



Member Newsletter  
Spring 2016

## What's it like to have asthma?

If you don't have asthma, it's hard to know what kids who have the disease go through. Try this:

Put a straw in your mouth and suck air in. Now blow it out through the straw. That's what breathing is like for someone with asthma. It's tough!

If you have friends with asthma, don't let other kids tease them. And tell your friends it's OK for them to use their medicines or inhalers when they need to.

Don't worry, though. You can't catch asthma from someone else.

## A cold vs. allergies: How to know the difference

As a parent, you know this is true: Colds are common. Kids get them all the time. But when a cold seems to linger on (and on, and on...), it may actually be allergies.

Allergies and colds share many symptoms. But they have different causes. Colds are caused by viruses (germs). Allergies are when the body overreacts to harmless things like pollen in the air.

### How to tell them apart

Many kids with allergies have problems about the same time each year, such as spring or fall. These are called seasonal allergies. A child with seasonal allergies might have regular bouts of coldlike symptoms that last longer than a week or two and include:

- A runny or stuffy nose
- Sneezing
- Itchy, watery eyes
- Itchy or tingling feelings in the mouth or throat—which are not common with a cold
- Frequent throat clearing
- Nose rubbing and sniffing

Allergies can run in families. So if you have allergies, it's more likely your child will have them too.

If you think your child has allergies, tell your provider.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

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Permit No. 44

## See you then! Don't miss your doctor visits

Jot it on a calendar; type it into your phone; leave yourself a note. No matter your style, make doctor visits a priority. They're too important to miss.

Getting all the checkups and screenings you need can help you stay healthy. And if you miss one appointment, it may take a while to set up a new one.

If you know you can't make it, call your doctor's office as soon as possible. This way, the office can set aside your time slot for another patient. And they can set up a new one for you.

Don't forget to make a note of your appointment as soon as you schedule it. You'll be less likely to forget it.

For your health's sake, get all the checkups and screenings you need.

## Prenatal care for moms-to-be

If you're pregnant, the health of your baby is likely at the top of your mind. And to keep your baby well, it's important to take care of yourself.

Regular prenatal care by your medical provider can help prevent problems or find them early.

### When to call

As soon as you think you're pregnant, call your provider. He or she will tell you how often to come in.

You will most likely visit:

- Once a month for weeks 4 to 28
- Twice a month for weeks 28 to 36
- Once a week from week 36 until birth

Some women may need to see their provider more often.

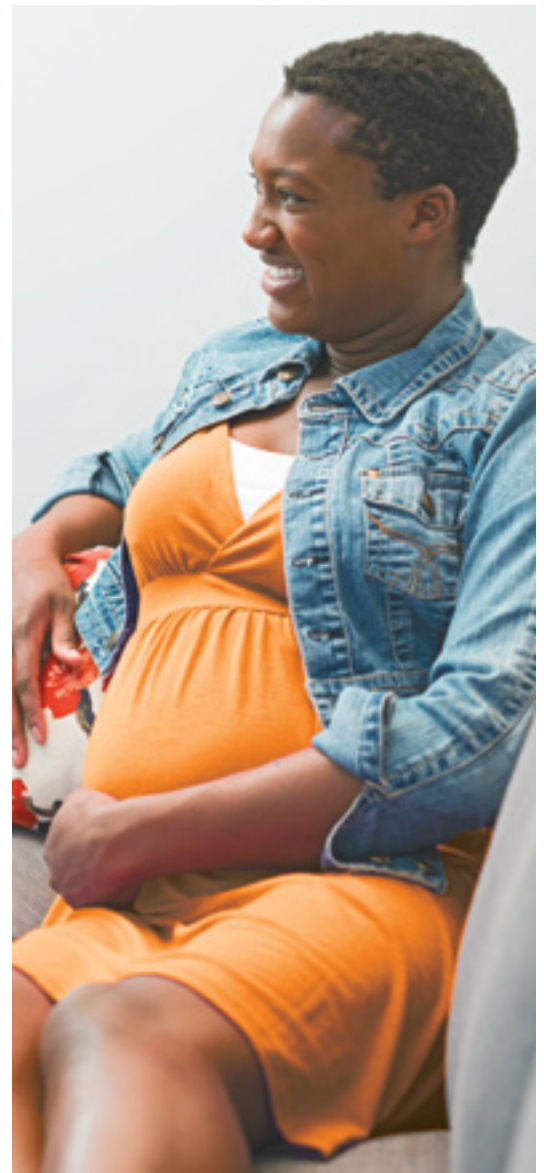
### What to expect

Your provider will:

- Weigh you
- Take your blood pressure
- Measure your belly
- Listen to the baby's heartbeat

Remember: It's important to go to every appointment, even if you feel fine.

Sources: March of Dimes; Office on Women's Health



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## Get help with the challenges of breastfeeding

You've chosen to breastfeed. That's great. It will help give your little one a healthy start in life. Breastfed babies may avoid illnesses and allergies. Plus, breastfeeding can help you and your baby bond.

But getting started may not be easy. When you first begin feedings, your breasts may hurt. You could have a pins-and-needles feeling when

your milk lets down. Or you might find that your baby has a hard time latching on properly. Or he may suck too fast. Or she may have trouble finding the right position for her head.

Don't let these issues stop you from breastfeeding. Most of the discomforts do not last more than two weeks. And you can get help with latching on and other problems. Here's how:

- Talk with your pediatrician.
- Call a certified lactation consultant.
- Join a breastfeeding support group.

