



close friends

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH PLAN OF RHODE ISLAND (NEIGHBORHOOD)

Get the Most Out of Your Car Safety Seat

Choosing, installing, and using a car seat can be confusing. Here are tips from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

START OUT RIGHT

Infants should face backward in the back seat until they're at least 1 year old and weigh 20 pounds. You can choose between an infant-only seat and a convertible seat. Convertible seats can be adjusted to fit the size of your growing child.

Once your child is at least 1 year old and weighs at least 20 pounds, the child can ride forward-facing.

BOOSTER SEATS

Your child is ready for a booster seat when one of the following is true:

- The child reaches the weight and

height limits for the seat

- The child's ears reach the seat top
- The child's shoulders are above the harness slots

A seat belt alone won't protect your child until the child stands about 4 feet 9 inches tall and is at least 8 years old. Until then, use a booster seat.

When installing a safety seat, make sure it's buckled in tightly. Check each time to be sure the harness straps are not loose. Not sure you've correctly installed your child's safety or booster seat? Check it at a child safety seat inspection station. To find a local



station, go to www.seatcheck.org, or call 1-866-SEAT-CHECK. ●

Win a \$25 gift certificate!

Call 1-401-427-6706 to enter a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate toward a child safety seat or other item at Babies R Us.

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Why You Need a Primary Care Physician

Primarily Care Physicians, also called PCPs, are specially trained to serve as a patient's main doctor over the course of many years. A PCP, such as a family medicine doctor, an internist or a pediatrician who knows and understands your needs, can be your most valuable health partner.

Primary Care Physicians are trained to treat the whole person—not just a disease.

They get to know their patients over the years. They consider medical history, personal history and life circumstances when providing care and treatment. Because PCPs manage all aspects of their patients'

medical care, they can refer patients to specialists when necessary and coordinate the care patients receive from other providers.

Specialists are trained experts who treat particular conditions or health problems and coordinate with your PCP, who is responsible for your overall health. And because health problems rarely develop when it's convenient, it helps to have a doctor who can see you when needed.

Before you choose a PCP, make a list of qualities you want in a doctor. The physician who meets your criteria—and who listens and treats you with respect—is the right one for you. Some questions you may want

to consider asking before you select a doctor include the following:

- Is the doctor accepting new patients?
- What are the office hours?
- If I called right now for a routine visit, how soon could I be seen?
- Does the doctor have a “sick today, seen today” policy?
- How much time is allowed for a routine visit?
- Will the doctor discuss health problems over the phone or by e-mail?
- What hospital does the doctor use? ●

Remember, when you feel sick, call your doctor first—no matter what time of day or night. If you do not have your own doctor, please call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019. We can help you find a doctor. We can also help you find a nearby Community Health Center (CHC).

Rlte Care Pharmacy Benefits Changed on February 1, 2009

Please call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 or visit our website at www.nhpri.org to learn more about the Rlte Care Pharmacy Benefit Change. Please note this change applies only to members with Group Number 1100 on their member ID cards.

What to Do in an Emergency

Remember: In a medical emergency, go to the emergency room right away or call 911.

You do NOT need a referral for emergencies. The hospital does not need to be part of your health plan.

Call your primary care site—the phone number is on your member ID card—the next day to tell them about your emergency room visit. If you are not sure if it is an emergency, you can call your primary care site at

any time. They will tell you when to go to the emergency room, urgent care or to their office.

When to Go to the ER:

- Broken bones
- Poisoning
- Overdose
- Very bad pain or pressure
- Bleeding that won't stop
- Trouble breathing
- Seizure problems, as in a new seizure or change in seizure pattern

- Pregnancy problems, such as heavy bleeding or very bad pain
- Fainting or passing out
- Bad head injury

When to Go to Your Doctor:

- Skin rash
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Earache
- Coughing
- Fever
- Diarrhea

Is It Allergies or Asthma? How to Tell the Difference

It's important to learn the differences between allergy and asthma symptoms.

With allergy symptoms, your body's immune system reacts to certain things called "allergens." Allergens include things such as bee stings, pollen, peanuts, and poison ivy. Symptoms may include sneezing, runny nose (clear discharge), itchy nose or throat, coughing, skin rashes or hives.

