MDwise would like to remind members that 24/7 access to a Registered Nurse is available to MDwise members and can be accessed by calling our toll-free Customer Service at 1-800-356-1204. Members can select option #1, then option #4. In addition to providing access to a Registered Nurse and triage, members can also access an audio library with over 100 topics.

What’s Inside:
- What to Do If You Have Winter Blues.................. 1
- WEIGHTwise: Let Your Plate Be Your Guide.......... 2
- Check Out MDwise.org ..................................... 2
- Results of 2019 Member Satisfaction Survey ......... 3
- How to Get Help with a Problem ....................... 3
- How to Manage Your Stress............................ 4
- Why Is Dental Care So Important? ..................... 5
- Understanding Gateway to Work ....................... 5
- Affirmative Statements About Incentives ............ 6
- How to Prevent Lead Poisoning ....................... 6
- Quitting Tobacco ........................................... 7
- Manage Your Medicines .................................. 7
- How to Appeal a Decision .............................. 8
- Sign Up For Our Texting Program .................... 8

What to Do If You Have Winter Blues

Wintertime brings extra challenges to people who already struggle with mood disorders. Many experience added feelings of anxiety, depression, or worthlessness during the holiday season. You are not alone. Unrealistic expectations or memories surrounding the holiday season can often make mood symptoms worse.

There are several factors to think about when suffering from “holiday blues.” Lack of sunlight, changes in routine, increased alcohol use at parties, not feeling good enough, or not being able to see family and friends for the holidays are all factors that could seriously affect your mood. Some symptoms of holiday blues are feeling overly tired, having headaches, and feeling frustrated, lonely or sad. Holiday blues tend to be short term and temporary. If you find that your symptoms last past the winter months/holiday season, please talk to your healthcare provider. You may be experiencing clinical anxiety or depression that can get worse if left untreated.

Continued on page 2
To avoid feeling down during the winter months and holidays, follow these simple steps:

1. Make sure you get 6-8 hours of sleep every night.
2. Stay with your normal routine as much as you can.
3. Stay active and move. Get exercise daily, even if it is a short walk or routine in the house.
4. Find time for yourself doing something you enjoy. Relax with music, a bath, reading, or other activity you enjoy.
5. Spend time with friends and family. Get out of the house and be social with caring, supportive people.
6. Keep your expectations about the holidays reasonable. This includes budget, events, and activities.
7. Make simple to-do lists that incorporate the above.

If you’ve tried the above and your mood continues to worsen, don’t wait for the holidays to be over. Talk to your health care professional about other options to help you.

Let Your Plate Be Your Guide

You want to lose weight in a healthy way. You also want to keep it off. Evidence shows that most people need to reduce the amount they eat and improve the quality of their diet. This helps you lose about 1 to 2 pounds per week. It can be difficult to count calories or measure portions accurately. Try using the “plate method.” This helps you control the amount you’re eating. You can use this method when you are trying to lose weight. It also helps you maintain a healthy weight.

Here is how it works:

- At least half your plate should be focus on whole fruits and vegetables.
- Split the other half evenly with varied lean protein and whole grains.
- Try moving to low-fat and fat-free milk and yogurt.
- If you go back for seconds, limit yourself to vegetables.
- Eat fruit or low-fat dairy for snacks.
- Eat less salt and sugared drinks.

For more information go to ChooseMyPlate.gov. You will find tips on healthy eating, eating on a budget, exercise and great recipes. Other websites and mobile apps are available for free to track your food, activities and weight. We recommend an internet search for food and activity trackers that are right for you.

Sources: US Department of Agriculture, ChooseMyPlate.gov, American Heart Association

Check Out MDwise.org

The MDwise website is a great resource for members. Do you know what you can find on the MDwise website? You can find information about your health plan benefits and services, MDwise special programs like WORKwise, and myMDwise. You can also find HELPlink, behavioral health resources, and so much more. Check out MDwise.org today!
Results of 2019 Member Satisfaction Survey

MDwise Quality Program Summary For 2019

Every year a survey is sent to member homes in the spring. It asks members about services they get from MDwise. We use a separate company to do the survey so that members who respond are kept private. MDwise does not know which members answered the questions. Below are some areas members thought we did well in by program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hoosier Healthwise Children</th>
<th>Healthy Indiana Plan Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience with your specialist.</td>
<td>Getting an appointment with a specialist as soon as they are needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor talking about ways to prevent illness.</td>
<td>Their health plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor informed and up to date about care from other providers.</td>
<td>Doctor informed and up to date about care from other providers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Members found things they thought could be better:

- Customer service.
- Getting needed care.
- Coordination of care with other doctors.

Here are some important things to remember about your health care:

- Check-ups are important for everyone in the family. This should happen at least once each year for those age three years and older. Babies and children under the age of three need appointments more often. See the MDwise member handbook for more details.
- Always call your doctor first when you need medical care. Your doctor has someone who can help you 24 hours a day.
- NURSEon-call can answer your health questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call customer service and choose option #4.
- If you smoke or use tobacco, talk to your doctor about quitting. There are programs and medications to help you. Go to MDwise.org/smoke-free for more information.
- Remember that the flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older each year!

