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Scam Alert! Don't Be Fooled

Some members may have received a phone call from a person claiming to be from VNSNY CHOICE, asking for your personal and financial information. We want you to know that VNSNY CHOICE **NEVER ASKS** for financial information over the phone. If this happens to you, hang up immediately and call Member Services at 1-866-469-7774 (TTY use 711) with any questions.



Baby Boomers — Pay Attention!

Baby Boomers, adults born roughly between 1945 and 1965, are 5 times more likely to have been exposed to the hepatitis C virus (HCV). As a result, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Preventive Service Task Force recommend everyone in that age group get tested. Even now, there are many ways the virus continues to be contracted, and early detection can prevent problems.

How is the HCV Spread?

- IV drug use, including sharing the straws used to snort cocaine, blood transfusion, and blood therapy or organ transplant before 1992
- Kidney dialysis
- Blood products made before 1987 used to treat clotting problems
- HCV-contaminated blood through a needle stick or splashes to the eye to exposed health care workers
- Infected mothers to their newborn infants
- Unsterilized equipment used in tattoos, body piercing and acupuncture could also pose a risk

New Advances in HCV Treatment

Newest advances in HCV treatment are two-drug combination therapies known as Epclusa and Zepatier. Both medications offer a cure for most

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Plan Reminders

Medicaid Recertification – Keep your Medicaid coverage active! To continue receiving Medicaid, you must re-apply every year. Medicaid will send you an application form 90 days before your Medicaid coverage ends. Before your Medicaid coverage ends, it is important that you fill out the application, sign, date and mail it along with any necessary documents back to Medicaid. Medicaid's mailing address is on the application form.

Behavioral Health Services – Your VNSNY CHOICE SelectHealth benefits include behavioral health services, including help for chemical dependency and mental health treatment, offered through our contracted vendor, Beacon Health Options. They can be reached directly at 1-855-735-6098, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users call 1-866-727-9441.

Be Safe – Get Tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) – If you've had unprotected sex, have a new partner (or more than one), or are worried you have been exposed to an STI, get tested. Common STIs are: chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, herpes, HPV, syphilis and trichomoniasis.

Source: ashasexualhealth.org/stdsstis/get-tested/

Lead Poisoning – Since most children with high levels of lead in their blood have no symptoms, all children should be screened by their PCP for lead poisoning with a blood lead test. Children at higher risk for lead exposure are:

- Those who live in older, poorly maintained rental properties
- Lower income and/or members of racial-ethnic minority groups
- Recent immigrants

Source: cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/books/plpyc/chapter6.htm

Harm Reduction – SelectHealth members have access to Harm Reduction Programs to help keep them safe. Syringe access and exchange Programs let drug users get new, clean syringes which helps to prevent passing on or getting HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. For more information call Member Services at 1-866-469-7774 or call the AIDS Institute at 212-417-4770.

Transportation – Members may arrange transportation through **Medical Answering Services (MAS)** by contacting them directly at 1-844-666-6270 or visiting the website at: www.medanswering.com.

KID'S CORNER Start Early to Stay Healthy — Adolescent Well-Care

Teens and pre-teens are generally healthy, but may resist seeing the doctor for well-care visits. This can be concerning because physical, emotional and behavioral issues often emerge during this transitional period. But when adolescents receive consistent, quality well-care from a compassionate provider, this is an ideal time to start a conversation about the challenges they are facing. Though a child may be shy about opening up to his/her parents, a non-threatening well-care setting may allow a flow of communication to head-off dangerous and even life-threatening actions.

Disturbing, But Preventable Statistics

- 88% of adult daily smokers started smoking in their teens.
- 3 out of 4 adolescents, ages 12–19 are involved in at least 1 of these risky behaviors — use of

alcohol and other substances, unprotected sex, poor eating and exercise habits.

What Can You Do To Keep Your Child From Becoming a Statistic?

Keeping the lines of communication open with parents and teachers is key. The annual well-care visit can uncover signs of stress and allow early screening, counseling and intervention. The chance to monitor growth and development, support psychological and emotional well-being and encourage healthy lifestyle choices is invaluable and can save lives. Parents should always look for signs of trouble (any out-of-character behavior, falling grades, wanting to be alone and lack of interest in things they always enjoyed) and take action. VNSNY CHOICE SelectHealth is here to support you. Call Member Services for help at 1-866-469-7774.

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Baby Boomers — Pay Attention!

people infected with hepatitis C (in genotype 1) in as little as 12 weeks. Patients taking the new drugs only need to take 1 pill once a day, and they run a much lower risk of serious side effects that can happen with other hepatitis C treatment.

Source: [cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis/media/pdfs/factsheet-boomers.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis/media/pdfs/factsheet-boomers.pdf)

ACE Inhibitors and ARBs — Keeping Your Heart Beating

What are ACE Inhibitors and Why are They Taken?

Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors are heart medications that treat high blood pressure and may also help to prevent a heart attack or stroke. They widen or dilate your blood vessels to increase the amount of blood your heart pumps.

What are ARBs and Why are They Taken?

Angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs) stop your blood vessels from narrowing (constricting). Like ACE Inhibitors, they make it easier for blood to flow through the vessels, which reduces blood pressure. ARBs allow salt to move out of your body which also lowers your blood pressure. ARBs are used to treat heart and kidney disease and high blood pressure.

ACE Inhibitors or ARBs – Which Is Best?

ACE Inhibitors and ARBs do essentially the same thing, but a common side effect of ACE Inhibitors is a dry, persistent cough. If this happens to you, your doctor may change you to an ARB, which does not tend to cause a cough.

Checking in With Your Primary Care Physician

ACE Inhibitors and ARBs can be very helpful but it's important that doctors order blood tests to make sure they're working properly. Based on test results, a doctor may change the type of medicine or dosage.

Sources: [webmd.com/heart-disease/guide/medicine-ace-inhibitors#1](https://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/guide/medicine-ace-inhibitors#1)

[bloodpressureuk.org/BloodPressureandyou/Medicines/Medicinetypes/ACEInhibitors](https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/BloodPressureandyou/Medicines/Medicinetypes/ACEInhibitors)

[webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/angiotensin-ii-receptor-blockers-arbs-for-high-blood-pressure](https://www.webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/angiotensin-ii-receptor-blockers-arbs-for-high-blood-pressure)

The Importance of Breast and Colorectal Screenings

VNSNY CHOICE SelectHealth appreciates your membership and wants you to stay as healthy as possible. Part of being well is to get preventive cancer screenings for early detection and treatment, and live a healthy lifestyle that includes:

- Not smoking
- Eating a well-balanced diet made up of vegetables, fruits and whole grains
- Using sunscreen or staying out of the sun
- Exercising regularly
- Staying connected to your friends, family and things you enjoy

What are the *risk factors* for developing cancer? Aside from having a family history or if you've had cancer before, risk factors start from *not* embracing healthy lifestyle habits listed above.

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women. According to the American Cancer Society, women age 55 or older (who are in good health) should have a mammography every 2 years.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer. Experts recommend:

- Adults age 50 to 75 should get a colonoscopy every 10 years. If you're high risk, you should talk with your doctor to find out if you should get one more often.
- People age 75+ should ask their doctor about which screenings they need.
- If you are part of a high risk group (for example, you smoke, have a family history, don't exercise or eat healthy, etc.), your physician may recommend other colorectal screenings more often.

Sources: [ww5.komen.org/BreastCancer/BreastCancerScreeningforWomenatAverageRisk.html](https://www.ww5.komen.org/BreastCancer/BreastCancerScreeningforWomenatAverageRisk.html)
[cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/)



CHOICE
Health Plans

VNSNY CHOICE

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New York, NY 10001

www.vnsnychoice.org

Member Services:

1-866-469-7774

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 6 pm

TTY users call 711

Suspect Something, Say Something

VNSNY CHOICE is committed to preventing and detecting any fraud, waste, or abuse in the organization related to Federal and State health care programs.

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.

The New York State Smokers' Quitline

1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) The New York State Smokers' Quitline offers free and confidential service to New Yorkers who want to stop smoking.

Smoking True or False — Test Your Knowledge

1. Smoking is just a choice. (False)

The first time? Yes. After just a few cigarettes?
No. Addiction to nicotine can happen quickly.

2. Secondhand smoke may bother people, but it isn't dangerous. (False)

Tens of thousands of nonsmokers die every year from breathing in secondhand smoke.

3. About 500 people die each year of smoking-related diseases. (False)

Nearly 400,000 people die of smoking-related diseases each year.

4. Cigarette smoke contains one chemical. That chemical is called nicotine. (False)

Cigarette smoke contains thousands of chemicals; 200 of them are known to be poisonous.

5. It takes about 10 seconds for nicotine absorbed into the bloodstream to reach the brain. (True)

6. The average smoker spends about \$100 each year on cigarettes. (False)

The average smoker spends about \$700 a year.

7. A smoker is twice as likely to have a heart attack as a nonsmoker is. (True)

If you smoke a pack of cigarettes a day, you're twice as likely to have a heart attack as someone who doesn't smoke.

8. In the U.S., about 1 million children under the age of 18 are smokers. (False)

An estimated 3 million children under age 18 are smokers.

Source: proprofs.com/quiz-school/story.php?title=NzY0MjQyUNO9

Inside...

Important Information to Help You Stay on Top of Your Health