FALL 2021

THE HEALTH CONNECTION

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FROM OUR MEMBERS

The customer service representative was very friendly, very helpful, and she was able to make it easy for me to understand what was going on with my claims.

APWU HEALTH PLAN

www.apwuhp.com
(800) 222-2798

Childhood vaccines keep kids healthy

Vaccines protect kids from a range of potentially fatal diseases that are uncommon in the United States because vaccines are doing their job. Polio is a deadly disease caused by a virus that spreads from person to person and can result in paralysis. The polio vaccine has eliminated the disease in the U.S., but it's still a threat in other countries. Doctors recommend that children get four doses of the polio vaccine.

Being scratched or cut by a sharp metal object can cause tetanus, a disease that leads to painful stiffness and lockjaw. The DTaP vaccine provides protection against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (or whooping cough). Doctors recommend that children get five doses of the DTaP vaccine. Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that is often transmitted through contaminated food and water. Doctors recommend that children get two doses of the hepatitis A vaccine.

All pregnant people should be tested for hepatitis B because an infected mother can spread the virus to a child during birth. Doctors recommend that babies get the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine shortly after birth and receive two more doses by the age of six months.

Measles, mumps, and rubella are very contagious diseases. While rubella is spread by coughing and sneezing, a child can get measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, even up to two hours after that person left. Mumps is another contagious disease that causes puffy cheeks and a swollen jaw. Doctors recommend that children get two doses of the MMR vaccine, which provides protection against all three diseases.

Bacteria called Streptococcus pneumoniae cause pneumococcal disease, which can result in ear and sinus infections, pneumonia, and meningitis. Doctors recommend that children get four doses of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (called PCV13).

Rotavirus can cause severe diarrhea, vomiting, and fever in infants and young kids. Doctors recommend that children get two or three doses of the vaccine.

Chickenpox causes a fever and an itchy rash of blisters all over the body. (Despite the name, you can't catch chickenpox from a chicken.) Doctors recommend that children get two chickenpox shots.

Source: CDC, "14 Diseases You Almost Forgot About (Thanks to Vaccines)" - https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/forgot-14-diseases.html

Thank You!

Thank you for being our loyal member. The APWU Health Plan partners with postal and federal families to create a lifestyle dedicated to healthy living. We are committed to providing our members with innovative high-quality products and services.

Remember, to stay a High Option member, there is no action required. We look forward to serving you.



HIGH OPTION

OPEN SEASON HOTLINE

800.PIC.APWU (8:30a.m. - 7p.m. ET)
virtualopenseason@apwuhp.com (response within 48 hours)
www.apwuhp.com (click on Open Season)

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- ✓ Diabetes generic oral medications
- ✓ Visits to a registered dietician/nutritionist
- ✓ Tobacco cessation and weight management programs
- ✓ Breast cancer screenings for women

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$25 for office visits, including specialists
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2022 PREMIUMS

APWU Career Biweekly and Retiree Monthly

Self Only (enrollment code 471)		Self Plus One (enrollment code 473)		Self & Family (enrollment code 472)	
Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly
$106.39	**$230.51**	**$212.96**	**$461.41**	**$268.83**	**$582.46**

ENROLL DURING OPEN SEASON

November 8 – December 13

Cigna®

A Medicare Advantage plan designed for FEHBP. Take advantage of it.

APWU Health Plan offers a Medicare Advantage plan for High Option members covered by Medicare Part A and Part B. The UnitedHealthcare® Medicare Advantage (PPO) for APWU Health Plan reduces or eliminates cost-sharing for services. Plus, it includes a $50 Medicare Part B monthly reimbursement.

There's so much to take advantage of:

No deductible, coinsurance or copays for covered services

No need to coordinate primary and secondary payers

Prescription drug coverage throughout the Gap stage and Catastrophic coverage stage

From an APWUHP Medicare Advantage member

I go to the doctor and they bill UnitedHealthcare automatically. When I call customer service, I always get an answer and they are always courteous.

It's a homerun!



Choose a plan that offers benefits at no extra cost.

SilverSneakers® 1
Stay active with a fitness program.

UnitedHealthcare HouseCalls 2
Get an annual in-home preventive care visit.

UnitedHealthcare Hearing 3
Receive a hearing exam and access a wide selection of hearing aids.

Attend a meeting to learn how to take advantage of the UnitedHealthcare® Medicare Advantage PPO for APWU Health Plan

To join the online meeting:

1. Go to **uhcvirtualretiree.com/APWUHP** and click on the Meetings tab.
2. Click on the link for the meeting you want to attend.
3. Enter your name, email address and the Event password.
4. Click the "**Join Now**" button to join the meeting
5. Connect to hear the presentation by dialing **1-844-867-6169**, then enter access code **6263582**.

