



# Healthy MercyCare<sup>TM</sup> LIVING

Spring 2019

*A wellness newsletter for MercyCare members*

# It's not too late to protect yourself against the flu

When seeing "Get Your Flu Vaccine" signs, you might ask, "Isn't it too late to get vaccinated?" It's not too late!

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting vaccinated by the end of October so people are more likely to be protected against the flu when activity picks up in the community. However, the need to get vaccinated continues much longer because flu season most often peaks between December and March, and can occur as late as May.

Flu germs can live for hours on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables. That's why it's important to wash your hands often. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose unless you have just washed your hands. And always cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Not every flu season is the same.

Flu viruses constantly change, so it is important that everyone who is at least six months old get a yearly flu vaccine.

Viruses in the flu shot are killed (inactivated), so you cannot get the flu from the flu shot.

Minor side effects can include soreness, redness, swelling at the injection site or low-grade fever.

The 2017-2018 flu season was the most severe recorded in the US, with an estimated 49 million sick, 960,000 hospitalized and 79,000 deaths. One of the most alarming statistics is of the 185 flu-related pediatric deaths, about 80% of those were in children who did not receive the flu vaccine.

**The flu shot is the first and best way for you to protect yourself and the people you love most from getting sick with the flu.**

The flu is in the community, so now is the time to be vaccinated if you have not yet been vaccinated. You not only protect yourself, but you protect the young, old and most vulnerable around you. Let's all do our part to make our community a healthy place to live.

Call your physician to schedule a flu vaccine, or stop by any Mercyhealth pharmacy to get an adult vaccination. Visit [MercyHealthSystem.org/service/pharmacy/](https://www.mercyhealthsystem.org/service/pharmacy/) for pharmacy locations and hours.



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Healthy Living is published by MercyCare Health Plans to inform its members of current health issues and improve the use of MCHP services. This publication should not replace the care and advice of your doctor. Always talk to your health care professional about your personal health needs. MercyCare Health Plans is a Qualified Health Plan issuer in the Health Insurance Marketplace.



### What are the hours of operation?

If you are in Wisconsin, medical professionals are available Monday-Friday, 8 am-5 pm. If you are in Illinois, they are available Monday-Sunday, 8 am-5 pm.

### How much does it cost?

MCHP members: 3 visits, \$20 each  
Non-MCHP members: \$49 per visit

### How do I pay for the visit?

Be prepared to pay with a credit card at the time of the visit.

## Mercyhealth Virtual Visit Now

**MercyCare Health Plans members receive three virtual visits for \$20 each**

Mercyhealth Virtual Visit Now gives you access to select Mercyhealth providers from your phone, tablet or computer. From colds and fevers to sore throats and sinus infections, the Virtual Visit Now team can help you feel better from the comfort of your own home. It's just one more way we're making health care convenient for you.

MercyCare Health Plans members will receive three visits for \$20 each. Members will be prompted to enter their member ID to receive the discount. This discount is per member.

### Enroll today! Follow these easy steps:

- Visit [MercyhealthVirtualVisitNow.org](https://www.MercyhealthVirtualVisitNow.org) to learn more
- Download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play





## The future of health care is here

January 5 marked the opening of our newest medical campus—the Javon Bea Hospital and Physician Clinic—Riverside. Conveniently located off of I-90 at Riverside Boulevard in Rockford, Illinois, this state-of-the-art facility is a place of peace and healing. The 560,000-square-foot structure is something to behold—a triumph representing years of work and the collaborative efforts of so many stakeholders. This hospital and clinic will serve as the regional hub for highly specialized care for children and adults:

- Level I (highest level) trauma services
- Adult subspecialty services
- The highest level of neonatal and pediatric services
  - » Over 55 pediatric and neonatal doctors in 25+ pediatric specialties
  - » State-designated Regional Perinatal Center
  - » 52-bed NICU
- » Level II Pediatric Trauma Center (1 of 6 in Illinois)
- » State-designated Children's Hospital (only one in northern Illinois)
- » Pediatric Critical Care Center (1 of 10 in Illinois)
- Advanced operating and surgery suites—including a hybrid operating room to support a full range of inpatient and outpatient surgery, including minimally invasive surgery and image-guided surgery
- Comprehensive diagnostic center, with lab, imaging and pharmacy services
- Inpatient dialysis
- Comprehensive cardiac, vascular, peripheral, and neurovascular interventional laboratory
- And much more



## Preventing falls as you age

Falls are not a normal part of aging, but they are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for people over age 65. Falls can result in hip fractures, broken bones and head injuries.

