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. The flu season usually lasts from October through May. It is best to get the flu shot as soon as it is available. But as long as 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.
- Adults age 65 and older.
- Pregnant women.
- People living in nursing homes or other long-term care.
- American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

In addition to getting a flu shot, you can do other things to keep from getting the flu. Stay away from sick people. Wash your hands 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.
Helpful Hints for a Healthy Weight

You may feel that losing weight is hard to do. Few have the time or interest to count calories or fat. Others have no time for dietary limits or complex diets. And even fewer are interested in exercising regularly. But you can lose a lot of weight by making small changes in your diet. These don’t have to require record keeping or a food scale. Use these tips to help you lose unwanted pounds.

Healthy Habits

• Prepare a healthy shopping list before you go to the store, and stick to the list.
• Eat your meals in the dining room or at the kitchen table.
• Do not eat right out of the store package. Always serve snacks on a plate or in a bowl instead of eating directly out of a box or bag.
• Freeze leftovers right after a meal so you can’t raid the fridge later.
• Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day. Try to include a glass right before meals. Water helps you feel full faster and longer. It also helps your body break down food.
• Limit alcohol intake. Alcohol is packed with calories. It also increases cravings and reduces your drive to avoid the wrong foods.
• Begin lunch or dinner with a broth-based hot soup. It forces you to eat more slowly and fills you up so you don’t overeat.
• Eat more slowly. Rushing through meals doesn’t give your brain enough time to tell you when you’re full.
• When eating out, ask for sauces and dressings to be served on the side. This way you can use as much or as little as you want.
• Never leave home hungry when heading out for a restaurant meal. Before you go, eat a light snack. Include foods like a piece of fruit, a carrot or drink a glass of tomato or vegetable juice.
• Don’t eat while watching TV. Watching the TV and not your plate can lead you into overeating; so will the food and snack commercials.
• Stick to your own plate. Nibbling off someone else’s dish may seem harmless but the calories add up.
• Choose healthy foods if you eat fast food. To do so, avoid fried foods and “super-sized” portions.
• Don’t go food shopping on an empty stomach. Eat a little something first or you’ll be tempted to buy more than you should.

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health

Introducing the myMDwise Mobile App

Do you want to look up the status of a medical claim? Or view your MDwise ID card? How about checking your coverage and benefits information or finding a doctor close to home? With the myMDwise mobile app you will be able to manage your health care on the go! Go to your phone’s app store. Then search for “MDwise” and download.

myMDwise is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When you use myMDwise, you can:

• View your general eligibility information, including the name of your current doctor.
• Complete a survey about your health (Health Needs Screening).
• View and redeem MDwiseREWARDS.
• View your medical and pharmacy claims.
• Sign up for electronic communications.
• View/print your member ID card.
• Contact MDwise customer service.

To sign up for myMDwise go to MDwise.org. Click the link “MDwise member login” in the “myMDwise Login” box. Then click “Create Member Account.” You will be guided through this process.
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 46. 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).

Did You Know You Can Get Information in Other Languages?

When you call MDwise customer service we have someone who can talk to you in your language. We will get an interpreter on the phone if we do not have a representative who speaks your language.

Many MDwise doctors can talk to you in spanish or other languages. This includes sign language. It is a free service to you.

Member information is available in spanish at MDwise.org. We have some documents in Burmese as well. You can also call MDwise customer service to have materials mailed to you. If you do not understand something you got in the mail from us, call customer service. We can help explain what it says.

Your member rights and responsibilities include:

1. Being treated with dignity and respect.
2. Receiving health care that makes you comfortable based on your culture.
3. Being able to make complaints about MDwise, its services, doctors and policies.

If you have trouble getting any of the services offered by MDwise in a culturally acceptable way, please call MDwise customer service at 1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831 if you are in the Indianapolis area. We need to know about any problems in order to help.

Women’s Health

MDwise wants our members to get routine preventive care. Female members can get this care from women’s health specialists. You do not need a referral from your primary medical provider for this. Some examples of women’s health specialists are:

- Obstetricians.
- Gynecologists.
- Certified nurse midwives.

