



Welcome to another edition of Whole You, a newsletter from PA Health & Wellness (PHW).

We hope this newsletter finds you well. We really hope you enjoy the helpful tips in this edition and that it helps you take better care of the whole you.

It's a New Year!

Time to Schedule Your Annual Wellness Visit

A yearly visit to your Primary Care Provider (PCP) is important, even if you're not sick. It's a time to focus on staying healthy, now and down the road.

What to expect during your Annual Wellness Visit

- Be sure to ask for a "Well Visit" or "Physical" when you schedule the appointment.
- You'll be asked about your medical history, your family's health and other personal questions. This is to see if you are at higher risk for certain conditions.
- Tell your doctor if you have pain or problems performing your day-to-day activities.
- Discuss Advanced Care Planning or Living Wills.
- Bring your full medication list, including any over-the-counter products you use. Use the time to ask questions about your medicines.
- The information you share is confidential. This is a good time to ask for alcohol, drug, and smoking treatment.
- A head-to-toe physical exam will be conducted. Tell your PCP if you wish to have someone in the exam room to make you feel more comfortable.
- Lab tests and other tests may be ordered.
- Vaccines will be discussed and offered.
- Make a follow-up appointment before you leave, if needed.
- Discuss the importance of cancer screenings with your PCP.



If you need help finding a PCP or updating the PCP listed on your card, call Participant Services at **1-844-626-6813 (TTY 711)**. They can help you with transportation and language services also.

We Speak Your Language!

We can help you find a healthcare provider that understands your language. Our providers are trained each year to understand differences in language and cultures. They can also contact an interpreter by telephone. We can also provide interpreters for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. These services are available at no cost. If you would like to find a provider who understands your needs, call Participant Services at **1-844-626-6813 (TTY: 711)**. We'll connect you with the interpreter service that speaks your language.



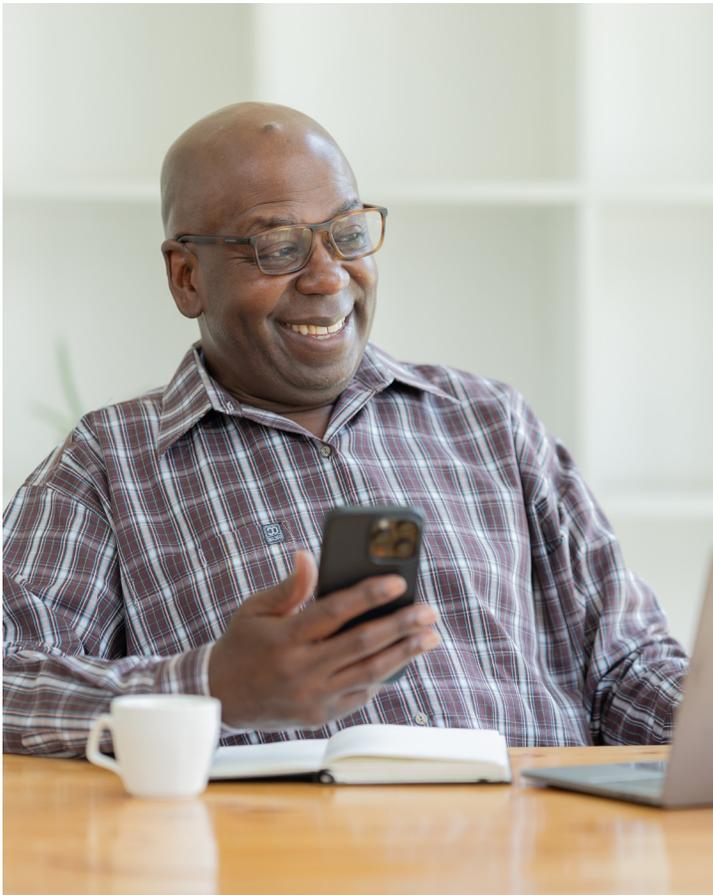
Work and Well-Being in the Winter

PA Health & Wellness supports you with exploring the possibility of work, finding a job, maintaining financial stability through work, and advancing in the workforce. Supporting your medical needs and employment are part of the overall approach to supporting your health.

