

health matters

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things to know

Breakfast: Fuel for healthy kids

Eating breakfast gives kids an early start on getting the vitamins and minerals they need every day.

A good breakfast helps kids:

- Boost their memory
- Feel less tired
- Think more clearly

It can even help them control their weight. A child who eats well in the morning may be less likely to overeat.

Pair these quick breakfasts with a glass of 100 percent fruit juice or low-fat milk:

- Melted cheese on whole-grain toast
- Peanut butter rolled in a tortilla
- A low-fat waffle with sliced fruit
- A cold slice of pizza and an orange
- Cereal topped with bananas or strawberries

Source: Children's Nutrition Research Center

How to handle fever in infants

If your baby feels warm or is very cranky, it's time to reach for a thermometer.

That's especially true if your baby is younger than 3 months. *Anytime* a baby this young has a fever, a doctor needs to know.

Chances are, your baby only has a cold or other minor illness. But a fever in a newborn may be a sign of something more serious. So don't take chances. Call the doctor if your infant has a fever. And remember to always use a rectal thermometer.

Also call the doctor if your baby is older than 3 months and

has a fever higher than 101.

Call the doctor, too, if your baby has a fever and:

- Is hard to wake up
- Is drooling
- Can't breathe well
- Has a seizure

Never give aspirin to your baby. It can make babies very ill. Make sure to get a doctor's OK before you give your baby any medicine.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics



To learn more about caring for your baby, go to www.zerotothree.org.

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Give yourself the best present ever—
peace of mind.
Get a mammogram and well-woman exam every year.



Colds and the flu

Stay well this winter

You can't catch a cold or the flu by standing in the rain. And you can't cure either one with chicken soup.

But there are ways to stay well this winter that are nearly that simple. And since it can take weeks to get better from a cold or the flu, your best bet is to stop them before they start.

Steer clear of germs

People in the U.S. get 1 billion colds a year. There are fewer cases of the flu, but it can be much more serious. The flu can be especially hard on older people or those with a disease, such as diabetes or heart disease.

Colds and the flu are caused by viruses. They are spread by touch or by a sneeze or cough. You can help keep yourself and others well with these tips:

- Wash your hands often, especially if you've been around someone who is sick. Use a disinfectant to clean surfaces, such as phones or toys, touched by sick people.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue away.
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes.
- Get a flu shot.

If you do get sick

You might have the flu if your symptoms come on quickly and include a fever higher than 101 degrees, chills and muscle aches.

If you think you have the flu, call your doctor. There are medicines that can help. You should also see your doctor if you have chest pain or trouble breathing.

Rest is one of the best things you can do if you get the flu or have a bad cold. These tips may also help:

- Relieve symptoms with over-the-counter medicines. They can help with aches, fever, stuffiness and swollen sinuses. Make sure to read labels to find out what each drug is for. Ask your doctor if you have questions.
- Drink lots of fluids and eat well.
- Don't drink alcohol or smoke.

It's important to stay home when you're sick. You'll feel better, and you'll avoid spreading germs to others.

Sources: American Lung Association; National Institutes of Health

When to use antibiotics

You wouldn't use a hammer to turn a screw. It's the wrong tool. Taking an antibiotic when you get a cold or the flu won't work either.

That's because these illnesses are caused by viruses. Antibiotics only work against bacteria.

Taking antibiotics when they aren't needed can even do harm. It can make bacteria stronger. The next time you need the medicine, it might not work.

To make sure antibiotics work when you need them:

- Take them just as your doctor tells you to. Finish all the pills, even if you feel better.
- Let your doctor decide if you need them.
- Never take other people's medicine. It might not be right for your illness. You could even get sicker.



Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Call the American Academy of Family Physicians at (800) 274-2237.



Fight colds and flu: Beat the germs!

Cough. Sniffle. Achoo! It's no fun when you have a cold or the flu. Cold and flu germs are what make you sick. These germs spread when you:

- Sneeze
- Cough
- Touch something covered with germs

But there's a lot you can do to fight germs and keep from getting sick. Here are some fun games that can tell you how.

Yikes!
BUBBLES!



Handwashing how-to

Washing your hands is the best way to get rid of germs. It's especially important to wash your hands after you sneeze or cough. Here's how to wash the right way:

- 1. Dive in!** Put your hands under warm running water and use soap.



- 2. Scrub up!** Rub your hands together and make lots of bubbles to scrub away dirt and germs.



- 3. Sing** a little song! Don't just do a quick rinse. Wash long enough to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.



Happy birthday to you

- 4. Rinse off!** Rinse your hands well to get all the soap and germs down the drain.



Bye!

- 5. Dry** those hands! Don't just wipe those wet hands on your clothes. Dry your hands well with a clean towel or paper towels.



Find the hidden germs

Germs are pretty much everywhere you go. But they have some favorite hiding places. See if you can find where germs like to hide.

Find these words:

- Bathroom
- Kitchen
- Remote control
- Cafeteria
- Gym
- Locker room
- Telephone
- Doorknob



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Germs hate
SOAP!





Health care reminders

We want you to get the most from your health insurance. You can do your part. Here are some reminders.

1. Always take your ID card when you visit the doctor and when you order or pick up prescriptions. That way your doctor and the pharmacy will have your most current information. Otherwise, you may not be able to see the doctor or get your medication. Or you might be billed for those services.
2. Tell us when you change your address or phone number.

We use mail and the phone to keep in touch about important information. And we don't want you to miss out. Call Member Services or your eligibility office to update your information.

3. Don't miss your doctor's appointments. If you need to miss one, call your doctor ahead of time.

You can also make the most of your health care by:

- Reading your Mercy Care Plan member handbook
- Knowing what care is covered
- Knowing your responsibilities as a member

Get answers from Member Services

Where should I buy my medicine?

Can my health plan help me change doctors?

What do I do if I've lost my ID card?

These are just a few of the questions Member Services can answer for you. When you need help, just call. We can:

- Tell you about your health benefits and services
- Help you find a different doctor
- Work with you to solve problems about getting care or service
- Help if you have a complaint
- Help you with pharmacy concerns
- Arrange for someone who speaks your language to interpret for your doctor visits



When you have other insurance

If you or your family members have more than one health plan, please let us know. It may change the way our services are paid.

When someone has two health plans, one is considered the primary plan. The primary plan pays first and the other pays second. The second plan may also pay for covered services that the first plan did not pay.

Examples of other plans include:

- Insurance from a job

- Medicare
- Insurance from a child's other parent

Telling us about all of your health plans helps prevent delays in payment. You will still get all of your covered benefits.

Call Member Services if you have questions.