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Staying Healthy With Asthma

Asthma is a lung disease that causes wheezing, coughing and difficulty breathing. Symptoms may be triggered only occasionally, but if ignored can lead to a serious, even life threatening attack.

What causes an Asthma attack?

Common asthma triggers are having a cold or allergies. Knowing what causes your asthma symptoms is an important step toward controlling them.

Asthma can be managed so that you can live a normal, healthy life. However, up to 70% of people with asthma take their medication incorrectly. Here are the top reasons:

- You stop taking your medications because you're feeling OK (no symptoms).
- Inhalers can be tricky, depending on the type, and you might give up if you're confused, or thinking it doesn't seem to work.
- Some asthma medications can cause side effects.

Living well with asthma

- Write an Asthma Action Plan with your doctor that teaches what to do to prevent and treat asthma symptoms. Practice using your inhaler with a health care provider, especially if you have more than one type.
- Learn about how your asthma medications can be affected by your other medications and what to do about it.
- Get the flu shot every year and talk to your doctor about the right pneumonia vaccine for you.
- Discuss your concerns about your condition with your doctor or your care manager. Don't wait to see your doctor if symptoms are worsening.

The American Lung Association offers resources that may help. Go to the American Lung Association website for details.

Sources: <https://getastmahelp.org/refer-to-specialist.aspx>
<https://getastmahelp.org/refer-to-specialist.aspx>
<https://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/>

Get Tested for Your Health and Others'

Did you know?

- You can have a sexually transmitted infection (STI) even if you feel healthy and have no symptoms.
- You can get an STI through vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- The only way to know if you have an STI is to get tested. Your doctor may order urine, throat or anal tests to diagnose an STI.
- Untreated, STIs can damage your vision, hearing, brain, heart and cause infertility.

Prevention Tips

- Regular condom use can prevent against all STIs during vaginal, anal and oral sex.
- Consider PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to prevent HIV. PrEP is a pill you take once daily to reduce the risk of HIV infection. Talk to your doctor about PrEP.
- Take emergency PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) if you are exposed to HIV. PEP can stop HIV infection if started within 36 hours (but not beyond 72 hours) of exposure. If you believe you've been exposed, call the NYC PEP Hotline at (844) 3-PEPNYC (844-373-7692). Operators are available 24/7 and can provide the best available guidelines.
- Get vaccinated. Some STIs can be prevented with a vaccine, including HPV, hepatitis A and hepatitis B.

Cure or Treatment

STIs caused by bacteria (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis) can be cured with antibiotics. STIs caused by viruses (HPV, genital herpes, HIV) cannot be cured but can be managed well with antiviral medications.

Getting Treatment

Talk to your primary care physician or care manager about getting treatment. The NYC Department of Health's eight Sexual Health Clinics offer low- to no-cost services for testing, treatment and prevention of STIs. Anyone 12 years and older, regardless of immigration status, who has been sexually active can and should be tested even if they have no symptoms. No appointment or parental consent is needed. Visit nyc.gov/site/doh/services/allclinics.page for the clinics near you.



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Protect Yourself Against the Flu and Pneumonia

Get a flu shot every year. The flu shot is needed every year because flu viruses are always changing. And remember that it takes 2 weeks for the flu vaccine to offer full protection; so get yours today!

Get a pneumonia vaccine once and be protected for life. If you're at least 65, you should get a pneumonia vaccine. Talk to your doctor about the right one for you. And, it's OK to get both the flu and pneumonia shots at the same time.

Call Member Services for more information at 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711) 8 am – 6 pm, Monday – Friday



Safely Throw Out Medication You Don't Want

The best and easiest way to throw out old and unwanted medications is at your local pharmacy. Look for the drop-off box near the pharmacy counter. If your pharmacy doesn't have one, ask your pharmacist where the nearest one is.



For a complete list of drop-off sites close to where you live, go to the Department of Justice, Diversion Control Division at deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch. Just enter your zip code for a list of places near you.

In the Spring and Fall, you can take part in the National Drug Take-Back Days (April and October). Learn more at the Department of Justice, Diversion Control Division website.

Help Us Help You Better!