Here are some tips in caring for yourself while working or looking for work this winter:

- Move closer to light. Work by a window or a common space for a few hours. Invest in a light therapy box that mimics outdoor light. If looking for work, change up your scenery by visiting a PA CareerLink center. Learn more at the website: <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/>
- If you have vision-related needs or mental health conditions impacted by the changes in sun during winter, consider asking your employer for a reasonable accommodation. Unsure how to do this? Connect with your Service Coordinator about a referral to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) or other supports that may be available.
- To support a healthy immune system, make sure to drink enough fluids and fuel your body with tasty, healthy foods.
- To reduce possible injury, add more time for travel to work. If needed, ask a neighbor to assist with shoveling and ice removal. Put an extra blanket in your car or add additional layers if traveling by public transportation.
- Focus on good sleep. If your work schedule varies, it may be possible to request a reasonable accommodation for some consistent scheduling during the winter months.
- Check if your employer has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and use it as needed. Your employer is not told who accesses the service.

Additional Resources Related to Work and Well-Being in the Winter:



Working Safely in Cold Weather (OSHA)

<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3982.pdf>

NAMI Wellness Resources and Strategies

<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Frontline-Professionals/Health-Care-Professionals/Wellness-Resources-and-Strategies>

Employment Laws: Medical and Disability-Related Leave

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/fact-sheets/employment-laws-medical-and-disability-related-leave>

Healthy Aging and Physical Disability: How to Manage Disability-Related Pain as You Age

<https://agerrtc.washington.edu/info/factsheets/pain#overlay-context=backdoor>

Can Workplace Flexibility and Supervisor Support Reduce Health Risks?

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/can-workplace-flexibility-and-supervisor-support-reduce-health-risks>

Age, Hearing Loss, and Communication: What Are My Rights?

<https://agerrtc.washington.edu/info/factsheets/hearing#overlay-context=backdoor>

Living Well with Age-Related Vision Loss

<https://agerrtc.washington.edu/info/factsheets/vision>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) Assists with disability and health specific needs at work

<https://askjan.org/info-by-role.cfm#for-individuals>



Contact Participant Services:
1-844-626-6813 (TTY: 711)



Medication Adherence

Taking your medications every day is more important to your health than you may know. Half of all treatment failures may be due to patients NOT taking their medications. One in four visits to the hospital can be tied to patients forgetting to take their medications. Something as small as remembering to take your medications could help save time, money, and your health!

If you have questions or concerns, talk to your doctor or pharmacist before you stop taking your medications. Do yourself a favor and stay healthy and happy in 2024!

Kim, Jennifer. Medication Adherence: The Elephant in the Room. US Pharmacist. January, 2018.



The risk of getting colon cancer increases as you get older. But other risk factors and lifestyle factors may contribute as well, including:

- Inflammatory bowel disease
- A personal or family history of colon cancer or polyps
- A genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer (Lynch syndrome)
- Lack of regular physical activity
- A diet low in fruit and vegetables, a low-fiber and high-fat diet, or a diet high in processed meats
- Being Overweight and having obesity
- Alcohol consumption and Tobacco use
- Having a history of adenomas

Get Screened for Colon Cancer

Colorectal cancer (Colon Cancer) develops in your intestines. The colon is the first and longest part of your large intestines. It helps absorb water and nutrients from your food. The rectum is the lower part of your large intestine and where your body stores your stool.

Colon cancer is a disease in which cells in the colon or rectum grow out of control. Most colon cancers begin as precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) in the colon or rectum. These polyps can be present in the colon for years before they may develop into cancer.

Colon cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States. In 2020 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that there were 126,240 new cases of Colon and Rectum cancer in the United States. For every 100,000 people, 33 new Colon and Rectal cancer cases were reported. On average, 13 of these people died from this cancer.

To learn more about PHW's participant Colorectal Cancer Screening incentives and My Health Pays® programs or make a referral:

Visit [PAHealthWellness.com](https://www.pahealthwellness.com).

Call participant services at **1-844-626-6813 (TTY: 711)**.

Email phwcasemanagement@pahealthwellness.com.

Colon cancer may not cause any symptoms, especially at first. Some symptoms may include:

- Abdominal pains, aches, or cramping
- Weight loss for no known reason
- Fatigue
- A change in bowel habits that lasts more than a few days, such as:
 - Blood (either bright red or very dark) in the stool (bowel movement)
 - Diarrhea, constipation, or feeling that the bowel does not empty all the way

If you have symptoms, talk to your doctor. Your doctor will decide which screening method would be right for you. The most effective way to reduce your risk of colon cancer, beginning at age 45, is to get screened. Colon cancer screening can find precancerous polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer.

