

Member news



Advocate for Your Best Health

If it's been a year or more since your last check-up, it's time to schedule an in-office visit with your primary care provider (PCP). Remember to wear a mask to keep yourself and others safe.

Here's how to prepare for your appointment:

- ☐ Ask about the guidelines used in your doctor's office to protect against COVID-19.
- ☐ Take your medications with you.
- ☐ Write down your questions and concerns.

Talk to your doctor about:

- ☐ Blood pressure, height and weight checks
- ☐ Cancer screenings—colon and rectal cancers, mammogram and a pap smear for cervical cancer, as recommended by your doctor.
- ☐ Blood tests for cholesterol, diabetes (HbA1c) and viral load—leave the office with a prescription for blood work if it wasn't done during the visit.
- ☐ Sexually transmitted infection testing (syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV)
- ☐ Vaccines:
 - ☐ COVID-19
 - ☐ Flu and Pneumonia
 - ☐ Shingles
 - ☐ Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2** • A Team That Truly Cares
• Answering Your Calls
- 3** • Medical Screening Guidelines
- 4** • Important 2021 Benefit Change Reminder

- ☐ Your mental health
- ☐ What your treatment plan is and what your next steps are. If you are confused about anything, ask before you leave.

Before leaving your doctor's office, make a follow-up appointment. As soon as you get home, schedule lab tests and imaging exams and pick up any new prescriptions.

Use your office visit as a chance to talk about your health and advocate for yourself and your well-being.

Review the **Steps to a Healthier Life** program to see ways to earn reward dollars for completing health activities, including screenings/tests.

A Team That Truly Cares

At VNSNY CHOICE we work hard to take care of you! Rest easier knowing that you have an entire **Care Team** to help answer questions about your health plan. So that you always know we are a **team of caring** people dedicated to helping you use your health plan to live well in your own home, we are changing our name from Member Services to **SelectHealth Care Team**.

We haven't changed anything about the care you get. We simply want to highlight that you have a **whole team** to help you with questions about SelectHealth.

So, when you call us, the voice on the other end may answer with "Care Team." You will always be treated with respect, compassion and empathy. In fact, most times, the person who picks up the phone in our call center can answer your question on the spot. If not, the agent will know how to move forward to find a solution.

Your **Care Team** is available at 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711) 8 am - 6 pm, Monday - Friday.

PrEP to Prevent HIV & Promote Sexual Health

If you are HIV negative, PrEP is a safe, daily pill that protects you from HIV. It's a powerful tool in helping to End the HIV Epidemic as well as to help you take control of your sexual health. PrEP is safe with no serious side effects reported. Talk to your doctor to see if starting PrEP is right for you. Most health insurance plans cover PrEP, including SelectHealth!

Source: health.ny.gov/publications/9930.pdf



Answering Your Calls

Recently, **Member News** spoke with the team in our SelectHealth call center and asked, "What are members calling about?"

Here are 3 hot topics:

1. **Pharmacy/Medication** – "What is the status on my request for an early refill?" A Care Team member can find out where your request is in the approval process.
2. **Find an HIV PCP** – "Can you help me find a Primary Care Provider (or Specialist)?" Whether you are a new or long-time member, we can help you find the right PCP (or Specialist) experienced in treating HIV near where you live. You can also use our on-line provider directory to find a provider.
3. **Behavioral Health services provider** – "Can you help me find a therapist?" A member of your Care Team can help you find the right provider through Beacon Health Options. They are available 24/7 at 1-855-735-6098 (TTY: 866-727-9441).

April is STD Awareness Month

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The CDC reports more than 20 million new Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) cases in the U.S. every year. STIs are either curable or treatable, though some show no symptoms. Speak to your doctor about STIs at your next office visit. For more information, go to yesmeanstest.org.

Be sure to follow SelectHealth



@SelectHealthNY



@SelectHealthNewYork

VNSNY CHOICE complies with Federal civil rights laws. VNSNY CHOICE 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. Llama al 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711)。

Medical Screening Guidelines

Stay healthy by getting the screenings* listed in this chart. They can save your life.

Test	Name of Test	Ages 40 – 49	Ages 50 – 64
HIV Health			
HIV Viral Load Blood Test	HIV PCR or HIV RNA Test	At least once annually, recommended every 6 months (discuss with your provider)	
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Screenings	Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Syphilis	At least once annually (discuss with your provider)	
Immunization Status	Influenza, Pneumoccal, Tetanus Booster	Discuss with your provider	
General Health			
Diabetes	Fasting Blood Sugar	Discuss timing with your provider based on your risks for diabetes	
	HgA1c	Recommended at least twice annually for members with a diabetes diagnosis (discuss frequency with your provider)	
Breast Health Screening	Mammogram	Every 1-2 years (discuss with your provider)	
Cervical Cancer Screening	Pap Test	Every 3 years (discuss with your provider)	
Colorectal Health	Fecal Occult Blood	Discuss with your provider based on your risk for colon cancer	Every year (if no colonoscopy)
	Colonoscopy		Every 10 years (or more frequent if advised by your provider)
Vision Exam	Eye exam	Every 1-2 years (discuss with your provider)	
	Dilated Retinal Eye Exam	Recommended every year for members with a diabetes diagnosis	
General Health	Full check-up including height, weight, BMI, blood pressure reading and routine lab work	Recommended annually (discuss with your provider)	
Heart Health	Cholesterol test (fasting lipoprotein test)	Every 5 years if normal	Discuss with your provider
	Blood Pressure Reading	Recommended at every visit for members with high blood pressure (discuss frequency with your provider)	
Oral Health	Dental exam	Recommended once or twice every year	

Resource: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & American Heart Association

*Please speak with your provider about all the screenings that are appropriate for you. Some may be recommended at earlier ages depending on your health history.



