



make *health* happen

News and Wellness information from Midwest Health Plan

Fall 2011



Talk to Your Doctor About Asthma

If you have asthma, it is important to follow your doctor's treatment plan. Work with your doctor to write your Asthma Action Plan and learn to follow it. An Asthma Action Plan is a roadmap for you to follow at work, home, or school. It will help you to take care of your asthma every day. It will help you to know when your asthma is getting out of control and what to do about it. The Asthma Action Plan identifies 3 zones of asthma control, and it will tell you what to do in each zone.

Your doctor can give you directions for exactly what each zone means for you.

RED = STOP Your symptoms are bad. Get medical help right away.

YELLOW = CAUTION You are having some symptoms. Add prescribed quick-relief medicine into your asthma plan.

GREEN = GO You're feeling OK. Keep using your preventive medication.

Taking Prescription Medications

Remember to take your medications as your doctor has prescribed. Asthma control requires 2 kinds of prescription medications:

- Quick-relief or rescue medications that provide fast-acting relief of symptoms
- Long-term control medications that are taken on a daily basis to control and treat symptoms

When you have asthma, it's important to know what can trigger your symptoms. Then you can find ways to control your environment to avoid those things. Common triggers include:

Allergens

- Dust
- Animal hair
- Mold
- Pollen

Irritants

- Smoking
- Strong smells
- Air pollution
- Cold air
- Infections, colds, and flu
- Changes in the weather
- Stress
- Exercise

Remember to see your doctor regularly for an asthma checkup, even when you're not having any symptoms. Also, take your asthma medication as prescribed by your doctor.

► **To enroll in the Asthma Focus program, please call 313-586-6071.**





Have a SAFE Hospital Stay

Midwest Health Plan is concerned about the quality of the care you receive in the hospital. The **Michigan Health and Safety Coalition** is an organization dedicated to improving hospital care. Visit their website at www.mihealthandsafety.org.

Here you can see how area hospitals are scored. They look at the number of procedures and surgeries performed, staffing in intensive care, and computer physician order entry.

► **Want a copy of this information? Contact Customer Service at 888-654-2200.**

Put **Cancer Screenings** on Your Calendar

Discovering cancer early increases the chances of successful treatment, which is why you should talk to your doctor about the recommended cancer screenings. Two of the screenings women should talk with their doctors about are cervical and breast cancer.

Cervical Cancer

Human papillomaviruses (HPV) cause most cases of cervical cancer. Most forms of HPV have no symptoms, while others can cause warts on the body. But high-risk HPVs, passed during sex, may cause genital warts or unusual cell growth in the cervix. This growth can later become cervical cancer. The Pap test is best for detecting abnormal cells on the cervix.

Breast Cancer

Mammograms are an important tool for detecting breast cancer, and getting regular mammograms might help save your life. A mammogram can detect tumors and this allows doctors to diagnose breast cancer early, when it is most treatable. Have a doctor examine your breasts every year. Experts also suggest monthly self-breast exams.

Did you know? Women need to be regularly screened for Chlamydia. This common sexually transmitted disease (STD) can trigger infertility, pelvic pain, and premature birth. Ask your doctor about this test.



Well Child **Visits**

Checkups and vaccines help kids stay healthy.

The first checkup should happen at birth, before you bring your baby home from the hospital. Then again at 3 to 5 days, 2 weeks, 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 1 year, and 15 months.

The doctor will check your child's growth, screen your child for exposure to lead, and give vaccines, also called shots. These shots help protect your child from serious illnesses like chickenpox, polio, and tetanus.

If your child has not had a well care visit, call your child's doctor today to schedule an appointment.



Get the Facts: **Nutrition**

Extra pounds can put a strain on your heart and increase chances of heart problems—including heart attack and heart failure, high blood pressure, and stroke. Losing just 10% of your weight has a big payoff. It can lower blood pressure; reduce bad blood fats, increase good cholesterol, and decrease risk of death by 20 to 25%.

Research shows people who lose weight gradually and steadily are more likely to keep the weight off.

Here's a good way to start:

- **Keep a food diary.** Review your diary to find ways to cut calories.
- **Plan meals.** Figure out how to make your favorites with lower-calorie ingredients.
- **Pay attention to portions.**
- **Snack smart.** Cut up fruits and veggies to have on hand in the fridge, or bagged to go. Other healthy options: air-popped popcorn, a handful of dry-roasted nuts, and nonfat yogurt.
- **Add exercise.** Try different activities to find out what you like and what fits into your life. Experts recommend at least 2.5 hours of moderate-intensity physical activity a week. That may sound like a lot, but you can break it up—just make sure you're exercising at least 10 minutes at a time.

Know When Antibiotics **WORK**

When you or your child feels sick, you want to feel better fast. But antibiotics aren't the answer for every illness. Using antibiotics when they are not needed can cause some bacteria to become resistant to the antibiotic.

Antibiotics cure bacterial infections, not viral infections such as:

- Colds or flu
- Most coughs and bronchitis
- Sore throats not caused by the strep bacteria
- Runny noses

Bacteria cause strep throat, some pneumonia, and sinus infections. **Antibiotics can work.**

Viruses cause the common cold, most coughs, and the flu. **Antibiotics don't work.**

Has Your Address or Phone Number **CHANGED?**



It is important to let Midwest Health Plan know when there have been changes to your address or telephone number. Please remember to contact Midwest Health Plan Customer Services Department at **888-654-2200** with your changes. Also, if you are a Medicaid recipient please inform your case worker of the changes.

PROTECT Your Health

One of the best ways to stay healthy is to get regular checkups. Midwest Health Plan has created a plan to help protect the health of children and adults.

You can view the Preventive Health Guidelines on our website at www.midwesthealthplan.com under the "Members" section, or you can request a hard copy by calling **313-586-6071**. Your health is important. Protect it by seeing your doctor before you get sick.



make health happen

Dr. Mark B. Saffer
President

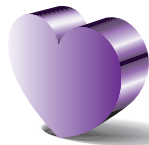
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Help Prevent Lead Poisoning

If you have children between 6 months and 2 years of age, talk to their doctor about **lead screening**. Children should be tested for lead by their second birthday. If lead is not found early, children with high levels of lead in their bodies can have behavioral, hearing, and sleeping problems. They may also have poor attention span, hyperactivity or irritability, headaches, or slow growth.

Here are some things you can do to **protect your child from lead poisoning**:

- Test your child for lead.
- Wash hands often.
- Be careful when buying children's toys and jewelry.
- Let tap water run for 1 minute before using.

Because your child may not show symptoms of lead poisoning, it is very important to get the simple blood test that will tell you whether your child has been exposed to lead. If you are not sure whether your child has been tested for lead, please call your child's doctor today!



- If you would like this newsletter in Arabic or Spanish, please call **313-586-6071**.

- Si desea que este boletín en árabe o en español, por favor llame al **313-586-6071**.

- **313-586-6071** إذا كنت ترغب في هذه النشرة باللغتين العربية أو الإسبانية يرجى الاتصال بالرقم