From now through January 2020, you may be asked to complete a survey about VNSNY CHOICE SelectHealth. It's completely anonymous and is your chance to let us know if you're satisfied with your health plan. The survey is being conducted, by mail and phone, by Datastat, Inc., on behalf of the New York State Department of Health. Please take some time to complete the survey. We value your feedback.

Thank you for helping us help you better!

If You're Facing Domestic Violence...

Domestic Violence happens when someone you're married to, living with or dating causes you physical harm and fear. It can involve sexual cruelty, threats, bullying and emotional abuse. Domestic Violence affects all races, ages, sexual orientations, income and education levels. Know that it's not your fault.

You can call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Offered in more than 200 languages, all calls are free and confidential.

VNSNY CHOICE Health Plans complies with Federal civil rights laws. VNSNY CHOICE Health Plans does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

ATENCION: si habla español, tiene a su disposicion servicios gratuitos de asistencia linguistica. Llame al 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711).



World Aids Day 2019

2019 marks the 31st anniversary of World AIDS Day. Calling for greater awareness of HIV/AIDS. This year's theme is **Communities Makes the Difference**.

Join us for a special event – **SelectHealth Rocks New York**, celebrating World AIDS Day Event Proclamation from Brooklyn Borough **President Eric L. Adams**.

Event Details: **Place:** Brooklyn Borough Hall
209 Joralemon Street Brooklyn, NY 11201
Date: Tuesday, November 26
Time: 11 am - 3 pm

Let us know you're coming! Bring a friend! RSVP to SelectHealthevent@vnsny.org



Oven Roasted Parmesan Brussel Sprouts

Ingredients

- 1½ lbs brussel sprouts (trimmed & halved)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder or two cloves fresh garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Instructions

- Pre-heat oven to 425 degrees. Very lightly spray a cookie sheet with cooking spray.
- Trim brussel sprouts and cut in half.
- In a bowl, combine brussel sprouts with olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper and parmesan cheese.
- Toss together to coat evenly.
- Spread onto the cookie sheet in an even layer.
- Cook for 16 – 18 minutes.
- Drizzle a bit more olive oil and add some more parmesan cheese.
- Serve immediately.

If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us.

VNSNY CHOICE is committed to finding and stopping fraud, waste, or abuse in our health care plans.

Anonymous Reporting

VNSNY CHOICE Compliance Hotline: 1-888-634-1558.
File an online report at: vnsny.ethicspoint.com.
Learn more at: vnsnychoice.org/for-our-members/member-rights/compliance-program.

Member Services

1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711)
8 am – 6 pm, Monday – Friday
www.vnsnychoice.org



CHOICE
Health Plans

Are You Up To Date On Your Medical Tests and Screenings?

Now's a good time to check off tests and screenings you've gotten and schedule ones you've missed. There's still time! Bring this checklist to your next doctor's visit.

End-of-Year Medical Checklist

- ☐ **Physical exam:** Checks your blood pressure, cholesterol, height, weight, body mass index, and how you are feeling overall.
- ☐ **Vaccinations:** Get the flu shot every year.
- ☐ **Colonoscopy:** Have a colonoscopy—a test for colon cancer—every 10 years beginning at age 50.
- ☐ **Blood sugar test:** Have a fasting blood sugar test done every 3 years or more often if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease or are overweight.
- ☐ **Eye exam:** Get screened for common eye ailments that can cause blindness.
- ☐ **Hearing test:** Get a hearing test if you are having trouble hearing.
- ☐ **Dental exam:** Go for dental check-ups to detect early signs of oral health problems and bone loss.
- ☐ **Hepatitis C antibody test:** Get screened for hepatitis C, which can cause liver damage.
Get tested if you:
 - Were born between 1945 through 1965
 - Have chronic liver disease and HIV or AIDS
 - Injected drugs, even once
 - Have received donated blood or organs before 1992
- ☐ **Mammogram:** For women, breast cancer risk increases with age. Get a mammogram every 1 or 2 years, usually beginning at age 50.
- ☐ **Prostate health:** Men should have a yearly prostate exam to look for signs of cancer or an enlarged prostate, beginning at age 50.