Some examples of routine preventive health care services are:

- Prenatal care.
- Breast exams.
- Mammograms.
- Pap tests.

Prenatal care is care before and during pregnancy. It is important to see a health care provider during your first trimester. And keep all appointments during your pregnancy. This helps keep you and your baby healthy.

A Pap test can save your life. It can find changes in your cervix that may lead to cancer. Cervical cancer can almost always be prevented. Having regular Pap tests is the key.

A mammogram is an 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 one if you have risk factors for breast cancer. This includes a family history of breast cancer.

Talk to your doctor about these important examinations.
MDwise Quality Program Summary for 2015

Each year MDwise reviews the care and services provided for members. Here are the results of the review.

Areas in which MDwise improved in 2015:

- Well-care visits for children
  - 0–15 months of age.
  - 3–6 years of age.
  - Adolescents, 12–21 years of age.
- Pregnant women getting the prenatal care that they need.
- Getting Hoosier Healthwise members in for a follow-up doctor visit after a behavioral health inpatient hospitalization.

While MDwise did better on well-care visits for children in 2015, we are still working to make more improvements:

- Babies should have eight well child visits by 15 months of age.
- Babies having all of their recommended immunizations (shots) by age two.
- Adolescents getting the immunizations (shots) that they need.

MDwise is also working to improve in these areas in 2016:

- Helping pregnant women quit smoking or 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 annual well care.
- Getting HIP and Hoosier Care Connect members in for a follow-up appointment after a behavioral health inpatient hospitalization.
- Members using the emergency room wisely.
- Diabetic members getting the screenings they need and maintaining healthy sugar levels and blood pressure.

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 at 1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831 if you are in the Indianapolis area.

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

Get your FREE gift card!

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. Then shop for gift cards with your points. Go to MDwise.org/rewards to learn more.
Medical emergencies can be frightening and stressful. Knowing what to do in an emergency can help you manage it.

Sometimes you know right away you should go to the emergency room. The following signs and symptoms are examples of common emergency problems. These are only some examples. This information is not intended to, and does not, serve as or replace the advice of your doctor or another health care professional.

**Warning Signs and Symptoms**

- Difficulty breathing. Shortness of breath.
- Chest or upper abdominal pain. Or pressure lasting two minutes or more.
- Fainting, sudden dizziness or weakness.
- Sudden changes in vision.
- Trouble speaking.
- Confusion or changes in mental status. Unusual behavior. Difficult to wake up.
- Any sudden or severe pain.
- Bleeding that won’t stop.
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea.
- Coughing up or vomiting blood.
- Wanting to harm yourself or others.
- Unusual abdominal pain.

There are other times when it is best to make an appointment with 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 a medical emergency, it is always best to call your doctor first.

**Sometimes it is not clear when to go to the emergency room. Here are some hints to help you decide:**

- Call your usual doctor. They may tell you to go to the emergency room right away. Or they may make an appointment for you.
- Call MDwise NURSEon-call at 1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831 in the Indianapolis area. Choose option #4 for NURSEon-call. The nurse can tell you whether to go to the emergency room or wait to see your usual doctor. NURSEon-call is available 24 hours a day.
- If you can’t reach your usual doctor or NURSEon-call, and you think you or your family member will have a bad outcome if you don’t get help 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 American Heart Association. They may have first aid classes in your area. Or they can tell you who to call.

**Is It an Emergency?**

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 if you need help. We can help you find another in-network doctor so you can get a second opinion.
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. It gives you a chance to talk to your 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; 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

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**Don’t Give Up!**

Quitting smoking may be the best thing you ever do for yourself. You tried to quit but couldn’t. And now you’re thinking, “Why bother?” **Don’t give up!** Quitting is hard work. It is so hard that most smokers who try to quit can’t do it the first time. If you’ve tried to quit before, try something new this time.

You can get tips for quitting on our website at [MDwise.org/wellness/smokefree](http://MDwise.org/wellness/smokefree). For further advice and support, call Indiana’s Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669). It’s available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also go to [quitnowindiana.com](http://quitnowindiana.com).

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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.