Remember that you can earn MDwiseREWARDS! MDwiseREWARDS points can be earned for many activities like getting check-ups or completing a tobacco cessation program. You can cash in your points for gift cards. Go to MDwise.org/MDwiseREWARDS to learn more.

Our goal for next year is to improve all areas of service. This will allow us to serve our members better in the future. We will work to improve the things you thought could be better.
How to Manage Your Stress

Everyone can feel stress and be overwhelmed at times. Stress happens when things in life feel like more than you can handle. This can happen when it is a good thing, like a new baby or moving, or when it is a bad thing, like someone you love dying. Some signs of stress are feeling overly tired, having a lot of headaches, having an upset stomach, and trouble sleeping. **There are ways to deal with stress that can help you feel less overwhelmed and more in control.**

- Find and focus on the positive. Write these positive things down and read them when you feel overwhelmed.
- Write down what is important to accomplish in the order you want to get them resolved.
- Take a break from what is causing the stress. Do something else for a while and then go back to whatever task is causing the stress.
- Exercise releases chemicals that cause happy feelings. It can release tension in your muscles that are tight because you are stressed. Even a short, fast walk can help ease the stress.
- Smile and laugh or be around people that smile and laugh. Smiling and laughing releases tension in your face and can tell your brain that you feel less stress.
- Phone a friend. Stay connected to people and be social.
- Take time for you every day. It is not selfish to spend 5 minutes for yourself so you don’t feel overwhelmed.
- Take a moment to breathe. Deep breathing, focusing on your own thoughts, and letting go of negative emotions help manage what is happening in your life now.

**Remember, stress is part of life.** You can manage it by doing one of the above every day so it doesn’t build up. Don’t wait until you have signs of stress to take care of yourself.
Why Is Dental Care So Important?

Early check-ups help avoid cavities. Cavities can lead to pain, trouble focusing and other medical issues. Children with healthy teeth can chew food easily, speak clearly and smile with confidence.

Regular dental visits can do more than keep your smile attractive. Your teeth can tell the dentist a lot about your overall health. Dentists can tell if you may be developing a disease like diabetes.

Research shows that gum disease may lead to other health problems. This can include stroke and heart disease. Also, women with gum disease are more likely to have pre-term, low birth-weight babies.

It is important that dental care starts at a young age. The first dental visit is recommended at the time of the first tooth, and no later than 12 months of age. The most common interval to see your dentist is every six months; however, some people may need more or fewer check-ups based upon past medical and x-ray findings. To protect your oral health, practice good oral hygiene every day:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- Floss daily.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Limit between-meal snacks.
- Replace your toothbrush every three to four months or sooner if bristles are frayed.
- Schedule regular dental check-ups.

Health behaviors that can lead to poor oral health include:

- Tobacco use.
- Too much alcohol use.
- Poor food choices.

Also, contact your dentist as soon as an oral health problem arises. Remember, taking care of your oral health is an investment in your overall health.


Understanding Gateway to Work

Gateway to Work is a part of the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP). It connects HIP members like you with ways to look for work, train for jobs, finish school and volunteer.

Many resources are available to help members participate in the Gateway to Work program. You can take an online assessment at www.HIP.in.gov (click on “Gateway to Work”) to help you find activities you can do for Gateway to Work. You can also call MDwise to take the assessment over the phone. If you need more help, we can do a longer assessment over the phone. We can talk about your interests and skills and develop a plan for you to be successful with Gateway to Work.

For questions about the program, contact MDwise at 1-800-356-1204.

*Gateway to Work was designed with a requirement for some members to do Gateway to Work activities to keep their HIP benefits. However, the state is not currently enforcing benefit suspensions and will not until after a federal lawsuit is resolved. Before the program is reinitiated, members would receive substantial advance notice regarding the timeline.*

Connect with us!

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MDwise.org/google
Instagram.com/MDwiselnc

steps to wellness
How to Prevent Lead Poisoning

Lead is a natural element. It can be found in the air and water. Lead can be very harmful. Exposure can lead to lead poisoning. Children under 6 years old are especially at risk due to their developing bodies and brains. Pregnant women and their unborn babies are also at risk.

High levels of lead in the body can slow growth, cause learning and behavior problems, and possibly permanent brain damage. Traces of lead can be found in dust, air, toys, paint, and other household items. There are ways that you can prevent lead poisoning and steps to take if you are seeing the signs and symptoms.

How can you help prevent lead poisoning?
The goal is to prevent lead poisoning from happening. Here are some ways to help ensure your child is protected:

- Make sure your child is tested.
- Children should be tested at 12 months and 24 months of age.
- Test children age 3-6 years if they have never been tested.
- Run tap water before using it.
- Wash your children’s hands and toys regularly.
- Use wipes and wet-mop floors regularly.
- Watch for peeling paint and lead pipes in older homes.

