



Member Newsletter

Maryland HealthChoice Program

Learn about COVID-19 vaccinations.

The arrival of COVID-19 vaccines is a positive turning point in a public health crisis that has impacted all of us. We care about your health and want you to have as much information as possible about the vaccine.

The State of Maryland has a variety of information online about COVID-19. **Coronavirus.Maryland.gov** is the state's homepage for COVID-19. **Coronavirus.Maryland.gov/Pages/Vaccine** enables you to find a vaccination clinic near your address or ZIP code.

The website also offers pre-registration for a mass vaccination sites. When an appointment becomes available, you will be contacted via your preferred communication method (phone, text, or email). If you do not have access to the internet, call **855-MD-GOVAX** for assistance.

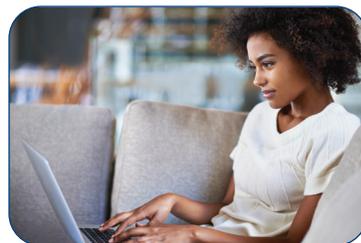
We know you may have questions about the vaccines. The MedStar Health COVID-19 website (**MedStarHealth.org/VaccineQuestions**) has answers to many questions regarding the vaccine and more.



Connect in the MFC Facebook group.

We encourage all members to join our new Facebook group to remain connected. This group will include information about member benefits, events, healthy tips, provider scheduling recommendations, and more.

Visit [Bit.ly/MFCGroup](https://bit.ly/MFCGroup) and click on "+ Join Group" to see our posts.



Para obtener una versión en español de este boletín, visite [MedStarFamilyChoice.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com) o llame a Servicios para Miembros al **888-404-3549**.

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How to keep your children healthy.

Keeping your children up-to-date on their vaccines is important, even during this current health crisis. Vaccines will protect your children from other serious illnesses.

The Maryland Department of Health created the following video about the importance of vaccinating children during COVID-19: [Bit.ly/3coepz2](https://bit.ly/3coepz2). The video also explains how to access your children's vaccination records online.

Please reach out to your children's doctor to schedule appointments for any missing vaccines.

Feel free to call the MedStar Family Choice Outreach Department at **800-905-1722, option 1** for assistance with the following:

- Scheduling an appointment
- Arranging transportation to an appointment
- Questions about your MedStar Family Choice benefits



The Outreach Department is available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For any other assistance or questions about MedStar Family Choice, you can also call Member Services at **888-404-3549**.

See your doctor via telehealth and video visits.

MedStar Family Choice is committed to providing care during COVID-19. To assist with any healthcare needs, many MedStar Health and MedStar Family Choice providers are offering telehealth options.

All MedStar Health providers can now see patients through online video visits. MedStar Health Video Visits are similar to an in-person office visit, except you see your provider using a tablet, smartphone, or computer from your own home.

If you need to see your doctor or a specialist, call to see if they offer telehealth or MedStar Health Video Visits. If this type of appointment is appropriate, you can schedule a video visit the same way you would an in-person office visit.



Note: To have a video visit with your provider, you will need a smartphone or a computer and/or laptop with a camera and microphone. If you want more information to help prepare for your visit, or if you have trouble connecting, you can visit our MedStar Health Video Visits patient experience website at MyVideoVisit.MedStarHealth.org.

MedStar Health locations are safe and ready to serve you!

Many of us are experiencing fear and anxiety about the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when seeking medical care. MedStar Family Choice wants to make sure you don't delay your medical needs or ignore symptoms. Early detection and treatment are important to effective care. Your health and safety are always top priorities. MedStar Health has put a great deal of effort, time, and attention into protecting you while providing the care you need in the most appropriate and safe setting. Video visits and telephone consultations may be options for a variety of appointment needs, but in some cases, an in-person visit may be best. We want to assure you that if you need an in-person visit, you will be protected.

When you come to any MedStar Health location, here's what you can expect:

- **Safe providers:** Our physicians, nurses, and other healthcare team members use the proper safety gear to protect themselves and you to keep everyone healthy.
- **Masking:** All patients and visitors are expected to wear a mask during their visit, regardless of symptoms. We will provide one for you, if needed.
- **Cleaning and disinfecting:** We thoroughly sanitize and disinfect all patient exam, waiting, and procedure rooms multiple times each day.
- **Hand sanitizing:** Hand sanitizer dispensing stations are available throughout every facility.
- **Staggered appointments:** We are carefully managing our schedules to minimize the number of people coming through our waiting rooms at one time.
- **Screening patients and visitors:** We are screening all patients and approved visitors for symptoms at every hospital, medical office, and physical therapy location.
- **Physical distancing:** While inside our facilities, we'll help you practice physical distancing with floor markers, signage, and reconfigured waiting areas.