Don't hesitate to seek help as you work to give your baby the best possible nutrition.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Office on Women's Health

## A fit pregnancy: What to know

Thinking about getting pregnant? If you're not active already, this is the perfect time to start moving more. Getting fit helps your health. And the healthier you are before you're pregnant, the more likely you are to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Those are two very good reasons for making exercise a habit. Just take care to start slowly. Then gradually increase how active you are.

### Moving for two

But what if you're pregnant right now? Is it still safe to exercise?

For most women, yes. And it's not just safe—it's helpful. Exercise can give you extra energy and get your body ready for labor. But get an OK from your doctor.

You want to be sure you don't have a medical problem that might make exercise risky.

If your doctor approves, walking is a great exercise. So is swimming. Neither puts extra weight on your joints.

And speaking of your body, listen to it. You'll know your workout is too intense if you're:

- Very tired
- Short of breath
- Uncomfortable

If this happens, slow down! Now isn't the time to overdo it.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; March of Dimes

## What does BMI stand for?

BMI stands for body mass index. It's one way to gauge if you're at a healthy weight. The number is based on height and weight.

Your BMI helps you know if your weight is:

- Too low
- In a healthy range
- Too high

Knowing your BMI can help you make decisions about your health. To learn your BMI, use the calculator at [www.morehealth.org/bmi](http://www.morehealth.org/bmi).

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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## Exercise to feel great: Three essentials for your routine

An effective exercise program can take many forms. But the foundation should have three basic parts: aerobics, strength training and stretching. Each plays a role in your overall fitness.

### Aerobics

This type of exercise is good for your heart and lungs. It also helps with weight control, if that's a concern for you.

Aerobic exercises involve constant movement to a steady beat. Brisk walking, jumping rope, biking and swimming are good examples.

Experts say you should do some kind of aerobic exercise for at least 150 minutes a week.

You'll know you're working out at a healthy pace if you're breathing harder than normal but can still speak easily.

### Strength exercises

This type of workout builds muscles and bones. Strength training also makes it easier to handle routine chores, like lifting groceries or working in the yard.

The most common way to build strength is to work out with weights. But you can use your body weight too. Pushups, pullups and crunches are some examples. Aim to work each major muscle group—arms, chest, back, stomach, hips and legs.

Start slowly—just one day a week with light weights. Do each exercise eight to 12 times. When that gets easy, add more weight or repeat the exercise more times.

### Stretching

These moves help keep your muscles loose and reduce



your risk of injury. Just hold a mild stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Stretch all major muscle groups.

### Getting started

The more exercise you do, the better. But some activity is better than none. Remember to start slowly. Trying to do too

much too soon can lead to injury.

If you need some inspiration, visit the American Council on Exercise website at [www.acefitness.org](http://www.acefitness.org).

Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; American Council on Exercise; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## Help stop fraud

Please remember: It is everyone's responsibility (a requirement that can be subject to federal or state sanctions) to report suspected fraud or abuse.

To report fraud or abuse, call the Maryland Physicians Care (MPC) compliance hotline at **1-866-781-6403**. We prefer, but do not require, that you leave your name.

Please leave enough information to help us investigate, including the:

- Name of the MPC member or provider you suspect of fraud
- Member's MPC card number
- Name of the doctor, hospital or other health care provider
- Date of service
- Amount of money that MPC paid for the service
- Description of the acts you suspect involve fraud or abuse

You can also visit MPC's website at **www.marylandphysicianscare.com**. Click on "Fraud & Abuse," and you can email us suspected fraud information. Either way, it's really important that we hear from you.

Thanks for your continued support!

Sincerely,

MPC Compliance Department

## Who to call

Member Services (benefits, ID cards, appeals, PCP changes, etc.)  
**1-800-953-8854**

DentaQuest (adults only)  
**1-800-685-1150**

Healthy Smiles Dental Services  
**1-888-696-9596**

Public Mental Health Services  
**1-800-888-1965**

Utilization Management (UM)  
**1-800-953-8854**—follow the prompts to UM

Superior Vision  
**1-800-428-8789**

HEDIS Outreach  
**1-866-651-7838**

Case Management/Disease Management  
**1-800-953-8854**  
**1-410-401-9443**

For health education requests, please call the Prevention & Wellness Coordinator:  
**1-410-401-9451**

## Is there a health topic you would like to see discussed in our member newsletter?

Would you like to offer feedback or recommendations on current or new member education programs? Would you like to learn more about a health topic? If so, we would love to hear from you! Please give us a call at **1-800-953-8854** and follow the prompts to the Prevention and Wellness Department.



## Learn more online!

Looking for ways to stay healthy? Go to **www.marylandphysicianscare.com** to learn more about proven care and health care options. You can use online tools to help you manage your health. You will also find more on programs or classes in your area. If available, discounts on memberships or services are just a few clicks away.

## Visit our website

Find information on:

- Quality Improvement Program
- Case Management Program
- Disease Management Program

- Clinical practice guidelines
- Utilization management
- Pharmacy/prescription drug management
- Benefits and coverage
- Member rights and responsibilities
- Member Handbook

- Provider directory
- Protected health information use and disclosure

If you do not have Internet service, you can reach us by phone (numbers listed at top right) for more information.

Your Family's Health is published as a community service for the friends of Maryland Physicians Care, 509 Progress Drive, Suite 117, Linthicum, MD 21090-2256, **www.marylandphysicianscare.com**

This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs. The plan does not provide health care services; you must receive health care services from your provider.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

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