Get Your Flu Shot

Did you know that everyone 6 months of age or older should get a flu shot every year? The flu can make you and your loved ones very sick.

The best protection you can get is with a flu shot every year. The flu season lasts from October through May. It is best to get the flu shot as soon as it is available. But if it is still flu season, it’s not too late to get the flu shot.

Some people are at higher risk for getting the flu. They also are more likely to have complications from the flu:

- Children younger than 5. Children younger than 2 are at highest risk.
- Pregnant women.
- People living in nursing homes or other long-term care.
- Adults age 65 and older.
- American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

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Get Your Flu Shot (continued from page 1)

Flu-like symptoms include:

• Fever.
• Cough.
• Sore throat.
• Runny or stuffy nose.
• Body aches.
• Headache.
• Chills.
• Fatigue.
• Some people also may have vomiting and diarrhea.

In addition to getting a flu shot, you can do other things to help avoid the flu. Stay away from sick people. Wash your hands often to reduce the spread of germs.

If you are sick with the flu, stay home from work or school. And stay away from people who are at higher risk of getting the flu. This helps prevent spreading the flu to others.

If you have questions about the flu, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. Remember that you can now earn MDwise REWARDS points for getting an annual flu shot. Visit MDwise.org to learn more!

Women’s Health

MDwise wants you to get routine preventive care. Women can get this care from your primary medical provider or from a women’s health provider in the MDwise network. You do not need a referral from your primary medical provider. Some examples of women’s health providers are:

• Obstetricians.
• Gynecologists.
• Certified nurse midwives.

Services include:

• Family planning.
• Prenatal care.
• Breast exams.
• Mammograms.
• Pap tests.

Prenatal care is health care before and during pregnancy. It is important to see a health care provider in your first trimester or the first 3 months of pregnancy. Keep all appointments during your pregnancy. This helps keep you and your baby healthy.

A Pap test can save your life. It can find early signs of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer can almost always be prevented. Having regular Pap tests is the key. Talk to your doctor about when this test is right for you.

A sexually transmitted infection (STI) is an infection passed from person to person through intimate sexual contact. One of the most common STIs is Chlamydia. Most women have no symptoms. You can have it for a long time and not know. If not treated, it can cause harm to your female organs. It can result in not being able to have children. There are tests to find out if you have it and treatment if you do.

A mammogram is a low-dose x-ray exam of the breasts. It looks for changes that are not normal. Women who are 50 and older should have a mammogram every year. If you are younger than 50, you should ask your doctor if you should have a mammogram. The doctor will order a mammogram if you have risk factors for breast cancer. This includes a family history of breast cancer.

Talk to your doctor about these important exams and screenings. Make an appointment today.

Small Changes Lead to Healthy Weight Loss

Set short-term goals to reach a healthy weight. Reward yourself for reaching small goals along the way. Your long-term goal may be to lose 40 pounds. You may want to control your high blood pressure. Short-term goals will help you get there. Here is how to get started.

• Step 1: Make a commitment.
• Step 2: Take stock of where you are (current weight, health issues, etc.).
• Step 3: Set realistic goals.
• Step 4: Identify resources for information and support like:
  › MDwise WEIGHTwise – MDwise.org/wellness/weightwise
  › Center for Disease Control and Prevention Healthy Weight – cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html
• Step 5: Continually “check in” (see where you are on each of your goals).

Some ideas are to:

• Eat slowly.
• Start eating breakfast.
• Drink lots of water.
• Eat in the kitchen or dining room table.
• Take a 15-minute walk three days a week.
• Have a salad or vegetable with supper every day.
• Don’t eat out of the store package.
Getting the Most Out of Your Doctor’s Appointment

It is important to make the most out of every visit with your doctor. Adults, teens and children three years old and older should have a preventive care or well-care visit at least once a year. Babies need even more visits from birth through the age of two. Each visit gives you a chance to talk to your or your child’s doctor about your health. It also helps to find any health problems early.

Before your appointment:

• First, be sure that you know who your doctor is. You can call MDwise customer service if you are not sure.

• When making the appointment, explain why you need to see the doctor. This helps them to schedule the right amount of time for you.

• It may be your first visit to a clinic or provider. If so, be ready to tell them about diseases that run in your family. Describe your current and past health problems and treatments. Write it all down if that helps.

• Make a list of the medications you are taking. You can also bring in the bottles. Include any over-the-counter medicines. You should also list any vitamins, herbs or supplements you take. Your doctor needs to know the dose and how often you take each medicine.