You will never feel socially distant. MedStar Family Choice cares about you and your family. It's how we treat people is more than just a slogan, it drives us to do what we do.

If you have questions or need help scheduling a visit, please call us at **888-404-3549**.

Exercise your way to a healthy summer.

It's the movement of your body! If you move your arms and legs enough, it will make your heart beat faster.

- Regular exercise gives you energy and keeps you healthy.
- Regular exercise makes your bones and muscles strong.
- Regular exercise makes your heart strong and healthy.
- Regular exercise helps you feel good about yourself.
- Regular exercise keeps you from gaining weight.

Keep your exercise simple at first. There are so many ways to exercise and have fun with your family, such as walking, jogging, riding a bike, hiking, jumping rope, playing with your pets, rollerskating, housework, swimming, mowing the lawn, and many more activities.



Did you or your grown "child" just turn 18?

If so, it may be time for a new doctor. As an adult, your health care needs are changing. If you or your grown child are currently seeing a pediatrician, you may want to find a primary care provider (doctor).

Types of adult primary care provider offices:

- Family Practice
- General Practice
- Internal Medicine

Ask your doctor if you have questions about what type of provider to see. MedStar Family Choice can also help find a new adult doctor in your area. If you would like help, please call us at **410-933-2243** or call Member Services at **888-404-3549** to select a new provider.

Understand fraud, waste, and abuse.

While MedStar Family Choice looks for possible fraud, waste, and abuse activities, we need your help to stop fraud, waste, and abuse. MedStar Family Choice has a strict non-retaliation policy. You do not need to give your name. Please report any situation that may involve fraud, waste, and/or abuse immediately by calling MedStar Family Choice's Director of Medicaid Contract Oversight at **888-404-3549**, the MedStar Health Corporate Integrity Hotline at **877-811-3411**, or the HealthChoice Fraud hotline at **800-455-4521**. You can also send something in writing to the Maryland Department of Health Program Integrity Unit at mdh.oig@maryland.gov or via mail at 201 West Preston St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

Attention all new or soon-to-be moms: you could earn a \$50 prepaid card!

Did you know that MedStar Family Choice has a postpartum program that will meet all your needs? You can also qualify to receive a \$50 MedStar Family Choice Prepaid Mastercard® just for following the state guidelines.

It is more important that you to receive your postpartum exam 21 to 56 days after you deliver your baby. If you have a C-section birth, your doctor may want to see you in the office within two weeks for a suture check. While you're at the appointment, you can schedule an appointment for your postpartum exam (remember the exam must be within 21 to 56 days after you deliver).

MedStar Family Choice will provide you with transportation to and from your visit and you will receive a \$50 prepaid card for going to your exam. You can also earn an additional \$10 prepaid card for going to your first well-child visit within 14 days of birth. If you have any questions or would like assistance with scheduling your appointment, please call your postpartum program coordinator at **410-933-7237** or **800-905-1722**.

In addition, the MedStar Healthy Life Portal offers additional Momma & Me classes where you can earn while you learn. Log onto the Healthy Life Portal at [MedStarFamilyChoiceHealthyLife.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceHealthyLife.com) to enroll and earn a \$25 gift card for completing the Prenatal/Breastfeeding courses, and a \$10 gift card for completing Infant Safety courses.

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Call the nurse advice line 24/7.

Feeling sick or need medical advice? A registered nurse is just a phone call away. The Nurse Advice Line (**855-210-6204**) is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Call and talk to a registered nurse to help you figure out what to do or where to go based on your symptoms.
- The nurse can provide you with nearby urgent care locations if need be.

Emergency Care is for when you need care right away for a serious, sudden injury or illness. Therefore, non-emergent care can take longer in an Emergency Room.



Spring into wellness and earn prepaid cards!

Your health and wellness is very important to MedStar Family Choice. Yearly screenings and shots are important to keep you and your family healthy. So we offer the MedStar Family Choice Prepaid Mastercard® with various amounts to members who get their screenings (tests) and immunizations (shots) each year!

