



Avoid Colds and Flu

WITH ALL OF THE NEWS ABOUT COVID-19, it's easy to forget about other health risks. Don't. Every year, millions of people get sick with a cold or flu.

It's important to take steps to protect both yourself and your loved ones. The best way to protect yourself against the flu: Get the flu vaccine every year.

Here are some other handy tips to help you stay healthy this cold and flu season.

• **Wash your hands often.** This includes:

- After using the toilet
- After taking out the trash
- Before, during, and after handling food
- Before eating
- After touching pet waste or food

• **Wash your hands well,** including:

- The backs of your hands
- Between your fingers
- Under your fingernails

• **Carry hand sanitizer.** If you don't have access to soap and water, clean hands with a hand sanitizer. Make sure it's at least 60% alcohol.

• **Disinfect your phone.** Your phone goes everywhere with you, and it's often in your hands. It can carry bacteria and spread illness. Clean it regularly.

FOR HELP SCHEDULING A HEALTH CHECKUP, CALL MEMBER SERVICES AT 1.800.469.6292 (TTY: 711).

IN THIS ISSUE:

Your Rights as a Member
of VillageCareMAX MLTC **2**

Eating Healthy at 60
and Beyond **3**

Advance Directives **4**

Make Safety a Habit
to Avoid Slips and Falls **5**

Take a Shot (or Two)
Against Pneumonia **6**

DISENROLLMENT RIGHTS

Please note that enrollment in our plan is voluntary. You may disenroll at any time.

If you choose to disenroll, we will process your request as quickly as possible. VillageCareMAX will work with New York Medicaid Choice (New York State's managed care enrollment program) to get your request approved, as appropriate. This may take two to six weeks.

You will receive written notification with the date of your disenrollment. VillageCareMAX will continue to provide or arrange for you to get covered services until the effective date of your disenrollment. We will also assist with the transfer to a new plan as needed and ensure that you can remain safe in the community.

VILLAGECAREMAX

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Your Rights as a Member of VillageCareMAX MLTC

VILLAGECAREMAX VALUES YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN OUR PLAN. We want you to know that we always strive to provide you with the best care and customer service you deserve. In addition to the services you receive from us, your care manager and the VillageCareMAX team can help you:

- Set up your health care provider appointments
- Arrange for transportation
- Understand instructions you get from your provider
- Manage your prescriptions

Whatever your health needs are, our team is here for you. Please call us at **1.800.469.6292** (TTY: 711) if you have any questions

or concerns. We will work to help you resolve them. We are available 7 days a week, 8AM to 8PM.

We also want to let you know that you have a right to know:

- Names, locations, and phone numbers of our network providers
- Rules about accessing providers who are not in our network
- Your rights and protections
- How to file an appeal, grievance, or apply for a fair hearing
- How to get authorizations and your benefits under VillageCareMAX
- How to fill out an advance directive
- How our plan works and how we pay network providers

For more information about your rights as a VillageCareMAX member, call Member Services at 1.800.469.6292 (TTY: 711).

Need Help with Your Health? Call Our Physician Hotline

VillageCareMAX offers a physician hotline. You can use it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. With a phone call to us, you can get help with any questions you may have about your health. This includes a change in your health status and any symptoms you may have.

The physician will tell you if you have an urgent care need. They will help you get the services you need. To get connected, call **1.844.484.7362**. This call is free.

Note: if you have an emergency, please call 911.



Eating Healthy at 60 and Beyond

WE CHANGE OVER TIME. Our eating habits should, too. The new Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025 address this. They include life stages for the first time. For instance, people ages 60 and up:

- Need more nutrients, but fewer calories
- Have lost bone and muscle mass
- May be overweight or obese
- Have a higher risk for cancer, heart disease, and other conditions

Making small diet changes offers many health benefits. It's never too late to improve your eating habits!

This life-stage approach is new. But the advice is familiar. It still stresses the importance of:

- Vegetables—dark green, red, and orange varieties, as well as peas and lentils
- Fruits—whole fruits in particular
- Protein—from seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans, nuts, and seeds

- Grains—mainly whole grains
- Dairy—especially fat-free and low-fat products
- Oils—including oils found in food such as nuts and seafood

How many servings should you have? It depends on your age, sex, height, weight, and how much you exercise. To find your targets, try the MyPlate Plan tool at myplate.gov/myplate-plan.

Older adults have other nutrient needs, too. Protein and vitamin B12 become more important with age. Protein helps save muscle mass. Vitamin B12 supports brain and nerve function. It also aids in the creation of red blood cells.

Talk with your health care provider about how to meet your individual needs.

Also, make sure you drink enough water. Do this even if you don't feel thirsty. Some chronic conditions and medicines make it harder to digest food and absorb nutrients. Not drinking enough fluids makes these problems worse.

Your Member Handbook

The Member Handbook has information about the VillageCareMAX plan that you are enrolled in and how the plan works. It explains your benefits, how to get the services you need, your rights as a member, and policies that VillageCareMAX must follow. You can view a copy of the Member Handbook on our website at www.villagecaremax.org, or call Member Services at 1-800-469-6292 (TTY: 711) to request a hard copy.