Treatment works best when found early. Colon screening methods may include:

- Fecal occult blood test (FOBT)
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy
- Colonoscopy
- Computed tomography (CT) colonography
- Stool DNA (sDNA) with Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)



What to Do if You Are Admitted to the Hospital or Visit the Emergency Room

When you go to the hospital, the goal for everyone is a discharge home without having to return. These steps make it easier for you or your loved one to go home and have the best possible health outcome.

Before you leave the hospital:

1. Ask to speak with a case manager about your plan for discharge.
2. See if an appointment can be scheduled with your PCP before you go home.
3. Discuss anything that concerns you when you think about going home.
4. Are there transportation problems? Do you have a caregiver to help you? Do you have financial concerns that may prevent you from getting food or medicine? How will you get your medications filled?
5. Notify Participant Services so we can help coordinate your care.

Upon discharge:

- Schedule or confirm your PCP appointment as soon as you get home.
- Complete your appointment within 1-2 weeks of discharge. It can be done in person, over the phone (telehealth), or by video visit.
- Share any paperwork you received from the hospital with your PCP.
- Bring your medicine with you (all vitamins and over the counter) medications.
- Inform your PCP of any changes or new medicines prescribed in the hospital.
- Ask about any symptoms you should report.
- Go over your test results and discuss next steps in your plan of care.
- Schedule an annual wellness visit if you have not already completed one this year.



Our Nurse Advice Line is ready to answer your health questions 24 hours a day – every day of the year. It is staffed with Registered Nurses.

Call **1-844-626-6813 (TTY: 711)**.

Take Control of Your Blood Pressure

The goal is to have your blood pressure reading be **less than 120/80**.

Blood Pressure Category	Stystolic mm Hg (upper number)		Diastolic mm Hg (lower number)
Normal	Less than 120	And	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	And	Less than 80
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	130-139	Or	80-89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	140 or Higher	Or	90 or Higher
Hypertensive Crisis	Higher than 180	And/or	Higher than 120

(consult your doctor immediately if you experience a Hypertensive Crisis)

Source: American Heart Association, Heart.org/BPLevels

Keys to meeting your blood pressure goals:

- Know your numbers.
- See your doctor, use a free blood pressure machine at a local store or pharmacy, or ask your doctor or Service Coordinator about a home blood pressure monitor.
- See your PCP regularly. Every 3-6 months if you have hypertension or diabetes.
- Lose extra weight.
- Lower your salt intake.
- Increase exercise and general activity. Start with walking 10 minutes a day. Work up to 20-30 minutes 3-5 times per week.
- Limit alcohol.
- Take medications as prescribed. Do not stop or miss doses.
- Sometimes diet and exercise isn't enough. Talk with your doctor about medications.



If you need help finding a provider, making an appointment, getting medications or have questions about your benefits, contact Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY: 711).

For people age 65 and older who are eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, Wellcare by Allwell is our Dual Special Needs Program. Our Wellcare by Allwell plans include comprehensive healthcare coverage with support you can count on.

To learn more, call Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY 711).

Visit the PA Health & Wellness website <https://www.pahealthwellness.com/community/community-connect.html> or talk with your PHW Service Coordinator to find more information about community events, employment aid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and rides to medical appointments.



Participant Advisory Committee

You can help PA Health & Wellness with the way our health plan works. We have a Participant Advisory Committee 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: 711) if you would like to attend.

Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse

If you suspect fraud, waste, or abuse in the healthcare system, you should report it to someone who can investigate it. Your actions may help to improve the healthcare system and reduce costs for our participants, customers, and business partners. You can report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse in one of these ways:

PA Health & Wellness anonymous and confidential hotline

1-866-685-8664

Pennsylvania Office of Inspector General at

1-855-FRAUD-PA (1-855-372-8372)

Pennsylvania Bureau of Program Integrity at

1-866-379-8477

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

1-844-DHS-TIPS (1-844-347-8477)

Mail: Office of Inspector General,

555 Walnut Street, 7th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101

Mail: Department of Human Services,

Office of Administration, Bureau of Program Integrity,
P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675

You may remain anonymous if you prefer. All information received or discovered by the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) will be treated as confidential, and the results of investigations will be discussed only with persons having a legitimate reason to receive the information (e.g., state and federal authorities, corporate law department, market medical directors or senior management).

Your managed care plan may not cover all your health care expenses. Read your participant handbook carefully to determine which health care services are covered.

1-844-626-6813 (TTY: 711)
PAHealthWellness.com



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