

Spring 2025

Health letter



When you see this symbol, go to metroplusrewards.org to learn how you can earn a member reward.

Say yes to immunizations

Immunizations teach your child's body how to defend against germs. That means they'll be able to fight infections now and in the future. Babies, children, and teenagers need shots to protect them from different diseases. Without these shots, these diseases might lead to:

- Hospital stays
- Serious illness
- Death

One example is whooping cough (pertussis). This disease causes coughing and can make it hard to breathe. Anyone can catch whooping cough. But babies less than 1 year old are more likely to become very sick. About half end up in the hospital. To prevent that, shots for this disease start at 2 months old.

Ask your doctor about the shots your child needs, including any screenings and lead testing.



Schedule a well-child visit today!



Keep your child healthy by going to regular well-child visits. You can also earn a \$60 or \$20 reward. You will need to complete 6 well-child visits in the first 15 months or 2 visits between ages 16 and 30 months. Have you registered for rewards? Click [here](#).

VISIT US AT [METROPLUS.ORG](https://metroplus.org).

Do you speak a language other than English? MetroPlusHealth has Member Services staff who speak your language. Need help making an appointment? Call the Member Services Department at **800.303.9626 (TTY: 711)**.

Manage diabetes for a healthier life

Glucose gives your body energy. It powers your muscles, brain, and heart. But if you have **diabetes**, too much glucose can harm your body. Managing blood sugar helps you stay healthy.

What happens with diabetes

Your body turns food into glucose and uses insulin to move it into your cells for energy.

- Type 1 diabetes: Your body doesn't make insulin.
- Type 2 diabetes: Your body doesn't make enough insulin, or it can't use it well.

Too much sugar in your blood can clog blood vessels and harm nerves. This can cause:

- Numbness, pain, or tingling in your feet or legs
- Vision loss or blindness
- Kidney damage
- Heart disease or stroke
- Skin infections

How to manage blood sugar

It's possible to live healthier with diabetes.

Here are some tips:

- **See your doctor regularly.** Your doctor may prescribe insulin or another medication. Always take it as directed.
- **Follow a healthy diet.** Choose fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. Cut back on processed foods, sugary drinks, and alcohol.
- **Stay active.** Exercise for at least 2.5 hours every week. This could be walking, dancing, swimming or even doing housework.
- **Check your blood sugar.** To watch a video on checking blood sugar at home, click [here](#). If you need help, ask your doctor.
- **Find simple ways to relax.** Take a few slow breaths to feel calm. Focus on relaxing any tense part of your body. You can also talk to a friend or family member for support.

Managing your blood sugar can keep you feeling your best and protect your health.

Nutrition tips



Are you ready to make healthier lifestyle changes this year? To learn more about portion control and serving sizes, click [here](#). You can also search for information in our Good4YOU Health Library by clicking [here](#).



Reminder: Get flu and COVID-19 shots. These shots can help you stay healthy. You can also earn a \$10 reward for getting a flu shot. Have you registered for rewards? Click [here](#).

Breathe easier with these asthma tips

If you have asthma, your airways may react to pollen and mold. This can make it hard to breathe. Pollen and mold allergens are common triggers for asthma attacks.

What are pollens and molds?

Pollen comes from plants like weeds, grasses, and trees. Plants usually release pollen during spring, summer, and fall.

How do they affect you?

People who are allergic to pollen or molds can have a variety of symptoms, including:

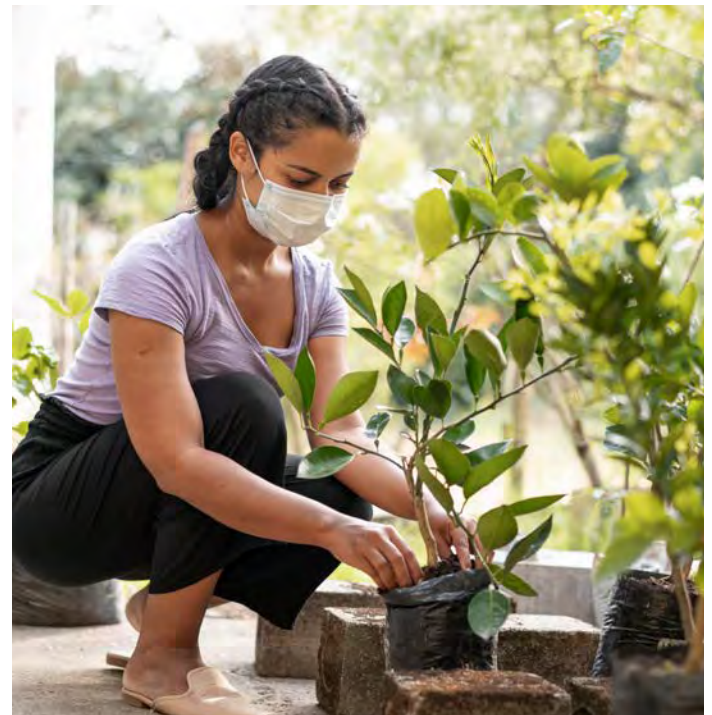
- Sneezing
- Congestion or runny nose
- Itchy, red, or watery eyes
- Itchy nose, mouth, or throat

For people with asthma, these allergens can cause swelling in the airways and trigger asthma attacks.

