Check Up

What’s Inside:

- Sexual Health
- Member Spotlight
- Women’s Health
- Springtime Pasta Primavera Recipe
Your Sexual Health Matters

Sexual health is as important as your physical or mental health. It is common for people to remain sexually active throughout their lives. Being in good sexual health includes being informed and making healthy choices. Talk to your doctor about your sexual health concerns and questions—like your risk for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Use the information below to open a conversation with your doctor.

Health Conditions and Medications Affecting Sex Life
- Illness and disease
- Effects of aging
- Sexual desire and performance

Reproductive Health
- Women’s reproductive health (gynecology)
- Menopause
- Men’s reproductive health (urology)

Sexual Violence
- Prevention
- Trauma-informed care

LGBTQ+ Health
- Gay and bisexual persons
- Transgender persons
- Non-binary persons
- Sexual partner preferences

Sexually Transmitted Diseases & HIV/AIDS
- STDs with no symptoms
- Increasing rates of STDs
- Condoms and other ways to prevent transmission

What Is Sexual Health?

Get More Information
To learn more about these sexual health topics, visit Your Health Audio Library: www.commonwealthcarealliance.org/audiolibrary

STDs Are on the Rise for Older Adults Too!
For people over the age of 60, rates for STDs jumped 23% between 2014 and 2017.

Please Don’t Hang Up… It Might Be CCA!

We often call when you are due for important appointments and tests. These recorded phone messages can also connect you to the Member Services team to help schedule appointments for things like:
- Dental check-ups
- Diabetes tests for your eyes and kidneys
- Cervical cancer tests (Pap tests)
- Breast cancer tests (mammogram—an X-ray of the breasts)

Some tests and appointments need to happen every year. Look for calls or voicemails from a Boston area code so you don’t miss these important messages. You can also call the number back at any time to hear your personal message.

We want to ensure you are getting the preventive care you need to stay healthy. Please keep answering!
In the late 1980s, Aida moved to the United States from the Dominican Republic to make a better life for herself and her family. She worked hard but also faced some difficulties. In 2002, she was diagnosed with diabetes and a few years later, she had a bad fall that injured her back. Stress also began to take a toll on her health. She describes her health at the time as simply “not good at all.”

By 2015, Aida didn’t feel well most of the time and had a hard time keeping track of her medications. She was struggling with leaving her house to go to the pharmacy or medical appointments.

**Home is where she’s happiest**

Now that Aida is a member of Commonwealth Care Alliance’s Senior Care Options plan, she gets care in the place she feels most comfortable, her home. Her nurse from Commonwealth Community Care (CCC) visits her every Wednesday. Her medications are mailed to her monthly, and her CCC nurse fills her med box for her. She also has monthly visits from her nurse practitioner and behavioral health specialist.

Together, Aida and her CCA care team were able to get her diabetes under control and address her other chronic medical issues. Aida says, “I have better care, so I feel better.”

At home, Aida can focus on her three birds that keep her busy (and entertained). Even if she’s feeling drained, she says she always finds the energy to take care of them. Her family, birds, and religion are what keep her going. Some days are still tough. Religion helps her cope. She says, “It’s not easy. You never overcome the pain. But I have a lot of faith.”

**I have better care, so I feel better.**
**Your Voice Deserves to Be Heard**

*Member Voices* is a program that brings CCA members together to share their experiences about the care they get from CCA. It gives you the chance to help improve care for all members. It's also a great way to learn from fellow members and to build friendships.

**What is the goal of Member Voices?**
Our goal is to make sure that we, and our providers, are respecting our members’ values, preferences, and needs. Feedback from the *Member Voices* program helps us do that.

**What are some of the Member Voices activities?**
When you join *Member Voices*, you’ll be invited to share in activities like:
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Workshops
- Advisory groups

**How Do I Join?**
Call Emily Escobar at 857-246-8862 or email membervoices@commonwealthcare.org.

We will schedule an orientation session to give you information and skills to help you participate.

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**Pharmacy Corner**

Spring is here! Spring brings fast-changing weather. It also means colds, asthma, and allergies can flare up. When the weather is bad or you’re not feeling well, it can be hard to get to the pharmacy. Make sure you keep up-to-date on your medications. That way you can take them even if you can’t go out. Here are **2 ways to help manage all your medications:**

1. **3-Month Medication Supply**
   You may be able to obtain a prescription from your doctor for 3 months. You can also call your local pharmacy to request that they contact your doctor directly to request a 3-month prescription. A 3-month supply means you don’t need to pick up your medications every month.

2. **Medicine-On-Time (MOT) Packaging**
   Do you have trouble keeping track of your medications? CCA works with several pharmacies that can package your monthly medications together. The package is labeled so you know what the medication is and what time to take it. It’s clear, convenient, and no-cost.

