Get the Most Benefit From the Medications You Take

If your doctor or your child’s doctor has prescribed a medication to treat a chronic condition, here are a few tips to help you achieve the most benefit from the medication:

• Schedule a follow-up appointment with the doctor who wrote your prescription. With many newly prescribed medications, it is recommended that you see your doctor within the first month. Some adjustment in dose or even a different medication may be needed.

• Change for the better may take up to several weeks after starting a new medication. Stick with it and don’t make any changes without first talking to your doctor. If you and your doctor decide that you no longer need the medication, it may need to be tapered off slowly. Any resulting problems should be reported to your doctor at once.

• Side-effects may occur at the beginning of treatment (or when suddenly stopping medication) and may go away with time. Contact your doctor or pharmacist if you have any side effects that are bothersome.

• Set specific routines to take your medication. For instance, it might help you remember when to take your medication if you associate it with a normal, daily activity such as eating a meal, brushing your teeth, or going to sleep.

Below are some tips and additional information specific to certain classes of medications.

Antibiotics

Antibiotics may be prescribed for bacterial infections such as strep throat. Often, you begin feeling better after just a few days on the medication and think that your illness is cured. It is important to complete the course of medication—if the full dose of antibiotics is not taken your symptoms may recur, requiring additional treatment. This may also contribute to the development of resistance in the bacteria. This is one...
Many people experience normal feelings of sadness or grief from time to time, but feelings that persist for two weeks or longer may indicate depression that needs treatment. If over the last two weeks, you have experienced at least four of the symptoms below and one symptom is either loss of interest or feeling down/depressed then you may be depressed.

- Little interest or pleasure in doing things
- Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless
- Trouble falling asleep, or sleeping too much
- Feeling tired or having little energy
- Poor appetite or overeating
- Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure, or have let yourself or your family down
- Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television
- Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed, or the opposite—being so restless or agitated that you have been moving around a lot more than usual
- Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way

Do You Have Depression?

Is your child on medication to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), it is important that they be seen by his/her physician within 30 days. This is so that any symptoms along. Even if you have just a few of the above symptoms, you may still benefit from treatment—it is important to talk to your doctor about your symptoms. Depression is easily treated and there are several options including anti-depressant medication and behavior therapy. The sooner you seek treatment the better your chance for a fast recovery and return to normal.

Antidepressants

Antidepressants help to balance the chemicals in your brain that regulate your mood. In addition to improving mood, when prescribed to treat depression, antidepressants may help increase your level of energy, increase interest in activities, reduce thoughts of unworthiness, and improve sleep and appetite. When these brain chemicals are in proper balance, your depression may get better. However, it is important to remember when you begin feeling better NOT to stop taking the medication—typically antidepressants should be taken for at least six months after you begin to feel better. This can help you from slipping back into a depression. Your doctor may even want you to take the medication for longer periods of time. It may take up to 5–6 weeks before the medication takes its full effect so remember to give it time. Also, side effects may disappear as your body adjusts within the first six weeks of treatment. Your doctor will instruct you when to contact them about side effects.

PREVENTIVE CARE GUIDELINES FOR MEN

Recommendations apply to most men of normal risk. Additional tests and immunizations may be recommended based on specific risk factors. Visits recommended every 1-3 years and should include:

HEALTH HISTORY & LIFESTYLE ASSESSMENT

- Complete or update assessment, including family history; activity; tobacco, alcohol, and drug use; and sexual practices

PHYSICAL EXAM

- Height and weight (Body Mass Index)
- Blood pressure
- Vision screening

TESTS

- Screen for lipid disorders every five years
- Screening for colorectal cancer (CRC) using fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy. Begin at age 50 and continue until age 75; if you are over age 50, talk with your doctor regarding the frequency of screening needed.
- Screen for Type 2 diabetes if blood pressure >135/80
- Screen for abnormal blood glucose and Type 2 diabetes, ages 40–70 who are overweight or obese

IMMUNIZATIONS

- One-time dose Tdap/Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis booster every 10 years
- Flu vaccine annually
- MMR vaccine for those without evidence of prior infection
- Varicella vaccine for those without evidence of prior infection
- MMR vaccine for adults born after 1975 without evidence of prior MMR vaccine

COUNSELING/SCREENING

- Diet and exercise
- Smoking cessation
- Alcohol/substance abuse prevention
- Sexually transmitted diseases/HIV/sexual behavior
- Family planning
- Dental health
- Sun exposure
- Infection prevention (including seat belt, helmet use)
- Life stage issues (parenting, family, child)
- Depression
- Health Care Proxy/Advance Directives
- Screen for HIV infection ages 16–65

HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS

- Aspirin therapy recommended for ages 45–79 when benefits outweigh risks
- Screen for colorectal cancer (age 50-75)
- Screen for diabetes (age 40+)

If you have a family history of glaucoma talk with your doctor about whether screening may be right for you.