Common factors that lead to falls:

- Balance and gait problems
- Vision changes
- Medicines
- Chronic health conditions

**There is good news—most falls can be prevented.**

Talk to your health care provider about ways to improve your risk of falling.

### **Stepping On Fall Prevention Workshop**

This seven-week workshop is proven to reduce falls by improving your balance and strength, teaching you about home and environmental safety, and addressing other risk factors. Presented by the Rock County Council on Aging.

(608) 757-5472 • [co.rock.wi.us/aging](http://co.rock.wi.us/aging)

### **Mercyhealth Safe Connect Personal Emergency Response System**

Ideal for elderly and disabled individuals who want to stay in their own homes, independent, safe and comfortable. With Safe Connect, there is always a 24/7 connection to family members, friends or emergency services to help you get back on your feet from a fall.

(608) 756-6784 • [MercyhealthSafeConnect.org](http://MercyhealthSafeConnect.org)



**You don't have Mercyhealth MyChart yet? Why wait?**  
**Sign up now to view all insurance claims through MyChart.**

MercyCare members can now do the following through MyChart:

- Look up insurance coverage details
- Learn more about your benefits
- View your claims status and payment information
- Request a new MercyCare ID card
- Change your primary care physician
- Email your health plan representative
- Update your information, such as change of address

**How to get started:**

Do it all securely online at home or on your smartphone with the Mercyhealth MyChart app. Sign up today at any Mercyhealth clinic or visit [MyChart.MercyHealthSystem.org](https://MyChart.MercyHealthSystem.org).

# Keeping your aging brain healthy

Aging well depends on your genes, lifestyle choices and environment. Even if you're healthy, brain changes as you age may lead to increased challenges with multitasking, paying attention and recalling words. The good news is, most of us—at any age—can learn new things and improve skills, which can be important for maintaining our independence.

Good overall health helps you maintain good brain health.

These tips can help you stay healthy, physically and mentally:

- Eat or drink less sugar, salt and solid fat
- Eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Choose lean meats, fish or poultry, and low-fat dairy foods
- Control portion sizes
- Drink adequate fluids
- Make physical activity a part of your routine
- Get seven to eight hours of sleep every night
- Volunteer, join a social club or attend community programs
- Make time to gather with friends

Additionally, conditions like heart disease, stroke, diabetes and high blood pressure can affect brain health. Manage your cholesterol and blood pressure, exercise, eat healthily and get recommended health screenings. If you smoke, quit. If you drink alcohol, limit consumption. Get enough sleep and seek help for sleep problems.

Genetic risks to brain health are inherited, but the lifestyle and environmental factors you control may be changed to help overcome some of these risks and help maintain brain health.

For more information about brain health, visit [MercyHealthSystem.org/health-library/](https://www.MercyHealthSystem.org/health-library/).





## Everyone can take five concrete steps to prevent high blood pressure



avoid tobacco



avoid harmful use of alcohol



eat a healthy diet

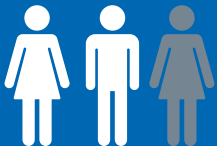


engage in regular physical activity



manage stress in healthy ways

## Adults living with high blood pressure



**1 in 3**  
worldwide

## Know your numbers

High blood pressure has no signs or symptoms, but measuring it to stay healthy is quick and painless

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries that carry blood from your heart to other parts of your body. It normally rises and falls throughout the day, but it can damage your heart and cause health problems if it stays high for a long time. Did you know ... one in every three adults has high blood pressure?

### What blood pressure numbers mean

Blood pressure is measured using two numbers. The first number, called systolic blood pressure, represents the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats. The second number, called diastolic blood pressure, represents the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart rests between beats. Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg).

A blood pressure less than 120/80 mmHg is normal. A blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or more is too high. People with levels from 120/80 mmHg to 139/89 mmHg have a condition called smart, which means they are at high risk for high blood pressure.