Tips to manage triggers

You can help avoid or reduce exposure to pollen and mold with these steps:

- **Check daily pollen and mold counts.** Stay indoors or limit outdoor activity when counts are high, especially on hot, dry, or windy days.
- **Stay away from smoke.** Also, don't let people smoke in your home or car.



- **Wear a mask.** Use one when doing yard work or gardening.
- **Avoid strong perfumes.** Cleaning products and fresh paint can also be triggers.
- **Wash up after being outside.** Clean your skin and hair to remove allergens.
- **Use air conditioning.** Keep windows and doors closed to reduce indoor allergens.

Does exercise trigger your asthma?

Exercise is a common trigger for many people with asthma. But that doesn't mean you should stop exercising. In fact, exercise is very helpful for people with asthma. It helps keep your lungs and muscles strong.

Some activities may be less likely to trigger symptoms. Talk to your doctor about the types and amounts of exercise that are best for you.

Need to refill your medicine?



You can earn a reward for refilling your asthma control medicine. Get a \$5 reward for a 30-day refill and \$30 for a 90-day refill. The maximum reward is \$120. To register for rewards, click [here](#). To learn more about asthma by taking a short quiz, click [here](#).

Did you sign up for MyChart? Use MyChart to make an appointment, get a refill, check test results, or send a message to your doctor's office. To sign up, click [here](#).

Is your teen using drugs?

It can be hard to know if your teen is using drugs, but here are some signs to look for:

- Mood swings
- Skipping school or lower grades
- New friends or being secretive about their social group
- Missing money or items from home
- Losing interest in activities



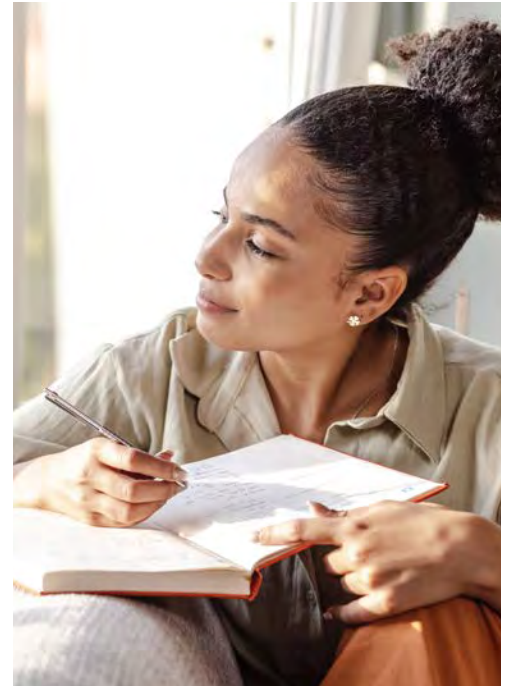
Some of these changes may be part of growing up, but it's important to notice if they happen suddenly.

If you see any of these signs, talk with your teen. Ask about their feelings and how they deal with stress. You can also:

- Talk with a school counselor or social worker about screening for drug use.
- Take your teen to the doctor to check for health problems.

To reach Member Services, call **800.303.9626**. You can also call, text or chat with trained counselors at **NYC 988**. It's free and confidential.

For tips on talking with your teen about drug use, click [here](#).



Feel better after a mental health hospital stay

Taking care of yourself after leaving the hospital isn't always easy. It can be hard if you were working through depression or another mental health issue. Here are a few simple ways to feel better at home:

- **Write in a journal.** Put your thoughts and feelings on paper.
- **Meditate.** Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a place that makes you feel happy.
- **Breathe deeply.** Take slow, deep breaths to relax.
- **Try light exercises.** Do gentle activities like yoga or walking. Just 5 minutes of motion can help your mind feel calmer.

Quality management program

MetroPlusHealth wants all New Yorkers to have access to good health care. Our goal is to be the top health plan for the communities we serve. To learn more about the Quality Management Program, click [here](#).



EPSDT Helps Your Child Stay Healthy

The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit provides services for children ages 21 and under to stay healthy. To learn more about EPSDT, click [here](#).