

# WHOLE you

2021 Summer Bulletin

Your healthy source for living well.

**Hello! This is the new issue *Whole You* from PA Health & Wellness.**

In this issue of *Whole You*, you'll find important topics to keep you healthy:

- September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
- Are you Ready to See the Doctor?
- How to Get the Most from Your Coverage: Pharmacy Benefits
- Preventive Care in 2021: Putting You First
- Participant Advisory Committee
- Have a Healthy Summer!
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Free Community Events
- Employment Services
- Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Vaccine

**Thank you for being our Participant, and for taking care of the whole you!**

# WHOLE you

## September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

You may not have ovaries, but it is likely that someone you love, does. Ovarian cancer is the 5th deadliest cancer in women. For Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, here are some tips that may help you or a loved one.

### **Remind me, what are ovaries?**

Ovaries are female reproductive organs located in the pelvis. Ovaries produce eggs (ova) and the hormones estrogen and progesterone.

### **What are some risk factors for ovarian cancer?**

- Obesity
- Older age; ovarian cancer is rare in women younger than 40
- Taking hormone replacement therapy after menopause
- Personal history of certain types of breast cancer or colon & intestinal polyps
- Family history of ovarian cancer, breast cancer, or colorectal cancer

### **What are some things I can do to prevent ovarian cancer?**

While it is not possible to stop aging or change your family health history, there are a few things you can do:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Talk to your doctor about not taking hormone replacement therapy after menopause
- Talk to your doctor to see if birth control pills are an option for you. Studies show that women who have used birth control pills for 5 years or longer have a 50% lower risk of getting ovarian cancer.

### **How would I know if I might have ovarian cancer?**

Ovarian cancer is a more difficult cancer to find early, but it may have some early warning signs, so it is important to:

- Get your annual pelvic exam!
- Contact your doctor if you have changes in your body or ongoing symptoms, such as:
  - Bloating, swelling, or pain in your pelvis or abdomen
  - Feeling full quickly or losing your appetite
  - Changes in urination, such as having to go more often or always feeling like you have to go
  - Changes in your period, such as heavier or irregular bleeding

### **Is there any good news?**

- Ovarian cancer can be treated
- 94% of patients live longer than 5 years when the cancer is found early
- More attention is being paid to ovarian cancer which means more and better treatments

Most importantly, contact your health care professional if you have any concerns or questions about how you are feeling. If you need help scheduling an appointment or finding a provider, PA Health & Wellness (PHW) will be happy to help you! Just give PHW Service Coordination a call using the phone number on the back of your membership card or contact us through our website at [PAHealthWellness.com](http://PAHealthWellness.com). Please always remember to take your Participant ID card with you on the day of your visit.

# WHOLE you

## Are You Ready to See the Doctor?

Many people didn't go to their doctors' offices last year. Everyone was being very careful because no one wanted to get sick. Hospital and office staff have done a lot of work to make sure that patients are safe. Now that more people are getting the vaccine, offices and hospitals are starting back to get back to normal. This is great news because the time you spend with your doctor is important to your health! Being prepared for your next appointment helps you focus on staying healthy. Below are helpful tips to get the most from your next doctor's visit.

### **Get Organized Before Your Appointment**

- Call your doctor's office to confirm your appointment.
- Make a list of questions starting with the most important.
- Note any changes with your health, either good or bad.
- List all of your prescribed and over-the-counter medications including vitamins and supplements.
- If you track your blood pressure or blood sugar readings at home, make sure to keep them current and bring your documentation to the appointment.

### **During Your Appointment**

- Talk openly and honestly about your health. Your doctor can best help you if they know exactly what kinds of problems you are having, or what successes you've had.
- Share your questions with your doctor or the medical team.
- Take notes.
- Bring a friend or relative to your appointment.
- Schedule your next appointment, labs or diagnostic test while you are at the office.

### **After Your Appointment**

- Review your notes and instructions.
- Pick up any prescriptions from the pharmacy.
- Complete any scheduled labs and/or diagnostic tests.

By being prepared, you can help make the most of your appointment, whether you are starting with a new doctor or continuing with the doctor you've seen for years.

Taking care and control of your health is an ongoing and rewarding process. Please reach out to your PA Health & Wellness Service Coordinator if you have any questions or would like some assistance.





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## How to Get the Most from your Coverage: Pharmacy Benefits

As a valued Participant, you have a number of services available to you. Be sure you get the most from your plan by knowing about your pharmacy benefits. PA Health & Wellness is committed to providing appropriate, high-quality, and cost-effective drug therapy to all PA Health & Wellness Participants. PA Health & Wellness's Pennsylvania prescription insurance covers prescription medications and certain over-the-counter medications with a written order from a PA Health & Wellness provider.

This Pennsylvania prescription drug coverage program does not cover all medications. Some medications may require prior authorization and some may have limitations. Other medically necessary pharmacy services are covered as well.



To learn more about  
PA Health & Wellness's  
pharmacy benefits, visit  
[PAHealthWellness.com](http://PAHealthWellness.com)  
or call 1-844-626-6813  
(TTY 1-844-349-8916).