Check with your Primary Care Physician about the tests and screenings that are right for you.

TIPS TO HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING

Make a list of reasons to quit

Do you want to feel healthier? Save money? Stop exposing family and friends to second-hand smoke?

Whatever the motivation, write it down and keep it where you'll see it, like on your refrigerator door or bathroom mirror. This will remind you why you're quitting when you're tempted to smoke.

Set achievable goals

Set a realistic quitting date, restrict your smoking to certain times or places, or cut down on the number of cigarettes you have each day. These steps can make a big difference.

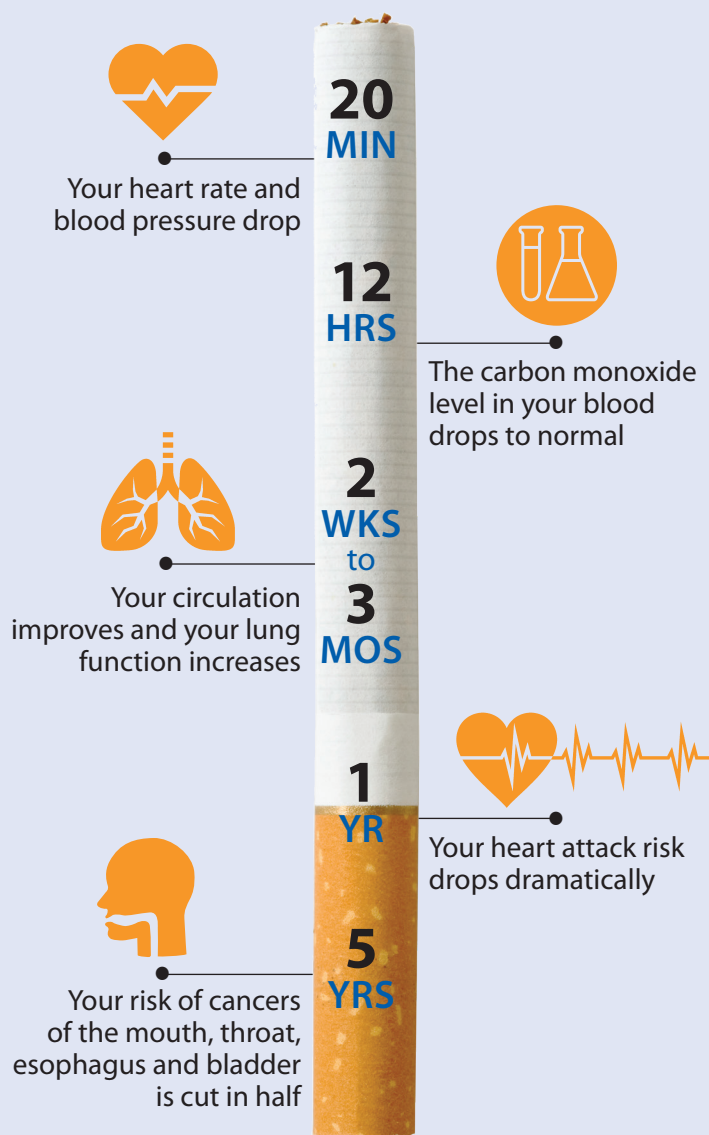
Get help

- Tell anyone you're close to that you're trying to quit. Ask them for support and encouragement.
- Talk to your primary care physician about the many medications that can help you quit. Ask which one is right for you.
- Talk to a Quit Coach from the New York State Smokers' Quitline, 1-866-NY-QUITS. It's free and confidential.

Tools to help

When you're tempted to light up, try doing something to distract yourself, like drinking a glass of cold water, taking a walk, chewing on a carrot, toothpick, straw or sugar-free candy. Or, go to a place where smoking isn't allowed, like a movie theatre or cafe. It's not easy to quit, so if you have a cigarette, don't be discouraged. You can still do it and you will, when you're ready.

When will you see results?



Source: www.cancer.org

To learn more, please call:

1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711)

8 am – 6 pm, Monday – Friday

Or visit vnsnychoice.org/selecthealth



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