• Find a friend or relative to go with you to your visit. The doctor may give you a lot of information. It may help to have someone with you to help write things down.

During your appointment:

• Tell your doctor about changes in your health. Especially: unexpected weight loss or fevers; changes in appetite or energy; new pain or change in chronic pain; change in bowel movements or urination; bleeding or bruising; chest pain or shortness of breath; and changes in the way you walk, talk or think.

• Give them your list of medications.

• Tell them how much alcohol, tobacco or other drugs you use.

• Talk about changes in your energy level or the amount of sleep you get.

• Don’t forget to tell them about your emotional health. It affects your physical health.

• Ask what health screenings you should get. Depending on your age, you should get screenings for cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure and weight. You may also need immunizations (shots).

• Repeat instructions your doctor gives you to be sure you heard everything. Ask questions to be sure you understand the instructions.

Before you leave the office:

• Ask if you need to watch for certain warning signs for your condition. Ask at what point you need to call in.

• If you received a new prescription, be sure you understand what it is for. How much and how often to take it. Any side effects to watch for. At what point you should call the doctor for concerns.

• Ask how to reach the doctor if you have questions or concerns. What hours are best? How soon can you expect a response?

• Find out if and when you should return for another visit. Schedule a follow-up appointment if necessary.

• Don’t leave if you’re uncertain about any instructions about your condition or treatment.

Source: Center for Advancing Health

How We Protect Your Privacy

Details about your health are personal. MDwise does all we can to protect your privacy. We make sure your health records and information about you are kept safe. Only staff that need to see your files to help you can get them. Even then, our staff signs statements promising not to share information about you. Our doctors follow these rules too.

If other people ask us for your records, you must first say it is okay. You have to give that permission in writing. The only time we do not check with you first is when someone has a need and a right to see the files. That’s determined by law.

We often review the way we keep your information safe. We want you to have good care and peace of mind. Our privacy policy is in your member handbook starting on page 49. The most recent version is at MDwise.org. You can also have a copy of our general privacy policy mailed to you. Call MDwise customer service if you’d like a copy (1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831 in the Indianapolis area).
Visit Your Doctor First

Your MDwise doctor is part of a MDwise team (also called a network or delivery system) of doctors. It is important for you to visit your assigned MDwise in-network doctor every year for a well-care physical. MDwise members can choose a primary medical provider (PMP). Or, if you don’t choose a PMP, one will be assigned to you. This doctor is called an in-network doctor. An in-network MDwise doctor usually works with a specific hospital in your community. You can be seen by your in-network doctor for:

- Primary care.
- Well-care.
- Sick visits.
- Other needs.

Your doctor is linked to other doctors who can take care of all of your health needs. The name of your network/delivery system can be found by logging into your myMDwise account at MDwise.org/myMDwise. It can be found in the Eligibility Status section under “My Benefits”. It is important to only get care from your team of doctors so they can get to know you, your family and your health history. This helps them provide better care for you. Getting care from your in-network team of doctors means:

- Seeing your in-network primary care doctor for visits.
- Going to the in-network hospital.
- Going to the in-network emergency room.

Changing from Pediatric to Adult Health Care

MDwise wants to help our young members stay healthy as they become adults. As youth get older they will need to change from a pediatric provider to adult care. Doctors usually suggest this change between the ages of 18 and 21 years.

After you choose a new provider you will need to:

- Get your medical records to the new provider.
- Tell your new provider about your health history.
- Give your insurance information to your new provider.

To get help with making the change to adult health care:

- Talk with your pediatrician.
- Call MDwise customer service to find or choose a doctor at 1-800-356-1204. If you are in the Indianapolis area call 317-630-2831.

Some youth have special health needs. This change may be more difficult for them. There is help to make this change easier. You can find information on the following websites:

- Family Voices Indiana: www.fvindiana.org/information/transition
- Indiana State Department of Health Care Coordination Services: www.in.gov/isdh/25312.htm
- Got Transition: www.gottransition.org/youthfamilies/index.cfm

Sources:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration
- Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs
- Indiana State Department of Health, Care Coordination Services

Second Opinions

Making decisions about your health care is very important in your life. It can be hard sometimes to know what is best for you. MDwise knows how important it is for you to know you made the right choices about your health. There are times you may want to talk another doctor about your care.

Second opinions are a way to learn more about your condition. They also help you make choices for treatment. Most doctors will welcome another physician’s input. Your doctor may be able to recommend a specialist. It should be another doctor in your MDwise network. You will want to get a copy of your medical records and test results. Share these with the new doctor that you see for the second opinion.