Pollo Guisado (Chicken Stew)

This yummy one-pot meal comes together in about an hour, combines flavorful chicken, healthy veggies and pantry-staple spices that ramp up the flavor. And, it's budget, heart and diabetes-friendly. (Serves 4)

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive or vegetable oil
- 2 lbs bone-in chicken thighs, legs or breasts (or a combination)
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken stock
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 bell pepper (any color), small onion, large carrot, thinly sliced
- 1 medium potato (cut into 1-inch cubes)
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 9 oz canned, no salt added, diced tomatoes
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ tsp oregano or cilantro
- 1 bay leaf

Directions

1. Add oil to a medium pot and heat over medium heat for 1 minute.
2. Add chicken to the pot and brown for 4-5 minutes on each side.
3. Add lemon juice, garlic and herbs – heat to combine.
4. Add bell pepper, onion, carrot, potato, tomatoes, and cook on medium-high heat for 5 minutes or until tender.
5. Add chicken, stock, cover and simmer until vegetables are cooked through (about 45 minutes). Remove bay leaf before serving.
6. Serve with brown rice or beans and/or with salad. **Enjoy!**

Important 2021 Benefit Change Reminder

As of January 1, 2021, service limits have been removed on physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT) and speech therapy (ST) visits. That means, SelectHealth covers all medically necessary PT, OT and ST visits that are ordered by a doctor or other licensed professional.

If you have any questions, please call us at 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711) 8 am – 6 pm, Monday – Friday.

If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us.

SelectHealth 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.

SelectHealth Care Team

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

"Progress" Pride Flag by @danielquasar





New Yorkers with HIV Are Now Eligible for the COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 remains a significant risk in New York City (NYC) and across the U.S. Vaccination, along with other prevention measures, can help us end the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Get Vaccinated

Vaccines are very effective at preventing COVID-19, a disease which can lead to hospitalization and death and cause long-term health problems.

All people with HIV who live in New York State (NYS) are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. For a list of groups currently eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine in NYS, visit nyc.gov/covidvaccinedistribution.

Get a Vaccine Appointment

Ask your clinic or hospital if they can vaccinate you. Regularly check the vaccine appointment systems of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) at vax4nyc.nyc.gov, [NYC Health + Hospitals](#) and [NYS](#). You can also search for a vaccination site near you and make an appointment at vaccinefinder.nyc.gov. If you need assistance making an appointment at a City-run site, call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). Vaccine supplies are limited, so check regularly as new appointments will be added as more vaccine becomes available.

On the Day of Your Appointment

Reschedule your appointment if you are not feeling well that day.

Wear a face covering when traveling to and from your vaccination site and while at your appointment – you will not be allowed in without one.

You need to bring proof that you live in NYS or NYC and are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. If you are eligible because you have HIV and are being vaccinated by your health care provider, your medical records at your provider's office can serve as proof of eligibility. Otherwise, when scheduling your appointment, you will need to complete a [certification](#) confirming you have an underlying health condition that makes you eligible for vaccination. You do not need to state which health condition or provide any other evidence to demonstrate which condition you have. For more information on proof of eligibility, visit nyc.gov/covidvaccine.

Stay Safe After Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccine is very effective at preventing symptoms and dangerous complications of COVID-19. However, we do not yet know how long protection from the vaccine lasts or whether you could still spread the virus to other people. Therefore, even after vaccination, you will need

to continue to [take steps](#) to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay home if you are sick or recently tested positive for COVID-19.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Wear a face covering.
- Wash your hands often.

COVID-19 Vaccines are Safe

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized two COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use. The vaccines have gone through large clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people of various ages, races and ethnicities. The trials showed that the vaccines are safe to use and that serious side effects are very rare. Common side effects include mild to moderate soreness or swelling on the arm where you get the vaccine, headache, body aches, tiredness and fever. The vaccines do not cause COVID-19 infection.

The U.S. government and research organizations continue to monitor vaccine safety.

COVID-19 Vaccines are Effective

The two authorized COVID-19 vaccines are very effective at preventing COVID-19. In clinical trials, the vaccines were more than 94% effective at protecting trial participants from symptoms of COVID-19.

People with Low CD4 Counts or Not Taking HIV Treatment Should Get a Vaccine

People who have an immune system weakened by HIV or another condition were not part of the COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials, so we do not have data on how safe or effective the vaccine would be for them. If you have a low CD4 count or weak immune system, you can receive the vaccine. You may particularly benefit from getting vaccinated as you could get very sick if you get COVID-19. However, the vaccine may not work as well at protecting you from getting COVID-19. Talk to your provider if you have questions.

Get Regular HIV Care

HIV can make you sick if you do not get care and treatment. Take your HIV medicines as prescribed. Tell your provider about anything that makes it difficult for you to take your medicines or stay in care. You can stay in touch through phone, text or video chat. If you have trouble getting your medicines, call the NYS Uninsured Care Programs at 800-542-2437. To find an HIV care provider, visit the [NYC Health Map](#) or text "CARE" to 877-877.

For more information on HIV and COVID-19, see guidance by the [NYC Health Department](#) and the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine, visit nyc.gov/covidvaccine. For information on COVID-19, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

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