To dial-in only for the online meeting:

If you don't have access to the internet, you can call **1-844-867-6169**, TTY 711, to hear the presentation. Follow the instructions that you hear on the phone.

Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies, a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare.

1 Availability of the SilverSneakers program varies by plan/market. Refer to your Evidence of Coverage for more details. Consult a health care professional before beginning any exercise program. SilverSneakers is a registered trademark of Tivity Health, Inc. Tivity Health, Inc. All rights reserved.

2 HouseCalls may not be available in all areas.

3 Other hearing exam providers are available in our network. Your plan includes benefits for hearing aid coverage outside of the UnitedHealthcare Hearing network. See plan for details.

Foods to avoid when you're pregnant

Healthy eating is an essential part of prenatal care. A well-balanced diet provides the essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals you and your developing baby need. However, when you're pregnant, there are a number of foods to avoid:

Avoid raw and undercooked foods

- Raw seafood, rare beef, and undercooked poultry that may be contaminated with coliform bacteria, toxoplasmosis, or salmonella
- Raw fish or undercooked shellfish that may cause algae-related infections (including sushi, sashimi, ceviche, oysters, clams, scallops, and mussels)
- Raw eggs or food that contains raw eggs and may be contaminated with salmonella (including Caesar dressing, mayonnaise, eggnog, batter, homemade ice cream or custards, Hollandaise sauce, and cookie dough)

Avoid seafood high in mercury

Seafood is a great source of protein and omega-3 fatty acids, but avoid fish and shellfish that may contain potentially dangerous levels of mercury that could harm your baby's developing nervous system:

- Fish (including swordfish, marlin, orange roughy, bigeye tuna, king mackerel, shark, and tilefish)
- Fish from contaminated local lakes and rivers that may be exposed to high levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (including bluefish, striped bass, salmon, pike, trout, and walleye)

Avoid unpasteurized foods that may be contaminated with listeria bacteria

- Uncooked hot dogs and lunch meats, unless they're cooked to steaming hot
- Refrigerated, smoked seafood (including lox, Nova-style salmon, kippered fish, or jerky)
- Unpasteurized milk
- Soft cheeses (such as Brie, Camembert, blue cheese, Roquefort, feta, Gorgonzola, and Mexican-style cheeses that include queso blanco and queso fresco), unless the cheese is labeled as being made with pasteurized milk
- Refrigerated pâté or meat spreads (canned meat spreads are okay)
- Unpasteurized fresh-squeezed juice that may contain harmful bacteria, including salmonella and E. coli

Avoid certain vegetables

- Unwashed vegetables that may expose you to toxoplasmosis
- Raw sprouts and deli sandwiches that contain raw sprouts (including alfalfa, clover, and radish) that may contain harmful bacteria

Source: American Pregnancy Association, "Foods to Avoid When Pregnant" · https://americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/pregnancy-health-wellness/foods-to-avoid-during-pregnancy/

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Dana W. in the benefits area deserves a very high rating and recommendation. She went above and beyond trying to straighten out our problems and she is just wonderful. So thank you so much and thanks to Dana, kudos to her!

MANAGE DIABETES WITH STAY-AT-HOME EXERCISES

Regular exercise is essential for people with diabetes. Staying active can help you keep your blood glucose levels in check, lose weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and improve your self-esteem.

Here are some exercises you can do at home—no gym required:

1. WALKING When you diabetes, walking is a great way because you can do it almost a can even walk in place while you If it has been awhile since you've walk, start with a short stroll th neighborhood and gradually inc time and distance each week.

2. CALISTHENICS T rely on your own body weight to strengthen your muscles, and th minimal equipment. Calisthenic help you build endurance and fl

- Lunges
- Planks
- Pull-ups
- Push-ups
- Squats

3. CARDIO At-home car can help you burn calories and

IT'S SAFE TO GET A MAMMOGRAM DURING THE PANDEMIC

If you have avoided scheduling a mammogram due to COVID-19, you may find it reassuring to know that healthcare clinics are taking steps to keep patients safe during these important preventive screenings.

Safety steps include:

- Rearranging workspaces to accommodate social distancing
- Scheduling fewer appointments to limit crowding in waiting rooms
- Increased cleaning and sanitization
- Health and temperature screenings for all patients and employees
- Universal masking

Mammograms are an essential part of preventive care

Delaying or skipping a mammogram is never a good idea because these screenings can detect breast cancer early, when it's often easier to treat. About 85 percent of breast cancers occur in patients with no family history of breast cancer. A mammogram can find cancer before it reaches the size where it can be felt. Breast cancer screening guidelines vary by health organization. Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider about when you should begin and how often you should be screened. If you have a high risk for breast cancer, you may need earlier or more frequent screenings.