Asthma is a chronic disease of the lower respiratory system. Asthma symptoms such as sudden shortness of breath, problems breathing, a tight chest, wheezing or coughing occur when airways become blocked for a while or narrowed because of exposure to:

- Allergens
- Irritants (such as tobacco smoke or diesel fumes)
- Strenuous exercise
- Cold air
- Anxiety
- Other things that "trigger" asthma

The most common nasal allergy symptoms include runny/stuffy nose, itchy/watery eyes, dry coughing and repeated sneezing. Severe nasal allergies can make asthma worse. Severe nasal allergies are a disease of the upper respiratory system. If your doctor suspects you may have nasal allergies, the first step is to take a detailed medical history and

physical exam. Certain tests are used to confirm that you are allergic to certain allergens. A skin test or a blood test may be given. There are many prescription and over-the-counter treatments for allergy symptoms.

Not everyone is allergic to the same allergen triggers. Also, many people may even be allergic to more than one thing. Tree pollen in the spring, grass pollen in the summer and weed pollen in the fall are the most common outdoor triggers. Indoor triggers include pet dander, dust mites, mold spores and cockroach allergen.

To prevent allergies at home, there are some simple things you can do.

- Wash bedding once a week and vacuum twice a week to control dust mites.
- Avoid pets with feathers or fur, like birds, dogs, and cats. If you can't bear to part with your pet, keep it out of the bedroom.
- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Use an air conditioner or dehumidifier, fix any leaks, clean moldy surfaces, and limit the number of houseplants. ●

If you have symptoms, please call your doctor. Keeping track of seasonal allergies will assist your doctor in coming up with an allergy treatment plan.

Neighborhood is proud to be ranked the top Medicaid health plan in Rhode Island!



PROVIDENCE



**Children's
museum**

Show your Neighborhood ID card at the Providence Children's Museum and your visit is FREE. Another great reason for being a member of Neighborhood!

We Can Help You in Your Language

If you need help understanding this information in your language, please call us at **1-800-459-6019** and ask for Customer Service.

Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta información en su idioma, por favor llámenos al **1-800-459-6019** y pida hablar con el Departamento de Servicio al Cliente.

Se precisar de ajuda para entender as informações em seu idioma, ligue para **1-800-459-6019** e peça para falar com o departamento de Serviço ao Consumidor.

Для того чтобы получить информацию на своем языке, обратитесь в отдел по работе с клиентами (Customer Services) по телефону **1-800-459-6019**.

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បើអ្នកត្រូវការជួយឲ្យយល់នូវព័ត៌មាននេះជាភាសារបស់អ្នក សូមទូរស័ព្ទមកយើងតាមលេខ **1-800-459-6019** ហើយសួររកអ្នកធ្វើការផ្នែកសេវាបໍដីអតិថិជន ។



Get the Facts About Teens and STDs

DO LATEX CONDOMS PROTECT YOU FROM GETTING AN STD?

For sexually active people, the most effective strategy for reducing the risk of STDs and preventing HIV/AIDS is correct and constant use of latex condoms. However, research shows that condoms may not provide as much protection against some STDs such as HPV (genital warts). Abstinence—not having sex—is the only 100 percent sure way to avoid an STD.

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

A parent, teacher, school nurse, family doctor, clergyman or other responsible adult. ●

Contact your doctor if you think you may have an STD.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE AN STD?

Since many STDs do not have any noticeable symptoms, the only sure way to know is by having a medical exam and lab tests.

STD testing is a quick and simple process. Testing can be done in a doctor's office, any health center in your community or a hospital.

Important Reminder

Even if you no longer qualify for cash assistance through the Department of Human Services, you may still be eligible for health insurance through Rlte Care.

Your Family's Health Insurance Is Very Important...

DON'T LOSE IT!

All Rlte Care members must reapply each year for health insurance coverage.

If you are a Rlte Care member and have to make monthly premiums to DHS and have not made these on time, your family will lose all its health insurance benefits for 4 months. Call us today for more information: **1-800-459-6019**.

Remember to have your name on your mailbox. Mail from DHS will not be delivered if your name is not on the mailbox.



Call us today for more information: 1-800-459-6019.

cut out and save as a reminder!

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are more than just an embarrassment. They are a serious health problem. If untreated, some sexually transmitted diseases can cause permanent damage, such as infertility (the inability to have a baby) and even death (in the case of HIV/AIDS).

How much do you know about sexually transmitted diseases, also called STDs?

WHAT IS AN STD?

STD stands for "sexually transmitted disease." These infections are passed from person to person during sexual activity. Some infections have cures, while others don't. It is estimated that more than 15 million new cases of STDs occur in the U.S. each year. Approximately one quarter (3.75 million) of new cases occur among teenagers.

Unfortunately, STDs have become common among teens. Because teens are more at risk for getting some STDs, it is important to learn what you can do to protect yourself.

