

Care of the Heart

A Special Newsletter for MVP Health Care[®] Members **Issue 2, 2023**

How to be Safe with Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicines

Some medicines aren't good for your heart. Some may mix with other medicines in ways that aren't safe. This includes some OTC pain relievers and cold medicines. Some medicines may:

- Make your heart failure worse
- Keep your heart failure medicines from working the way they should
- Make your symptoms worse by causing your body to hold fluids
- Speed up your heart rate, raise your blood pressure, or make your heart beat in a way that isn't normal

continued on next page...



Attention Medicare members!

If you have questions about your medications, including OTC medicines, don't forget about the Medication Therapy Management Program, available under your plan. Have a phone call with an MVP Pharmacist about your medications, and get your questions answered. Learn more or schedule an appointment by calling **1-866-942-7754**.

Contact Us

1-866-942-7966

Monday–Friday,

8:30 am–5 pm

TTY 711

We Value Your Opinion

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at mvp-listens.com.

We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100% confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with heart failure. For more information or to see if you qualify, call 1-866-942-7966. MVP's program is based on the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American College of Cardiology's Guidelines for Preventing a Heart Attack and Death in Patients with Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease. This program must be coordinated with your physician.

Y0051_9334_C

continued from previous page...

Knowing which medicines are safe for you might seem confusing at times. But there's a simple way to be sure you're choosing safe medicines. Follow these steps:

1. Make a complete list of everything you take, including OTC medicines. Include:
 - Vitamins, supplements, and natural health products
 - Cold, pain, or headache medicines
 - Allergy or sinus medicines, antacids, and laxatives
 - Any medicines you have around the house, bathrooms, or your purse

2. Share your list with your doctor or pharmacist. They can check to see if the medicines you take are safe for you. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before you take any new medicines. Add any new ones to your list.
3. Ask for a "safe list" from your doctor or pharmacist. This is a list of OTC medicines you can take safely when you need them for colds, pain, or allergies. Your safe list should be based on the **active ingredients** in OTC medications. Your doctor or pharmacist can help you select OTC medications containing the correct active ingredients. Your safe list will include medicines that:
 - Don't make your heart failure worse
 - Don't have too much sodium
 - Don't cause problems with other medicines you take

Tips for Fluid Restriction

With heart failure, having too much fluid in your body can lower sodium levels in the blood. It can also cause symptoms such as swelling. Your doctor may have told you to limit fluids if you need to maintain your body's sodium balance.

Not everyone who has heart failure needs to limit fluids. Talk to your doctor if you are not sure.

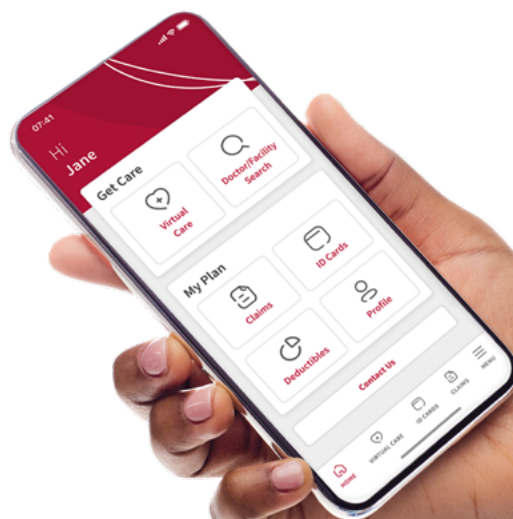
- Space your liquids throughout the day
- Track the fluids you take in. Here are two methods you can try:
 - Write down how much you drink throughout the day
 - Keep a container filled with the amount of liquid allowed for the day. As you drink liquids during the day, such as a six-ounce cup of coffee, pour that same amount out of the container. When the container is empty, you've had your liquid for the day
- Count any foods that will melt (such as ice cream or gelatin), liquid foods (such as soup), and liquid in canned fruits and vegetables (if not drained)
- To relieve thirst without taking in extra water, try chewing gum, sucking on hard candy (sugarless if you have diabetes), or rinsing your mouth with water and spitting it out



Access to Care, When You Need It

For urgent medical needs or questions, the *Gia*® by MVP mobile app is here when you need it. *Gia* is available 24/7 and quickly connects you to a doctor via phone, in-app messaging, or video. *Gia* is a good option when you can't get to your doctor's office, do not have transportation, or cannot get time off work.

NEW! Try *Gia* for nutritional services to help you follow a heart-healthy diet. Log in to *Gia* and select Behavioral Health Care. Our virtual care partner, myVisitNow, lets you speak with a dietitian about your nutritional needs.



Scan the code with the camera on your mobile device, or visit [GoAskGia.com](https://www.goaskgia.com) to get the app.

Try *Gia* for flu, strep, ear and sinus infections, and more.

Lower Your Risk of Influenza (Flu) and Pneumonia

It is important to get vaccinated against the flu each year, and pneumonia as directed by your doctor.

Pneumonia is a lung infection that can cause mild to severe illness in people of all ages. Signs of it include coughing, fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, rapid breathing or shortness of breath, chills, or chest pain. Many pneumonia-related deaths are preventable through vaccination and appropriate treatment.

Certain people are more likely to become ill with pneumonia:

- Adults age 65 or older
- Children younger than age five
- People under the age of 65 who have underlying medical conditions (like diabetes or HIV/AIDS)
- People ages 19–64 who smoke cigarettes
- People ages 19–64 who have asthma

Simple steps for preventing the flu and pneumonia:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Clean hard surfaces that are touched often (like doorknobs and countertops)
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue, your elbow, or sleeve
- Limit your exposure to cigarette smoke
- Take steps to treat, control, and prevent conditions like diabetes and HIV/AIDS

Get vaccinated.

Several vaccines prevent infections that can cause pneumonia, including pneumococcal, pertussis (whooping cough), and seasonal flu vaccines. Talk to your doctor for more information.

Have a Health Question?

Our Health Library is your one-stop resource for the latest health information. Visit mvphealthcare.com/HealthandWellness.



PRSRT STD US
Postage
PAID
MVP Health Care

625 State Street
Schenectady, NY 12305-2111
mvphealthcare.com



Health and Wellness or Prevention Information

Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Select Care, Inc.; and MVP Health Services Corp., operating subsidiaries of MVP Health Care, Inc. Not all plans available in all states and counties.

©2023 Healthwise, Incorporated. This information does not replace the advice of a doctor.

Living Well Programs from MVP

The MVP Health Promotions team is proud to offer a variety of classes, discount programs, and vouchers throughout our service area. To learn more, find classes by you, or to register for any of our programs, check out mvphealthcare.com/calendar.

Stay a Step Ahead with Preventive Care

Preventive care helps you stay healthy by screening for illnesses early on when treatment is more effective. Talk to your doctor to find out if you are due for screenings or any other preventive care services.