Without screenings, you may not know of health issues that could get worse without treatment. Don't worry, because MedStar Family Choice is here to help you! Our Outreach Department can assist you and your family with scheduling any of the following appointments with your doctor:

- Yearly physicals
- Well-child visits
- Lead testing
- Mammograms
- Pap smears
- Diabetic testing



Once you have completed one or more of the services listed above, you could be eligible to receive a prepaid card. MedStar Family Choice offers the following incentives on gift cards just for going to your wellness doctor appointments:

- Up to \$190 for getting your baby's nine well-child visits before 15 months of age, as well as getting a lead test
- Up to \$100 for your first prenatal care visit during the first three months of pregnancy and \$50 for your first postpartum visit within 21 to 56 days of delivery
- \$25 for completing your well-child visits (ages 3 to 11)
- \$50 for completing your adolescent physicals (ages 12 to 21)
- Enter a \$100 drawing for completing your Pap test
- \$25 if you sign up for mail order delivery of medication to treat diabetes, asthma, or high blood pressure
- \$50 for completing your mammogram in 2021 (50 years and older)
- \$50 for getting your child's lead test screening, up to 12 months of age
- Up to \$175 for completing diabetic testing and doctor / education appointments for better diabetic control by December 31, 2021

Learn more at [MedStarFamilyChoice.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com) or call our Outreach Department at **800-905-1722, option 1.**

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It's okay to ask the pharmacy!

Have you ever tried to fill a prescription only to be told the medication is not covered by your insurance?

If so, did the pharmacy offer to contact your doctor's office or insurance to resolve the issue?

Many people will leave the pharmacy without their needed prescription due to these challenges.

But did you know it's okay to ask the pharmacy:

1. Why the medication is not covered?
2. Is there a way it could be covered?
3. If there is another medication that could be used?

When a prescription is not covered, the pharmacy gets a code explaining why the medication is not covered. The code includes the insurance phone number to call for more help.



Here are some common reasons why prescription is not covered:

- The medication is not on the formulary (a list of covered medications).
- The medication needs approval first (also known as prior authorization).
- It may be too soon to fill the medication if it is a refill.

No matter the reason, it's okay to ask the pharmacy why the prescription was not covered and what could be done to fix the issue.

MedStar Family Choice wants you to get the medical care and medications you need to keep you healthy. We want you to know it's okay to ask the pharmacy if there is a problem getting your medication.

If, after asking the pharmacy, you still can't get your prescriptions, there is help here at MedStar Family Choice.

For help with medications, please call MedStar Family Choice at **800-905-1722** Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition, MedStar Family Choice members can submit pharmacy issues online through this form ([Bit.ly/MFCPharmIssues](https://bit.ly/MFCPharmIssues)).

For help with Mental Health and Substance Abuse related medications, please call the Maryland Department of Health Pharmacy Hotline at **800-492-5231, option 3**.

For more information about your pharmacy benefits, please visit [Bit.ly/MFCPharmacyBenefits](https://bit.ly/MFCPharmacyBenefits).

Know the dangers of opioids and other pain medicines.

Pain medicines may not take away all of your pain. The goal is to control your pain while you heal. It is normal to still feel pain when moving around while you are getting better.

What are opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs used to reduce pain. Prescription opioids are often prescribed to treat severe pain for medical conditions such as cancer and other serious conditions. This article is not about taking opioids for these serious conditions, it is about taking these medications for an acute pain problem like you may have following surgery or an injury. Common types of opioids are oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin), morphine, and methadone.

What are the side effects of over usage or addiction?

- Tolerance—meaning you might need to take more of the medication to achieve the same pain relief
- Physical dependence—meaning you have symptoms of withdrawal when the medication is stopped
- Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy, and strength
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression
- Itching and sweating



How much medicine should I take?

Follow the directions on the bottle—it is not safe to take any more than your doctor prescribed for you. If the instructions say to take every four hours as needed, this means that dosage is the **most** you should take every four hours. You shouldn't automatically take the medicine every four hours if you don't need it. Taking less is okay if the lower dose still controls the pain. As you heal, you should be taking less as time goes on. **These medicines can have serious side effects and can cause you to become addicted. Taking any medicine in a bigger amount (dose) or more often could cause you to overdose or die.** You may take your opioid medicines for moderate to severe pain. You can try other things, like using heat or ice, which may also help your pain. Talk to your doctor about what will work best for you.

You should notice that you need less and less opioid medicine as you start to feel less pain. Take less and less of your opioid medicines each day as your pain gets better. This may mean taking a smaller dose each time, or waiting for a longer amount of time between each dose you take. This is called tapering. If you feel like your pain is not at a comfortable level, or is getting worse, call your doctor.

Where should I keep my medicines?

Keep these medicines in a safe and secure place, away from other people in your family, children, visitors, and pets. Do not let other people take or use your medicines. This is very unsafe and against the law.

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How do I stay safe while taking these medicines?