# WHOLE you

## Preventive Care in 2021: Putting You First



We know it was hard to get to the doctor's office in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people were unsure about what kind of steps the offices took to prevent their patients from getting sick. The good news? Now that more Americans have received the COVID-19 vaccine, rates of the infection are decreasing. Doctors and dentists have done an excellent job of making sure their offices are safe. This is a great time to make some appointments that you might have delayed.

Going to your doctor for check-ups is a very important part of keeping you healthy. Many diseases can be treated and managed well if they are caught early. Your doctor wants to be your partner in managing your health! They want to be sure you live a long, healthy life. For example, women over the age of 45 should have a mammogram every year. Women between 21-65 years old should have a pap screening every 3-5 years, depending on the kind of test. People with diabetes should have a dilated retinal eye exam every 2 years, and their HbA1c checked annually. Everyone should have their blood pressure checked by their doctor at their annual wellness visit. Making an appointment with your doctor means you are putting yourself first.

PA Health & Wellness wants to help you set your preventive care appointments. Please reach out to your Service Coordinator, or call Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY 1-844-349-8916) so we can assist you.



### Participant Advisory Committee

You can help PA Health & Wellness with the way our health plan works. We have a Participant Advisory Council that gives Participants like you a chance to share your thoughts and ideas with PA Health & Wellness. The group meets every 3 months. This gives you a chance to talk about your concerns with a variety of people. You also have a chance to tell us how we are doing. You may ask questions or share any concerns that you have about the delivery of services. Call Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY/TDD 1-844-349-8916) if you would like to attend.

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## Have a Healthy Summer!

This is a great time of year to make some healthy changes to your daily routine! The weather is getting nicer. Taking walks is a great way to get moving and enjoy the fresh air. Farmers markets have finally opened. Fresh fruits and vegetables are in season! These are very heart healthy snacks. Think about having one day a week where you cut meat out of your menu, and enjoy light meals like a salad or grilled vegetables. Cut back on sugary drinks, like soda. Try a cool glass of iced tea instead. Stay hydrated on hot, humid days. Make sure you wear sunscreen and a hat when spending time in the sun.

Managing your stress is also important. We all spent a lot of time inside in the last year. Find an activity that you enjoy doing. Meet a friend for a walk in the park. Take in a fireworks show or an outdoor concert. Lastly, cutting back on smoking has a very positive effect on your health. Many health conditions can become worse if you smoke. Talk to your doctor about how to quit smoking.

For more information about having a healthy summer, visit the CDC's website: [www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/healthy-summer.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/healthy-summer.htm).



## SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

People in eligible low income households can obtain more nutritious diets with SNAP. SNAP allows for eligible households to increase their food purchasing power at grocery stores and supermarkets. Those who are qualified, receive an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) ACCESS card to make food purchases. One can apply two ways: online and in person. Online, you can apply for, or renew, by using COMPASS ([www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us)) or by contacting your county assistance office ([www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/CAO-Contact.aspx](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/CAO-Contact.aspx)).

### Who can apply:

- The head of the household
- The spouse of the head of the household
- Any other responsible household member
- A designated authorization representative

## Employment Services

Did you know there are **5 Employment Services available to some participants with Community HealthChoices?**

1. Benefits Counseling - How does employment affect my services?
2. Career Assessment - Learn to develop interests and capabilities
3. Employment Skills Development - Helps prepare for employment
4. Job Finding - Assists in locating a job
5. Job Coaching - Provides support once you have the job

For more information, reach out to your Service Coordinator, or call us at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY 1-844-349-8916) to ask if you qualify.

## Free Community Events

**Virtual Senior Academy** ([virtualesenioracademy.org](http://virtualesenioracademy.org)) is a platform for adults over the age of 50, offering them the opportunity to expand and make new friends by offering live learning experiences using video chat software. Topics covered include: health and wellness, arts and music, book clubs, history, current events, and more.

There are many expos in Pennsylvania for those 50+. Find one near you by visiting [www.50plusexpopa.com](http://www.50plusexpopa.com).

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## Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Vaccinations

### ***We are all in it together!***

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and protecting each other from COVID-19 requires a team effort from everyone to get their vaccine. Here are some commonly asked questions about the vaccine.

### ***Will I have to pay anything to get the vaccine?***

No. PA Health & Wellness Participants will not pay anything for the vaccine.

### ***Where should I go to get a vaccine?***

You have several options! First, if you need assistance with getting your COVID-19 vaccine, your PA Health & Wellness Service Coordinator can help you or you can ask your doctor's office for assistance. Also, check with your pharmacist to see if they can provide the vaccine to you.

### ***Why should I get the vaccine?***

There are so many reasons to get the vaccine!

- The vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19.
- Once you get the vaccine, you'll be able to start doing some of your favorite things again that you weren't able to do during the pandemic.
- Being vaccinated protects your loved ones.
- You'll contribute to the national effort to get more people vaccinated.

### ***What are some common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?***

You may have some discomfort on the arm where you got the vaccine. You may also experience a fever, chills, or headache. In most cases, these side effects last only a few days.

### ***Can the vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?***

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that the vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

### ***When will I be fully vaccinated against the virus?***

People who have received the vaccine are not fully vaccinated until two weeks after their last dose. If you receive the Moderna or Pfizer shot, you will be fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your second vaccine. If you receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you will be fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your only vaccine.

If you have additional questions, please call Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY 1-844-349-8916).







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