**Need More Information?**
If you have questions about your pharmacy benefits, talk to your CCA care partner or call Member Services at **866-610-2273 (TTY 711)**, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week.
What Steps Can You Take for Better Health?

Women face unique health issues that are important to address to live a healthy and independent life. We are here to help all our members, including our female members, thrive.

As a woman, there are important steps you can take to avoid or detect certain medical problems before they become more advanced or serious. Start by talking to your doctor about your risk for certain health issues, like weak bones and cancer.

Learn More About Preventive Care

Medical tests and screenings can help your doctors catch health problems early. Following preventive care guidelines is one of the best ways for you to stay healthy. Read the guidelines here: [www.commonwealthcarealliance.org/preventivecare](http://www.commonwealthcarealliance.org/preventivecare)

Prevent Broken Bones

As women age, they have a greater risk of osteoporosis, or weakened bones. This can lead to fractures or broken bones. Talk to your doctor about your risk of fracture and about getting a bone density test. You can also follow the 3 steps below to lower your risk for fractures:

1. Exercise (walking is great!)
2. Avoid smoking and limit alcohol
3. Get enough calcium and vitamin D

Get Tested for Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is one of the main cancers for women. Screening for breast cancer is important because you can detect changes before cancer develops or find it early. Early treatment is likely to work best.

Talk to your care partner or call Member Services to schedule free tests that screen for cancer. Your doctor can also tell you if you need tests more often.
Concerned About Opioid Addiction?
Get Help from CCA’s New Drug Management Program

Many of our members are in pain because of serious health conditions or disabilities. Pain medications, such as opioids, may be the only way to treat this pain. Opioids can be very addictive. At Commonwealth Care Alliance, we want to make sure that each member’s pain treatment plan is safe.

This winter, we started a new drug management program to focus on creating safe treatment plans for members who use prescription opioids. Our drug management program is dedicated to helping our members manage chronic pain while preventing addiction and overdose.

If you are taking an opioid medication for pain, talk to your doctor about your risk for addiction. We are committed to providing quality care that meets the needs of each of our members as safely as possible.

For any medications, including opioids, always only take as directed by your doctor and follow these 3 rules:

1. Never take more pills than prescribed ✔
2. Never take pills more often than prescribed ✔
3. Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about side effects ✔

Get More Information
To learn more about opioids, review the Frequently Asked Questions on our website: www.commonwealthcarealliance.org/opioids
Springtime Pasta Primavera
It’s time to put the spring back onto your plate!

This simple pasta dish celebrates spring and all the new veggies popping up from the ground: broccoli, squash, peas, and tomatoes. It’s light and bright, but still perfect for satisfying those pasta cravings.

Prep Time: 15 minutes • Cook Time: 13 minutes • Total Time: 28 minutes

Ingredients
- 8 ounces uncooked pasta
- Reserved starchy cooking liquid from cooking the pasta (~¼ cup)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 ½ cups broccoli florets (fresh or frozen)
- 3 shallots or 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 medium yellow squash or zucchini, diced
- 4 large cloves garlic, finely minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste (~¼ teaspoon each)
- 1 cup frozen green peas
- ¼ cup low-sodium or unsalted chicken broth or stock
- Zest and juice of ½ lemon
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- Fresh basil or parsley and reduced-fat parmesan-style grated topping for garnish (optional)

Directions
1. Cook the pasta to package instructions in water. Before you drain, don’t forget to reserve a mug full of the cooking liquid.
2. While the pasta is cooking, preheat a large skillet over medium-low heat for a minute or 2, and add olive oil to the pan.
3. Add shallots and broccoli and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Add squash and cook another 2 minutes.
5. Add the frozen peas and cook another 2 minutes.
6. Add salt, pepper, and garlic, and stir to combine, being careful not to burn the garlic. Cook one more minute.
7. Add the chicken broth and cook about another minute and a half.
8. Zest the lemon over the pan.
9. After the minute and a half is up, turn off the heat, and add the lemon juice, tomatoes, and cooked pasta, stirring to combine.
10. Add a little reserved starchy cooking liquid from the pasta (~¼ cup).

Nutrition Facts:
Serving size: ~2 ½ cups
Servings per recipe: 4

Nutrition per Serving:
Calories: 389.9
Total Fat: 11.3 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Salt (sodium): 223.3 mg
Total Carbohydrates: 63.1 g
Sugars: 10.5 g
Protein: 11 g
This fall, over 3,000 members answered our questions about their experience using their pharmacy. Here’s what we learned:

9 out of 10 members said their pharmacy was easy and convenient to use.

9 out of 10 members said their pharmacy did a good job communicating with them and their doctor.

We use your feedback to learn what is important to YOU and improve services for all members. Look out for the next survey that may ask you about:

- Your experience at the hospital
- Paid helpers
- Medical equipment
- Transportation

Thank you for helping us ensure you get the care you deserve.