- Do not drive, operate machinery, or drink alcohol while taking opioid pain medicines.
- Check with your doctor before taking any other medicines that you did not talk about at discharge.
- Tell a friend or family member that you are taking these medicines and to call 911 if they are worried you are more sleepy than normal and it is hard to wake you up.
- Your doctor may give you naloxone (Narcan®), which is a medicine that can quickly reverse an overdose of opioid pain medicines. Tell a friend or family member that you have this and to be ready to give it to you after calling 911.

What should I do with my opioid medicines after I stop using them?

If you are no longer using your opioid medicines, get rid of any that is leftover. Here are safe ways to do this:

- Find your local drug take-back program or your pharmacy mail-back program.
- Go to [FDA.gov/Drugs/Safe-Disposal-Medicines/Disposal-Unused-Medicines-What-You-Should-Know](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know) and follow the instructions from the FDA.

For more information on opioids, go to [CDC.gov/DrugOverdose/Opioids](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/opioids).

Patient safety is vital to your health care.

Patient safety is one of the nation's most pressing healthcare challenges. There are things you can do to help yourself get safer health care. Some are as simple as making sure that when you are in the hospital, your wristband has the right name on it. You have probably seen your chart at your doctor's office. In fact, you may have charts at several doctors' offices. If you've been in the hospital, you have a chart there too. To keep track of all this information, it is a good idea to keep your own records. What kind of information should you put in a personal health record?

You could start with ...

- Your name, birth date, blood type, and emergency contact
- Date of your last physical
- Dates and results of tests and screenings
- Major illnesses and surgeries, and the dates they took place
- A list of your medicines, dosages, and how long you have taken them
- Any allergies
- Any chronic diseases
- Any history of illnesses in your family

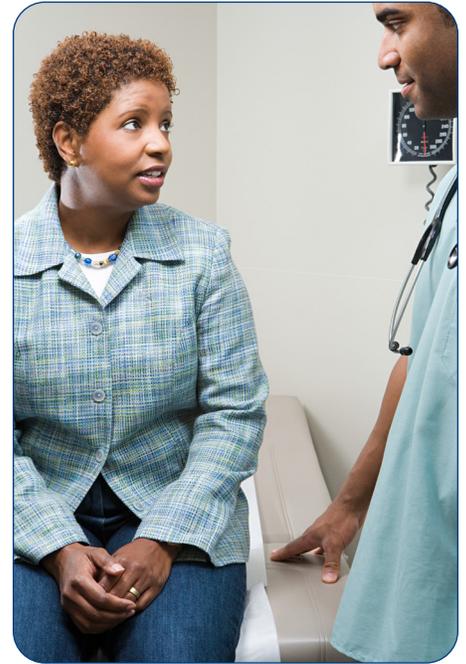
Also be sure to:

1. Ask questions if you have doubts or concerns, and make sure you understand the answers. Choose a doctor you feel comfortable talking to. Take a relative or friend with you to help you ask questions and understand the answers.
2. Give your doctor and pharmacist a list of all the medicines that you take, including non-prescription medicines. Tell them about any drug allergies you have. Ask about side effects and what to avoid while taking the medicine. Read the label when you get your medicine, including all warnings.

How to break down barriers when talking with your doctor.

You play a very important part in your care when visiting your doctor. Here are some things that can help make your visit more pleasant:

- Have your questions already written down before your visit.
- Listen carefully to the advice your doctor is giving you.
- Make sure you follow the doctor's orders and get the labs or other tests that your doctor asks you to get.
- Make certain that your blood pressure is taken at every doctor visit, regardless of whether it is with your primary care doctor or a specialist.
- If you had a hospital admission or an emergency room visit, tell your doctor. All doctors involved in your care need to know this information.
- Your primary care doctor should receive a copy of your hospital stay, known as a discharge summary, which provides detailed information on your care in the hospital. It is very important that you schedule a follow-up visit with your doctor regarding any inpatient hospital stay.
- Ask your primary care doctor if he or she has received a copy. If not, suggest that your primary care doctor request a copy from the hospital, as it is very important in managing your health care.



Did you know?

Maryland Department of Health has a free service to help Maryland residents quit smoking.

The Maryland Tobacco Quitline assists Marylanders 13 years and older quit using any kind of tobacco.

To learn more, go to SmokingStopsHere.com or call one of their certified Quit Coaches at **800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)**.

Connect to Quit Corner

Ask, Advise, Assess. Connect to Quit.



Maryland's

1-800



QUIT NOW

SmokingStopsHere.com

Are you eligible for the rare and expensive case management program?

The Rare and Expensive Case Management (REM) program is a Maryland Medicaid benefit for members with certain qualifying conditions or diseases. The REM program is not another MCO (Managed Care Organization). The REM Program allows Medicaid recipients to be in traditional Fee-for-Service Medicaid but includes additional case management services.