Advance Directives: Appointing Someone to Make Health Care Decisions for You

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET SICK AND CAN'T MAKE HEALTH CARE DECISIONS FOR YOURSELF? The New York Health Care Proxy Law allows you to appoint a health care agent to make those decisions for you. It should be someone you trust. This could be a family member or close friend. Your agent makes sure health care providers follow your wishes.

Choosing your health care agent is a very important task. Each adult needs to make this decision, no matter your age or health status. The person you appoint will make sure you get your preferred treatment.

Your agent decides how to apply your wishes as your condition changes. You may allow them to make all health care decisions. Or only certain ones. Hospitals, doctors, and other health care providers must follow your agent's decisions as if they were your own.

You need to fill out a Health Care Proxy form to list your wishes. This form can also list if you want to donate organs or tissue. The form comes in a variety of languages.

If you have questions, call Member Services at **1.800.469.6292 (TTY 711)**, 8AM to 8PM, 7 days a week.

Join Our Member Advisory Committee

Do you have ideas on how we can make VillageCareMAX a better health plan? Join our Member Advisory Committee. Meetings are every three months. You can participate in-person or by phone. We provide transportation to meetings. Are you interested? Call us today at **1.800.469.6292 (TTY 711)**. Our hours are 8AM to 8PM, 7 days a week.

Beware of Phone Fraud

Official phone numbers are being used as part of a scam targeting people across the country. So says the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG).

The scammers represent themselves as HHS OIG employees. They can change the caller ID to make it seem as if the call is coming from HHS OIG phone numbers.

They may try to get your personal information. This can then be used to steal money from a bank account or for other illegal activity. Protect your personal information and don't provide it during telephone calls.

If you believe you may be a victim of this scam, call **1.800.HHS.TIPS (1.800.447.8477)**.



Make Safety a Habit to Avoid Slips and Falls

WE ALL STUMBLE NOW AND THEN.

But there are simple things you can do to stay on your feet.

When at Home

Keep yourself, your family, and visitors safe by:

- Clearing up clutter. Keep walkways free of anything that could trip you.
- Staying aware of Fido and Fifi. Be careful not to step on pets.
- Making timely repairs. Fix loose or wrinkled carpet, and tighten handrails along stairs.
- Ensuring good lighting, both indoors and outside.
- Using mats that don't slide in the bathroom on any surface that could get wet.

Out and About

Winter's ice and snow can be hard on everybody. These tips can help you prevent falls.

- Wear waterproof boots with textured soles.
- Keep an eye out for potholes, cracks, train tracks, or anything else that could make you fall.
- Walk carefully if weather makes the ground slippery with water, ice, or snow.
- Avoid rushing and distractions. Keep your phone and other items tucked away for later.
- Watch your step on curbs and other places where the surface changes.
- Stay alert for vehicles and bicycles.

Small changes in your hearing and vision can also cause a fall. Make sure you have exams regularly. If you have contacts, glasses, or a hearing aid, wear them as prescribed.



Learn About Our MAP Plan

VillageCareMAX Medicare Total Advantage Plan members get all covered Medicare and Medicaid benefits directly from VillageCareMAX. This includes long-term services and supports and prescription drugs. You also get extra benefits that are not covered by Medicare or Medicaid. There are no co-pays, deductibles, or monthly premium for covered services. To learn more, call us at **1.800.469.6292** (TTY: 711).

Take a Shot (or Two) Against Pneumonia

PNEUMONIA CAN AFFECT ONE OR BOTH LUNGS. This infection keeps the body from using oxygen the way it should. It's caused by bacteria, viruses, or fungi.

Who Is At Risk?

Anyone can get pneumonia. These groups face the highest risk:

- Adults ages 65 and older
- Children younger than age 5
- People with certain health conditions, like the lung disease chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or diabetes
- People who smoke or vape

Can I Prevent Pneumonia?

The flu is a common cause of pneumonia. So get a flu shot every year. It can help prevent the flu and pneumonia.

There are also two pneumonia vaccines. Children younger than age 2 and adults ages 65 and older should get a shot.

People who smoke or have certain health conditions should get a pneumonia shot, too.

Talk with your health care provider about which vaccines are right for you. Also ask when you should get them.

Healthy habits help. They may protect you from colds and the flu. Pneumonia often follows these milder infections. Do your best to:

- Eat nutritious foods
- Exercise regularly
- Quit smoking, if you smoke
- Wash your hands often
- Get plenty of sleep

Pneumonia can cause serious lung and infection problems. It can even be deadly. It may take several weeks to recover from pneumonia. Most people respond well to treatment.

VillageCareMAX is an HMO plan with Medicare and New York State Medicaid contracts. Enrollment in VillageCareMAX depends on contract renewal.

**TRUST
HAS A PLAN.**

We never give up on him—
so he won't either.

**SEE WHAT'S POSSIBLE
WHEN HEALTH CARE
GETS PERSONAL.**