If you are not sure your child has been tested, talk to your MDwise doctor. Your doctor can do the testing. If you are not sure who your child’s doctor is, call MDwise customer service. We can even help you schedule an appointment.

Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Lead Prevention
Quitting Tobacco

It is important to understand how tobacco affects you. It will help you understand how important it is to quit. Using tobacco may cause your medication to be less effective, increase feelings of depression, and make it harder for you to quit using other drugs. There are options to help you stop using tobacco products. You can get mental health therapy that focuses on quitting tobacco. There are also medications that may help. Ask your doctor or mental health doctor which option may be best for you.

Indiana’s Tobacco Quitline is available at no cost to you. Go to quitnowindiana.com for more information. When you stop using tobacco, you may be able to earn MDwiseREWARDS. Call MDwise to find out more. It is never too late to quit using tobacco. Help is available and no matter how long you’ve used tobacco products, you will see benefits once you stop.

Manage Your Medicines

Taking medicine like the doctor tells you is very important! It helps keep your or your child’s conditions controlled. Medicines can prevent flare-ups and reduce symptoms. This can keep you from having to go to the emergency room or be admitted to the hospital.

Your doctor wants to know what you think. If your doctor starts a new medicine or stops a medicine you or your child have been taking, talk with your doctor about what you think is best.

Here are some tips to manage your medicines. Follow these same tips for your child’s medicines.

1. Make a list of current medicines. Keep this list with you all the time. Be sure to include all prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Be sure to include any vitamins or supplements you take. This includes herbal supplements.
2. Show the list to the doctor at each appointment. Update the list if the doctor changes your medicines.
3. Always plan ahead to get refills. Don’t wait and run out of any of your medicines.
4. Set up reminders so you don’t forget to take your medicines. You may want to set up your medicines in a pill organizer every week. This will help you keep track of the medicines you need to take every day.
5. If you have trouble organizing your medicines, talk to your pharmacist. They are glad to help you.
6. It helps to use one pharmacy for all your medicines. That way the pharmacist will know about ALL the medicines you take. They can check for any negative interactions between your medicines.

TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST

Your doctor and pharmacist will help you understand all the medicines you or your child take. They will answer your questions like:

1. What are they for?
2. What are the reasons I should take them?
3. What are the reasons I should stop taking them?
4. How should I take them?
5. What time of day should I take them?
6. How often should I take them?
7. Will I need to continue taking them once I feel better?
8. What are the side effects of the medicine?
9. What if I forget to take a dose?

Always ask! You need to know. You and your children will stay healthier and safer when you get all your questions answered.

Questions?

Go to our website at MDwise.org.

Si quiere que le mandemos esta información en español, favor de llamar a nuestro departamento de servicio al cliente de MDwise. También puede encontrar esta información en español en nuestra página web en MDwise.org. Gracias.
### How to Appeal a Decision

You have the right to appeal if you receive a negative decision from us. A negative decision may be a denial of coverage or services. You will receive written notification of the decision which will include your right to appeal. This notice will also include the steps to start an appeal. You can also ask someone like your doctor or another representative to act on your behalf.

**How to File an Appeal:**

**Step 1. Submit your appeal**

You must write a letter. You can call the MDwise customer service department for help writing your letter. When you write a letter, you should include the following:

- Date and description of the service that was denied.
- Additional information that can help in our review.
- You must sign the letter.

Keep a copy of these papers for yourself. Then, send us the original at:

**MDwise Customer Service Department**

Attn: Appeals

P.O. Box 44236

Indianapolis, IN 46244-0236

**Your appeal must be filed within 60 calendar days of receiving a denial letter.** You may ask someone else to file an appeal on your behalf, who can be your doctor if you want them to. You may also send in written comments or information.

In an emergency, appeals will be handled quickly. This is called an “expedited” appeal. If your case can be expedited, we will review your case and notify you of a decision within 48 hours. Call MDwise customer service to see if this can be done.

The MDwise Appeals Panel will review your issue. MDwise will send you a letter with the date and time the Appeals Panel will meet. You can speak to the panel if you want. You can also have someone else speak for you. This can be done in person or by telephone.

**MDwise will send you a letter with an answer to your appeal within 25 working days from the time we receive your appeal.**

You have a right to review copies of documents that are related to your appeal. This includes records that we used in making our decision such as a benefit information, state rule or guideline. Please call us if you want to review these records. We will provide copies of this information free of charge upon request.

If the appeal decision is not satisfactory, you may choose to request either a State Fair Hearing or a review by an Independent Review Organization.

Further information regarding the appeals process and the State Fair Hearing or Independent Review Organization process can be found in your member handbook. You can also call our Customer Service Department at 1-800-356-1204 if you have questions about the appeal process or if you need assistance filing the appeal.

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**Questions? Comments? Complaints?**

If you need help with anything about MDwise or your doctor, we can help. Please call MDwise customer service at 1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831 in the Indianapolis area.

MDwise customer service offers language services. Or we might use an interpreter. We also have services for the hearing and speech impaired.