alcohol can impair judgment and coordination. That greatly increases your risk of accidents, including car crashes.

Alcohol even affects your doctor's ability to diagnose and treat some illnesses. For example, alcohol can dull pain that might be a warning sign of a heart attack. It can also cause symptoms that mirror signs of Alzheimer's disease.

Your Doctor Can Help

The key to stopping alcohol abuse is to talk to your doctor. Your doctor will be able to advise you about your health, drinking, and treatment options.

But you need to be honest about your drinking habits. Tell your doctor everything. That's the only way the doctor can diagnose a problem and begin a course of treatment.

Do You Need Help?

The National Institutes of Health suggests that you might want to get help if you or a loved one does any of the following:

- Drink to calm your nerves, forget your worries or reduce depression.
- Lose interest in food.
- Frequently have more than three drinks in one day. (A drink is one 12-ounce beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.)
- Lie about or try to hide drinking habits.
- Drink alone.
- Hurt yourself or someone else while drinking.
- Were drunk more than three or four times last year.
- Feel irritable or resentful, or act unreasonably when not drinking.
- Have medical, social, or financial worries caused by drinking.

© 2006. Redspring® Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.



MYCHP SERVICE | become an informed healthcare consumer

Being an informed healthcare consumer is growing more important each day. That's why Community Health Plan provides you access to your healthcare information through MyCHP Service. Logging in is easy ... your username to log in to MyCHP Service will be your member number, your initial password will be "Password1" and the first time you log in, you will be prompted to change your password — be sure to remember your new password.

To log in, on the CHP home page, click the MyCHP Service graphic. A new window will appear where you can enter your username and password. Once you've

logged in, you are ready to access the many services available to you:

- Eligibility information
- Claims information
- Referral status
- Ordering identification cards
- Changing your primary care provider
- Searchable Provider Directory
- And much more

If you have any questions about MyCHP Service, please contact Customer Service at (816) 271-1247 or (800) 990-9247.

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.

Community Health Plan
137 N. Belt Highway
St. Joseph, MO 64506
(816) 271-1247
(800) 990-9247
Heartland Health Business Plaza
entry hours: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
www.mychp.com

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
St. Joseph, MO
Permit No. 2455