COVID-19 vaccines and mammograms

After receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, some patients experience swelling of the lymph nodes, especially on the side of the body where the vaccine was administered. The Pfizer BioNtech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines can cause lymph nodes in the armpit to swell. While some may mistake this swelling as a breast lump, it's more likely the result of the body producing antibodies in response to the vaccine.

If you experience swelling after receiving a vaccine, schedule a mammogram or talk to your doctor.

Source: Cleveland Clinic, "Is It Safe To Get a Mammogram During the Pandemic?" - https://health.clevelandclinic.org/is-it-safe-to-get-a-mammogram-during-the-pandemic/

FROM OUR MEMBERS

I am calling from a hospital and other facility and I spoke with Tyeace Brown she was patient, she explained things to me and she was wonderful and she was very, very kind and I want to give her kudos! Thank you!

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muscles. Plus, these exercises don't require purchasing expensive equipment.

- Burpees
- Jumping jacks
- Jump rope
- Staircase exercises

4. YOGA As an ancient practice that focuses on strength, flexibility, and breathing, yoga incorporates fluid movements that can boost your physical and mental well-being.

5. DANCING This is a fun way to lose weight, improve your flexibility, lower your blood sugar levels, and reduce stress. Chair dancing is a great option for people with limited physical abilities.

6. STRENGTH-TRAINING EXERCISES Lifting small weights or exercising with resistance bands builds strength and endurance. If you don't have dumbbells or kettlebells, use soup cans or other heavy objects.

How much exercise do you need?

The American Heart Association recommends that adults get 150 minutes or more of moderate physical activity each week. If it's easier, split your physical activity into three 10-minute sessions each day, five days a week.

Exercise safely

Before you start exercising, talk to your doctor, especially if you haven't been active for a while or have prior injuries. Ask your doctor for tips on stretching and getting the most out of your fitness routine. If you become short of breath, dizzy, or lightheaded, stop exercising immediately.

Source: Cleveland Clinic, "5 Best Exercises for People with Diabetes" - https://health.clevelandclinic.org/5-best-exercises-for-people-with-diabetes/

When to start colorectal cancer screenings

Colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of death from cancer in the United States. The disease almost always develops from abnormal growths, called polyps, in the colon (the longest part of the large intestine) or rectum (the last several inches of the large intestine). During a preventive screening, your doctor can find and remove polyps before they turn into cancer. Regular screenings can also discover colorectal cancer early, when treatment is most likely to be effective.

Colorectal cancer screening guidelines from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)

For people in good health with an average risk of colorectal cancer:

- Begin screenings at age 45
- Continue regular screenings until age 75
- Ask your doctor if you should continue screenings after the age of 76

If you have risk factors for colorectal cancer, ask your doctor about when to begin screening, which test is right for you, and how often to get tested. Your doctor may recommend screenings earlier than age 45, or more regular screenings, if:

- You have a personal or family history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer
- You have inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis)
- You have certain genetic syndromes

If you delayed or postponed a cancer screening due to COVID-19, talk to your doctor about how you can safely schedule these important tests.

Source: American Cancer Society, "When Should You Start Getting Screened for Colorectal Cancer?" - https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/american-cancer-society-updates-colorectal-cancer-screening-guideline.html

Can good posture relieve your back pain?

Most people experience back pain at some point. Repetitive activities, such as standing for long periods of time or sitting at a computer, can result in a back pain. Poor posture can also result in lower back pain by weakening the muscles, discs, and joints in your spine.

Other common habits that cause back pain include:

- Slouching or sitting hunched over at your desk
- Lying on your stomach on a bed while working on a laptop
- Lack of physical activity

Improving your posture is an effective way to prevent lower back pain.

How to stand with good posture

1. Stand with your shoulders back and your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Keep your head level and in line with your body.
3. Pull in your belly, and don't lock your knees.
4. Let your hands hang at your sides.

When you have to stand for a long time, shift your weight from your toes to your heels and back and forth, from one foot to the other.

How to sit with good posture

If possible, use an ergonomic office chair with adjustable height and lumbar support. Another option is to place a small pillow or rolled-up towel behind your lower back to maintain the natural curve.

1. Adjust the height of your chair so your feet rest flat on the floor. If your feet don't touch the floor, use a footrest.
2. Keep your back flush against the back of the chair, and relax your shoulders.
3. Keep your knees at or below the level of your hips.
4. Don't cross your legs.
5. Bend your elbows 75 to 90 degrees.
6. Keep your legs apart the same distance as your hips.
7. If you use a computer, the top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level.

Try not to sit in the same position for long periods of time. Get up at least once an hour and go for a short walk.