If eligible for the REM program, you will no longer be in the MCO (MedStar Family Choice). You will be able to see any doctor that accepts the Maryland Medicaid Red and White card (also known as Fee-for-Service or Straight MA). This means you would have access to more doctors/specialists and would no longer need referrals. Children and adults also have dental and vision benefits with REM.

Another benefit of REM is an assigned case manager who will meet with you on a routine basis to help achieve your healthcare goals. The case manager can help make doctor appointments, address medication problems or questions, and even attend appointments to help you ask your doctor questions.

MedStar Family Choice has a case manager to assist you with the REM application. If you believe you or your child has a rare condition that might be eligible for the REM program, please contact our REM Coordinator, Teresa Boileau, MSN, RN at **410-933-7290** for assistance. For a list of qualifying diagnoses, visit [MMCP.Health.Maryland.gov/LongTermCare/Pages/REM-Program.aspx](https://www.mmcp.health.maryland.gov/LongTermCare/Pages/REM-Program.aspx).

What is utilization management?

To make sure that members get needed health care, MedStar Family Choice follows a basic review process called utilization review. A member's doctor sends a request for services to MedStar Family Choice, usually by phone or fax. Our experienced clinical associates reviews all requests.

MedStar Family Choice decisions are based on national criteria, such as InterQual and Medicaid guidelines. Member needs that fall outside of standard criteria are reviewed by our physicians to see if they are medically necessary. MedStar Family Choice approves or denies services based upon whether the service is medically needed and a covered benefit. We do not financially reward our providers, associates, or anyone contracted with MedStar Family Choice for denying services. In addition, we do not financially reward anyone involved in the decision process in such a way that would encourage less use of services.

MedStar Family Choice requires up to two business days to process a complete request for services, excluding medications. Requests are considered complete when the doctor sends the necessary medical information. The final decision cannot take longer than 14 days, whether or not all clinical information has been received. MedStar Family Choice will approve, deny, or request additional clinical information for medication requests within 24 hours of receiving the request. The final decision will be made within 24 hours of receiving complete clinical information and will not take longer than 72 hours for urgent requests or 14 days for standard requests. If MedStar Family Choice denies the request, the provider and the member will receive a copy of the denial. The letter will list instructions on how to appeal the decision. Members may also contact the HealthChoice Help Line at **800-284-4510**.

Understanding tick bites and Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is an infection spread by the bite of ticks. Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tickborne infection in the United States. Untreated Lyme disease can produce a wide range of symptoms, including fever, severe headaches, fatigue, rash, facial paralysis, muscle pain, and arthritis.

While preventive measures against ticks should be taken year-round, ticks are most active in the warmer months. Therefore, extra caution should be taken from April through September.

Here are some tips to avoid tick bites:

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter
- Walk in the center of trails
- Use insect repellent with 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin (Note: parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes, and mouth)

The Environmental Protection Agency has a website to help you find the right insect repellent for your family at [EPA.gov/Insect-Repellents](https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents).

Use the following steps to remove ticks from you, your children, or your pets:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure to remove the tick. Avoid twisting or jerking.
- Clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
- Don't use nail polish, petroleum jelly, or a hot match to make the tick detach.
- If tick mouthparts remain in the skin, leave them alone. In most cases, they will fall out in a few days.

Visit [CDC.gov/Ticks](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks) to learn more about how to prevent tick bites, remove ticks, and check for signs and symptoms of tickborne illnesses.

MFC survey results are online.

MedStar Family Choice wants you to stay informed on how we are doing. For updated information on survey results such as HEDIS®, Satisfaction Surveys, System Performance Reviews, EPSDT audits, and the Consumer Report Card, please visit the MedStar Family Choice Quality web page:

[MedStarFamilyChoice.com/Maryland-HealthChoice/For-Maryland-HealthChoice-Members/Quality](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com/Maryland-HealthChoice/For-Maryland-HealthChoice-Members/Quality)

Paper copies are available upon request by calling **888-404-3549**. As we continue to improve and strive for high scores, your dedication to quality health care is very much appreciated.

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MedStar Family
Choice

5233 King Ave., Suite 400
Baltimore, MD 21237
888-404-3549 PHONE
[MedStarFamilyChoice.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com)

The MedStar Family Choice member newsletter is a publication of MedStar Family Choice.

Submit new items for the next issue to darin.a.tambascio@medstar.net.

For more information on your plan or anything in this newsletter, please visit [MedStarFamilyChoice.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com).

Kenneth Samet
MedStar Health, President and CEO
Darin Tambascio
Health Plan Communication Manager

Eric Wagner
President

Patryce Toye, MD
Medical Director