WHO CAN GET AN STD?

Anyone who engages in sexual activity.

Don't Let Stress Get You Down

At one time or another we all feel stressed. It can be caused by work, family, money, illness or many other things. Some stress can be good, such as when it helps keep you focused or helps you meet a goal. But too much stress can make you sick.

Any stress that keeps happening can cause you to get sick more often, have problems concentrating, have trouble sleeping or experience anxiety and depression. Too much stress can be bad for your physical and mental health. That is why you want to get control of your stress before it controls you.

Ways to control your stress:

- Find what causes you stress.
- See which of these things you can control.
- Decide which ones are important

enough to deal with.

- Change the things you can.
- Slow down—cut some things out of your busy schedule.
- When you are facing stress, stop and take a deep breath and slowly breathe out as you count to 10. This will help clear your mind.
- Get enough sleep, eat right and exercise.
- Talk to a friend or family member.
- Try to spend a few minutes each day doing something you enjoy.
- Eat healthy meals and snacks. Try not to skip meals.
- Walk. It helps you take a break from a stressful situation. Even a short walk can help you feel better. ●

Call your doctor if you are feeling symptoms of stress.

Tell Us If You See Fraud or Abuse

Fraud happens when a member or doctor does something that is not honest so that someone gets some type of benefit. Examples include when a doctor bills for a service that was not done, or a member lets someone else use their ID card. Abuse is when rules are broken and the Medicaid program has to pay extra money.

Please tell us if you notice fraud or abuse. You can call the Neighborhood Compliance Hotline at **1-800-826-6762** or Customer Service at **1-800-459-6019**. Your call is free and will be kept private.

Vaccination Rules Changing for School-Age Children

Prevention is basic to success in public health. Vaccines are credited as being one of the greatest public health successes of the 20th century. They prevent debilitating and life-threatening diseases that once were considered a common part of childhood. In the United States, children, adolescents and parents are fortunate that vaccines are available, and for the most part, vaccine-preventable diseases like polio or mumps are things of the past.

Vaccines prevent diseases and save lives, and in Rhode Island, we must work hard to maintain our high childhood immunization rates. Although there are fewer cases of vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States every year, the viruses and bacteria that cause the diseases still exist. Diseases that have been eliminated in the United States are still common in many Third-World countries.

Current science and technology also helps us to learn more about how vaccines work. As a result, immunization guidelines and rules are sometimes revised and updated. Starting with the 2009/2010 school year, there will be new vaccination requirements for school-age children.

A second dose of varicella (chickenpox vaccine) will be required for children entering kindergarten and seventh grade. In addition, vaccinations for tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis and meningitis will be required for children to enter seventh grade. To learn more about immunizations, call **1-800-942-7434** or visit www.health.ri.gov/immunization/index.php.

Contact your child's pediatrician to make sure his or her immunizations are up to date.

Depressed Teens Can Be At Risk for Suicides

By Girlaine Rosier Santos, LICSW

Do you know a 13- to 18-year-old who has been sad? Adolescent depression may be the problem.

Some signs of depression can be:

- Being sad
- Eating a lot or too little
- Sleeping a lot or too little
- Feeling tired

Some warning signs are:

- Family history of depression or suicide
- A medical problem

- Violence or abuse in the home
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Feeling lonely

Ways to help a teen who may be depressed:

- Discuss concerns with doctor
- Talk therapy, called “psychotherapy”
- Family therapy
- Medicine
- All of the above ●

If you feel your teen is depressed, you should talk to your doctor right away. Beacon Health Strategies can give you names of mental health professionals who can help. Please call Beacon at 1-800-215-0058.



Do You Need Food Stamps?

Are you having trouble providing food for your family? If you are struggling to put food on the table, you may want to consider applying for food stamp benefits. Food stamp benefits allow you to choose healthy food for you and your family.

Providing good nutrition for everyone in your family is crucial to maintaining a healthy family lifestyle. When individuals in a household do not eat, the entire household suffers. Food stamp benefits can help families in this situation by allowing them to purchase nutritious foods, while saving their cash.

If you would like information about the Food Stamp Program, please contact the Food Stamp Outreach Project at 1-866-306-0270 or visit the website at www.eatbettertoday.com. Both will provide answers to all the questions you may have about the Food Stamp Program as well as the necessary resources to apply for food stamp benefits.

Rlite Care members with Extended Family Planning (EFP) coverage can access primary care from their local Community Health Center.

Neighborhood's Provider Network

Call Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 for up-to-date information on Neighborhood's network of doctors and practitioners.



close friends

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