Source: Mayo Clinic, "Good posture tips" - https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/multimedia/back-pain/sls-20076817

Are you at risk for cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer occurs in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus in the female reproductive system. A sexually transmitted infection called the human papillomavirus (HPV) plays a role in causing most cervical cancers. Routine preventive screenings are important because early-stage cervical cancer usually has no symptoms.

Risk factors for cervical cancer
Your chance of developing cervical cancer is higher if your mother or sister had the disease.

While having one or more risk factors can increase your odds of developing cervical cancer, just because you have a risk factor doesn't mean you will develop the disease. You may be more likely to develop cervical cancer if you:

- Have a weak immune system due to another health condition
- Eat a diet low in fruits and vegetables
- Smoke tobacco
- Start having sex at an early age
- Have many sexual partners
- Have unprotected sex
- Are infected with HPV or other STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, HIV/AIDS)

Cervical cancer screenings save lives
Reduce your risk of developing cervical cancer by having routine screenings. These screenings, called Pap tests, can detect pre-cancerous cells in the cervix.

Medical experts recommend beginning routine Pap tests at age 21 and having follow-up screenings every few years. An HPV vaccine can also reduce your risk of cervical cancer. Ask your doctor if the vaccine is right for you.

Source: American Cancer Society, "Risk Factors for Cervical Cancer" - https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cervical-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html

How to use a home blood pressure monitor

If you have high blood pressure (also called hypertension), home monitoring allows you and your doctor to track your numbers and determine how well your medications are working. Self-monitoring may also motivate you to improve your diet, lose weight, and get more physical activity. While many pharmacies have public blood pressure machines, their accuracy varies. For more reliable results, use a digital home blood pressure monitor.

Choose a blood pressure monitor that is right for you
Home blood pressure monitors feature an inflatable cuff that fits around your upper arm and a gauge for readouts. A properly fitting cuff is essential for accurate measurements. Before buying a monitor, ask your doctor what size cuff you need. To check the accuracy of your monitor, bring it to your doctor's office once a year and compare your monitor's readings with those taken during your appointment. (However, remember that your blood pressure may be about five points lower at home than it is at your doctor's office). Visit validateBP.org to find a list of home blood pressure monitors that the American Medical Association has validated for accuracy.

How to use a home blood pressure monitor
Measure your blood pressure twice a day, first in the morning before you eat, take any medications, or exercise, and again in the evening. Take two or three readings (about three minutes apart) to make sure your results are accurate.

Before measuring your blood pressure:

- Avoid caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol for 30 minutes.
- Empty your bladder.
- Sit for five minutes in a comfortable chair with your legs and ankles uncrossed.

To measure blood pressure at home:

- Always use the same arm.
- Sit in an upright position with your back supported, feet flat on the floor, and your arm at heart level.
- Rest your arm on a table to raise it to the level of your heart. (If needed, place a pillow under your arm.)
- Secure the cuff on bare skin, not over your clothes. The bottom of the cuff should sit directly above the bend of your elbow.

Home blood pressure monitoring is useful, but it's not a substitute for regular doctor visits. Never stop or change your medications without talking to your doctor first.

Source: Mayo Clinic, "Get the most out of home blood pressure monitoring" - https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure/art-20047889

THE HEALTH CONNECTION

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TOGETHER.
BETTER HEALTH.

JOIN THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT®

Thursday, November 18, 2021

Quit smoking for one day
The Great American Smokeout is an annual event that encourages smokers to kick the habit. Join thousands of people in taking the first step toward a healthier life.

Make a plan to quit for good
Quitting smoking isn't easy. It takes time—and a plan. You don't have to stop smoking in one day. Just start with Day One. Let the Great American Smokeout be the day you make a plan to quit smoking.

The benefits of quitting
There are many health reasons to quit smoking. And, when you quit your:

- Breath, clothes, and hair will smell better.
- Sense of smell will return, and food will taste better.
- Fingers and fingernails will slowly appear less yellow.
- Stained teeth may slowly become whiter.
- Children will be healthier and less likely to start smoking.

Plus, you'll save money. If you smoke a pack a day, you spend at least $2,000 a year on cigarettes.

Enroll in an APWU Health Plan tobacco cessation program at no cost

Members pay $0
The tobacco cessation program targets physical, emotional, and social addiction and uses best practices to improve success. Nicotine replacement therapy is available at no extra charge.

High Option members
Call Cigna/CareAllies
800-582-1314

FROM OUR MEMBERS

I'm new to the APWU Health Plan. The customer service rep was wonderful—polite, positive, cheerful and friendly. She understood my questions, gave me plenty of time to ask them and didn't talk over me. It was an all-around really good experience.