### Blood Pressure Levels

Normal	systolic: less than 120 mmHg diastolic: less than 80 mmHg
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At risk (prehypertension)	systolic: 120–139 mmHg diastolic: 80–89 mmHg
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High	systolic: 140 mmHg or higher diastolic: 90 mmHg or higher
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Keeping your blood pressure levels in a healthy range usually involves taking medications, maintaining a healthy weight, reducing sodium in your diet, getting daily physical activity and quitting smoking.



## Lower your chances of stroke

### COMMON STROKE WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg—especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

Having a stroke can be a catastrophic, life-changing event. Heart disease and stroke are preventable, yet they remain leading causes of death and disability, and health care spending in the US. Alarmingly, many of these events happen to adults ages 35-64—over 800,000 in 2016.

[You may be able to prevent a stroke or lower your chances of having a stroke.](#)

**Choosing healthy meal and snack options** can help you prevent stroke. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Eating foods low in saturated fats, trans fat and cholesterol, and high in fiber can help prevent high cholesterol. Limiting salt (sodium) in your diet can also lower your blood pressure. High cholesterol and high blood pressure increase your chances of having a stroke.

**Physical activity** can help you stay at a healthy weight and lower your cholesterol and blood pressure levels. For adults, the Surgeon General recommends two and a half hours of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity, such as a brisk walk, each week.

**If you don't smoke, don't start.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your chances of having a stroke. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for stroke.

**Avoid drinking too much alcohol**, which can raise your blood pressure. Men should have no more than two drinks per day, and women only one.

Learn the signs of stroke, and call 9-1-1 right away if you think someone might be having a stroke. Getting fast treatment is important to preventing death and disability from stroke. Stroke is treatable.



Access Code:	Patient's Date Of Birth:	<input type="button" value="Log in"/>
<input type="text"/>	mm/dd/yyyy	

(866) 294-3664 | support@emmi.com | You can also visit us on Facebook

## Have you met Emmi?

Emmi is an interactive, web-based education tool that guides you through an animated, step-by-step overview of important medical information to help you prepare for a procedure or manage your chronic condition. You can access Emmi® through your computer, tablet or smart phone, and print related notes and articles.

Emmi uses plain language to make complex medical information simple and easy to understand. Each program takes about 20 minutes to watch and you can share with your family and friends. Watch them as often as you want. At the end of the program, you'll have the opportunity to print a summary of the information and your questions to take to your next medical appointment.

Emmi also provides follow-up, interactive phone calls to help you manage your health and share your concerns with your Mercyhealth health care provider. These calls will ask how you are doing, can tell you about preventive care, remind you of upcoming health appointments, and encourage you to take care of your health. You will be connected to a Mercyhealth provider as needed.

Visit [MercyHealthSystem.org/emmi/](http://MercyHealthSystem.org/emmi/) and register now to learn about your procedure, your stay and about how to manage your chronic condition. You'll be prompted to enter some basic information and can then connect to your Emmi program.



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## Are you drinking enough water?

Getting enough water every day is important for your health. Along with the beverages you drink, you can also get fluids through the foods you eat, (for example, broth soups, and foods with high water content such as celery, tomatoes or melons). Generally, water helps you:

- Regulate your body temperature
- Lubricate and cushion your joints
- Protect your spinal cord and other sensitive tissues

There are different opinions on how much water you should drink every day. Health authorities commonly recommend eight, 8-ounce glasses, which amounts to two liters or half a gallon. This is called the “8x8 rule” and is easy to remember. Everyone is different, so this recommendation may vary.

Your body needs more water when you:

- Are in hot or humid climates
- Are more physically active
- Run a fever, have diarrhea or are vomiting
- Are pregnant or breast feeding

If you think you are not getting enough water, these tips may help:

- Carry a water bottle for easy access while at work or running errands.
- Choose water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. (Did you know substituting water for one 20-ounce sugar sweetened soda will save you about 240 calories?)
- Choose water when eating out. You will save money and can also reduce calories.
- Add a wedge of lime or lemon to your water to improve the taste and help you drink more water than you usually do.



**MercyCare Health Plans**

PO Box 550  
Janesville, WI 53547  
WI (800) 895-2421  
IL (877) 908-6027  
[MercyCareHealthPlans.com](http://MercyCareHealthPlans.com)