Guidelines adapted from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Talk to your doctor about which preventive services are right for you.

Your Plan benefits may allow for services more frequently than what is listed here.
Be Smart About Antibiotics
When you are suffering from a cold, flu, or sinus infection, the only thing you want to do is get better. You may go to your doctor expecting an antibiotic to put you on the road to recovery, but antibiotics are not always the best treatment option. Using antibiotics when they are not needed contributes to the growing problem of antibiotic resistance, or “super bugs.” It also exposes you or your child to unnecessary side effects or reactions from the medication.

Antibiotics heal bacterial infections, not viruses—which are the cause of many common illnesses.

Are You Up-to-Date?
Most people know someone who has had cancer and either had to undergo treatment (including chemotherapy and radiation) or has lost their life from it. The overall death rate (all cancers combined) in the U.S. has been decreasing over recent years. One contributing factor is earlier diagnosis and treatment. Screening for cancer can help:

• to prevent certain types of cancer by identifying lesions that could be treated before they turn into cancer
• prevent death from cancer by finding the disease in an early stage when it is most treatable
• to reduce the intensity and length of treatment required

Although there are over 100 different types of cancer and many screenings available, we will focus on a few of the more common screenings. For more information on other cancer screenings appropriate for your age and gender, please refer to the table at the end of this newsletter and talk to your doctor.

Cervical Cancer Screening
Regular Pap tests are recommended for women ages 21–65, even if you are not currently sexually active. The cervix is the lower opening of the uterus—cancer that develops here can spread to other parts of the body. Regular testing by a Pap smear can help your doctor find and treat abnormal cell changes on your cervix before they develop into cancer. In addition to screening for cervical cancer, the HPV vaccine is recommended for both boys and girls at age 11 or 12. It prevents infection with the Human Papillomavirus, which is a leading cause of cervical cancer.

Breast Cancer Screening
Mammograms are generally recommended for women starting around age 40. A mammogram is an x-ray that can help find a small lump that may not be noticeable by a breast exam alone. It can often find breast cancer very early—up to two years before it can be felt by your doctor during an exam. Often breast cancer has to grow to at least the size of a pea before you or your doctor can feel it. Having a regular mammogram is important to help detect cancer in the early stages when it is most treatable.

Colorectal Cancer Screening
Screening for colorectal cancer is recommended for both men and women starting around age 50. There are several different ways to screen for this cancer: • colonoscopy every 10 years • sigmoidoscopy every five years, along with fecal occult blood testing (FOBT) every three years • fecal occult blood testing (FOBT) yearly

Talk to your doctor about which of these options is right for you.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTIVE PEDIATRIC HEALTH CARE

MVP Health Care encourages all members with children to select a pediatrician. Routine doctor visits help keep your child, and “tween” or teen healthy. If there are any problems, these checkups—also referred to as “well-child care visits”—help the doctor detect them early before they become serious. Well-child visits are a preventive care benefit and covered in full under your MVP medical plan.

IMMUNIZATIONS—A GREAT WAY TO KEEP KIDS HEALTHY

Immunizations are needed to protect your child from potentially life-threatening illnesses. Vaccination has enabled a reduction of most vaccine-preventable diseases to very low levels in the United States. Additional information and immunization schedules recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are available at www.cdc.gov. Select Healthy Living, then Vaccines & Immunizations. Talk to your doctor to determine which immunizations and tests are right for your child.

MVP WILL HELP YOU FIND A DOCTOR

Visit www.mvphealthcare.com and select Find a Doctor. You can search for providers by name, location, or specialty. Or you can call the MVP Customer Care Center at the phone number on the back of your Member ID card.

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PHYSICAL EXAM/HISTORY/EDUCATION/GUIDANCE

- Length/Height and Weight
- Head Circumference
- Weight for Length
- Body Mass Index
- Blood Pressure

SENSORY SCREENING

- Vision
- Hearing

DEVELOPMENTAL/BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT

- Developmental Screening
- Autism Screening
- Developmental Surveillance
- Psychosocial/Behavioral Assessment
- Alcohol and Drug Use Assessment
- Depression Screening

PROCEDURES

- Newborn Blood Screening
- Critical Congenital Heart Defect Screening
- Immunization
- Hematocrit or Hemoglobin
- Lead Screening
- Tuberculosis Testing
- Dyslipidemia Screening
- STI/HIV/Chlamydia Screening
- Cervical Cancer Screening

ORAL HEALTH

* Per the CDC Immunization Schedules for 2016. Visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules for more information.

These guidelines represent a consensus by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Bright Futures. This information is provided for reference purposes. Please contact your child’s physician for recommendations specific to your child. Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Health Insurance Company of New Hampshire, Inc.; 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.