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## Protect Yourself – Get Your Flu Shot

It's even more important this year to get the flu vaccine as COVID-19 continues to spread. At this time, there is no approved COVID-19 vaccine. Getting your flu shot can reduce your risk of dealing with both the flu and COVID-19. Every year the flu is different, so every year you need an updated vaccine which takes 2 weeks to offer protection. Call Member Services at 1-888-867-6555 for more information.

## Key Members of Your Care Team

As an MLTC member, the Care Manager and Home Health Aide (HHA) or Personal Care Aide (PCA) are key members of your Care Team. They help you live as healthy a life as possible (along with your entire Care Team – Primary Care Physician (PCP), specialists, assessment nurse, etc.).

### Care Manager: Your Care Team Captain

Leading the team, your Care Manager helps create your Person Centered Service Plan (PCSP), making sure that you get the services outlined in it.

### Your Care Manager:

- Reviews and updates your PCSP.
- Coordinates care (i.e., PCP, specialists, behavioral health providers, etc.).
- Helps to arrange for services not covered by VNSNY CHOICE MLTC, but paid for by Medicare, Medicaid or other insurance and community services.

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## Go See Your Doctor Soon

With COVID-19 trending down (as of this writing) in New York, and medical offices following high sanitary standards of patient and office safety, it's time to schedule an **in-person** visit with your Primary Care Physician (PCP).

Your PCP needs to see you in the office if you have chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma. Take time to discuss your medications and whether they are working well together.

### But is it safe to visit your PCP in person?

**Yes, it's safe.**

It's important to get and discuss the results of the following tests and screenings as recommended by your PCP:

- Hemoglobin A1c - 3-month average blood sugar
- Blood Pressure
- Spirometry
- Cancer Screenings, including breast and colon
- Dental and Eye exams
- Flu Shot

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**Spirometry** (spy-ROM-uh-tree) is an in-office test that's used to diagnose asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The test assesses how well your lungs work by measuring how much air you inhale and how quickly you exhale.

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## It's Not Just You

Urinary incontinence is when you accidentally leak urine. It happens to most people at one time or another, especially older women.

### Why does it happen?

- Weak and/or overactive bladder muscles
- Medications like water pills
- Putting off a trip to the bathroom for too long
- An enlarged prostate in men

### Good news! There are ways to manage urinary incontinence, including:

- Planning frequent bathroom trips. Don't forget to go!
- Doing exercise to strengthen pelvic floor muscles.
- Avoiding spicy foods, carbonated drinks and caffeine, which can irritate the bladder and make the problem worse.
- Asking your provider about medications for overactive bladder.
- Using protective pads or undergarments to avoid embarrassing situations.
- As a last resort, there are surgeries that may help.

Talk to your provider about what is the best for you. A useful resource is:

**National Association for Continence** [www.nafc.org](http://www.nafc.org)

## Staying In Touch with Your Doctor

**Telehealth** allows you to use your regular phone, smart phone, computer or tablet (with or without video) to speak with your doctor. It works well for behavioral health visits, which may have increased during this stressful time. Even as New York safely reopens, you can still use telehealth services. Remember, there are tests and screenings that must take place in-person. Talk to your doctor about what makes sense for you.

## Managing Chronic Pain Differently

It's been weeks and your lower back still hurts, even though you're following doctor's orders.

Pain that lasts more than 12 weeks is **chronic**. Consider adding one of these natural approaches along with your doctor's orders:

1. **Healthy Diet:** Replace processed foods with fresh fruit, vegetables and lean protein, especially if you have diabetes, high blood pressure or heart disease.
2. **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Pay attention to your body in the present moment, releasing tension by focusing on your breath, repeating a meaningful word or phrase to relax your mind and body.
3. **Physical and Occupational Therapies:** If your doctor recommends it, incorporating healing exercises taught by licensed therapists may help relieve pain and stiffness in joints.



### Your care team is here to help.

Call us at 1-888-867-6555 (TTY: 711) for help to arrange follow-up visits with your Primary Care Physician or to be referred to a nutritionist, physical or occupational therapist.

## Be on the Lookout for an Important Member Survey

(Summer through early 2021)



You may receive a call from SPH Analytics on behalf of CHOICE to participate in a survey.

The survey measures your satisfaction with services from VNSNY CHOICE MLTC.

CHOICE uses the results to find ways to improve service for all members. That's why we want to hear from you. Please take a few minutes to complete this important survey.

Note that completing this survey will never impact your benefits.

We thank you in advance for completing the survey and for being a member of VNSNY CHOICE MLTC. If you have any questions, call us at the number below.

Member Services: 1-888-867-6555 (TTY: 711),  
9 am – 5 pm, Monday – Friday.

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### Home Health Aide or Personal Care Aide: Helping Day after Day

Your HHA/PCA is the person who helps you most in your everyday life.

#### HHAs or PCAs can help you with:

- Going to and from medical appointments
- Food shopping and cooking
- Bathing, dressing, grooming
- Wound care
- Assisting and reminding you to take medications

For more information about your Care Team, refer to your Member Handbook, visit [www.vnsnychoice.org/mltc-member](http://www.vnsnychoice.org/mltc-member) or call Member Services. We're here to help!



**CHOICE**<sup>SM</sup>  
Health Plans

VNSNY CHOICE

220 East 42nd Street, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10017

[www.vnsnychoice.org](http://www.vnsnychoice.org)

**Member Services:**

1-888-867-6555 (TTY: 711)  
9 am – 5 pm, Monday – Friday



**TRANSPORTATION UPDATE**

Effective September 1, 2020, to schedule transportation, call **Logisticare** at least 48 hours in advance at: 1-877-718-4220 (TTY: 711), 8 am – 8 pm, Monday – Friday.

**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](http://vnsny.ethicspoint.com).  
Learn more at: [vnsnychoice.org/for-our-members/member-rights/compliance-program](http://vnsnychoice.org/for-our-members/member-rights/compliance-program).



**CHOICE**<sup>SM</sup>  
Health Plans

**Word Scramble**

*Unscramble these words from the Summer Newsletter*

1. **hinglea** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: To make better*

4. **ulf hots** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: Protection against the flu*

2. **mentla helath** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: Feeling well in your mind*

5. **inchorc** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: Something that last more than 12 weeks*

3. **scerninges** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: Tests to keep you healthy*

6. **dominateti** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: Breathing deeply and concentrating on something positive*

Answers: 1. Healing 2. Mental health 3. Screenings 4. Flu shot 5. Chronic 6. Meditation

**Inside...** *Managing Chronic Pain Differently*