Call MDwise customer service at 1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831. If you are in the Indianapolis area call 317-630-2831 if you need help. We can help you find another in-network doctor so you can get a second opinion.

Get your FREE gift card!

MDwise REWARDS

You don’t have to sign up for MDwiseREWARDS to earn points. You are automatically enrolled. Earn points for a variety of activities, like going to your doctor appointments.

As of July 1, 2017, new points can be earned for dental exams and the flu shot each year. HIP members can also use their points to pay their monthly POWER Account payments for the HIP Plus plan. You can shop for gift cards with your points. Go to MDwise.org/rewards to learn more.
Is It an Emergency?

When an emergency happens, you know you need medical care fast. But what if you’re not sure if it’s a true emergency? How can you tell if you or a loved one should go to the emergency room?

Sometimes you know right away you should go to the emergency room. You may have symptoms of a heart attack or stroke. You may think your child broke their arm. Or you may have a bad cut that won’t stop bleeding.

There are other times when it is best to see your MDwise doctor. For example:

- If your symptoms come on gradually.
- You think your child has an ear infection.
- You or your child has cold or flu symptoms.
- You sprain your ankle.

Your primary doctor knows your health history best. He or she will have your medical records. Unless you are sure it is an emergency, it is always best to call your doctor first when you need medical care.

Sometimes it is unclear when to go to the emergency room. Here are some hints to help you decide:

1. Your usual doctor can tell you to go to the emergency room right away.
2. MDwise NURSEon-call is available 24-hours a day. The nurse can tell you whether to go to the emergency room or wait to see your usual doctor.
3. If you believe you or your family member will have a bad outcome if you don’t seek health care right away, you may need to go to the emergency room.

You can learn more about emergency warning signs and what to do. Take a first aid class and learn CPR. Contact your local hospital, American Red Cross or the American Heart Association. They may have first aid classes in your area. Or they can tell you who to call.

Important Note: This information is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor or other health care professional.
**Areas in which MDwise improved in 2016:**

- Well-care visits for children.
- 0–15 months of age.
- 3–6 years of age.
- Adolescents, 12–21 years of age.
- Pregnant women.
- Starting prenatal care in the first 3 months of pregnancy.
- Getting ongoing prenatal care through the pregnancy.
- Postpartum care.
- Hoosier Healthwise.
- Members getting a follow-up outpatient visit after a mental health inpatient hospital stay.

While MDwise did better on well-care visits for children in 2016, we are still working to make more improvements:

- Babies should have eight well child visits by 15 months of age.
- Babies getting all recommended immunizations (shots) by age two.
- All babies should have a lead test completed by age two.
- Teens getting a well exam each year and the immunizations (shots) that they need.

MDwise is also working to improve in these areas in 2017:

- Helping pregnant women to quit using tobacco.
- After delivery of a baby, women getting in for their postpartum exam within 21–56 days.
- All members quitting tobacco use.
- Getting adults in for well care and the health screenings that they need every year.
- Getting HIP adult members in for a follow-up appointment in 7-days of a mental health inpatient hospital stay.
- Members using the emergency room wisely.
- Diabetic members getting the tests they need and keeping healthy sugar levels and blood pressure.

**What Are the Signs of Worsening Asthma?**

It is important to know the early signs of worsening asthma. By knowing the early warning signs, you can treat them early. Early treatment will help avoid an asthma attack. This will help avoid a trip to the emergency room.

The main early warning signs of worsening asthma are:

- Having a wheeze, cough, chest tightness or discomfort during the day.
- Feeling short of breath or “winded” during the day.
- Waking up at night with a wheeze or cough.
- Waking up at night with chest tightness or shortness of breath.
- Having to use a breathing machine or inhaler of “quick-relief” medicine (albuterol) more than 2 times a week during the day.
- Having to use a breathing machine or inhaler of “quick-relief” medicine (albuterol) more than 1 time a month during the night.
- Having trouble doing the things you normally do (including exercise—running, jumping, playing, climbing stairs).
- Have a lower peak flow reading.

If you have early signs of worsening asthma, follow your written asthma action plan. If you do not have a written plan, ask your doctor for one right away. Your asthma action plan should be used every day to control your asthma. It will tell you how to avoid asthma symptoms. It will also tell you how to treat an asthma attack. Your written asthma action plan should be updated with your doctor at least every 6 months.

Sources: