

Talking About Prescriptions

This October marked national "Talk About Prescriptions" Month sponsored by the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE). This year's theme was "Communication is Key!" and focused on better communication between consumers and their healthcare providers, which can lead to safe and appropriate medicine use – and better health. One very important component of this year's theme was capitalizing on every teachable moment. If both consumers and providers focused on quality communication during each interaction we could better ensure that consumers get maximum benefit from their prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. It is imperative to continue improving the dialogue about medicines.

Unsafe and inappropriate medicine use continue to be major public health problems costing our nation suffering, lives, and too many dollars in avoidable healthcare spending. According to a new report (August 2009) by the New England Health Care Institute (NEHI), the cost to the healthcare system due to patients who do not take their medications as prescribed has reached \$290 billion each year in otherwise avoidable medical spending.

The NCPPIE says, "Consumers need more information about their medicines and about how prescriptions work in order to be Medicine Smart.™" The Talk About Prescriptions observance is about increasing medication adherence and raising awareness for consumers. Consumers need to learn to; ask questions about medications; avoid drug interactions, understand safe use of pain medications, and practice proper medicine disposal.

The NCPPIE "Are You Medicine Smart?" campaign poses a simple question with profound implications for good health. For example, being Medicine Smart means getting all the information necessary to use your medicine correctly. That means asking questions and sharing important information about past medicine use to better ensure that you get the most benefit from your treatment.



Below is a list of simple questions consumers should ask to be Medicine Smart™:

1. What is the name of the medicine and what is it for? Is this the brand name or the generic name?
2. Is a generic version of this medicine available?
3. How and when do I take it - and for how long?
4. What foods, drinks, other medicines, dietary supplements, or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?
5. When should I expect the medicine to begin to work, and how will I know if it is working?
6. Are there any side effects, what are they, and what do I do if they occur?
7. Will this medicine work safely with the other prescription and nonprescription medicines I am taking? Will it work safely with any dietary / herbal supplements I am taking?
8. Do I need to get a refill? When?
9. How should I store this medicine?
10. Is there any written information available about the medicine?

Being "Medicine Smart™" also means knowing several key facts about the medicines you are currently taking - and being able to share that information with the members of your healthcare team with each visit. That means keeping track of the names of the medicine(s) you are taking, how much you take, when and how you take it, why you take it, and when you started taking it. For tips on making a Medication Record card or Pill Card visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at

<http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pillcard/pillcard.htm>

Source: National Council on Patient Information and Education, www.talkaboutrx.org

August 20th through January 29th

www.bewellstaywell.az.gov

MAYO CLINIC Health Assessment

Take the Mayo Clinic Health Assessment Today!

- Log on to www.bewellstaywell.az.gov
- Complete the registration by entering in your Employee Identification Number (EIN), a unique email address, and some basic information.
- Receive an email confirmation of registration.
- Follow the email link to the web portal to log in and take the Health Assessment

EmbodyHealth Coaching

Participants who complete the Health Assessment questionnaire may also be eligible to receive FREE EmbodyHealth Coaching from the Mayo Clinic. The Coaching programs offer confidential counseling based on your personal health goals. During the program your Coach will work to help you:

- Understand the impact of choices that affect your health
- Identify barriers that prevent you from changing health habits
- Build skills to help change behavior and improve health
- Increase motivation and self-confidence

The Lifestyle Coaching program has 5 programs to choose from: Fitness, Nutrition, Weight Management, Tobacco Cessation, and Stress Management. Each program has three levels of intervention aligned with the severity of your health weaknesses; self managed, moderate and intensive. The EmbodyHealth Coaching program may be 9 months for the intensive model and 6 months for the moderate version. Participants will be engaged through telephone calls, secure e-mail, print educational materials, or via web using "My Coach." Also, participants are able to call their lifestyle coach with any questions or barriers that arise during the course of the program.

Questions?

Visit the Wellness website at www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness for more information or call Wellness at 602-771-9355.

Annual Flu Shots Update

Benefit Options Wellness is in the middle of our Annual Flu Vaccine Campaign and still offering FREE influenza vaccinations to all State of Arizona employees and Benefit Options Members (retirees, spouses, and dependents over 4 years of age). Benefit Options Wellness has vaccinated approximately 10, 000 employees and members so far.

However, our contracted vendor, Healthwaves, has been experiencing vaccine shortages caused by delayed shipments from the vaccine manufacturer. As a result we have been forced to cancel many of the previously scheduled flu clinics. We are expecting to get back on schedule in the first two weeks of November, but schedules are still tentative.

There are still two options to receive a flu shot through our annual vaccine program: Work site Clinics and Public Clinics

Work Sites

Specific dates and times for work site events posted on the Benefit Options Wellness website www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness and the schedule is updated often.

Public Clinics

The Healthwaves public flu clinic schedule is posted on their website at www.healthwaves.com.

Please review the websites frequently as schedules are tentative and are subject to change based on vaccine availability.

What to Bring

In order to receive a flu vaccine please bring the following items to the flu clinic of your choice:

- The Employee Identification Number (EIN) of the State of Arizona employee
- An Benefit Options insurance card or State ID badge
- A photo ID

For other flu vaccine questions, call the Benefit Options Wellness line at 602-771-9355.

Do Hand Sanitizers Work?



With bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for public use everywhere these days, you may be wondering if this stuff actually works. You may be asking yourself such questions as; Is it better than hand washing? or Does it create mutant strains of germs?

In fact, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are effective in preventing the spread of the seasonal flu, H1N1, colds and other viral- and bacterial-based diseases.

Wash or Sanitize?

Most public health experts say that hand washing with soap and water is the most effective way to remove germs from your hands. But the effectiveness is influenced by proper hand washing technique. The recommendation calls for hand washing with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds to create a full lather and to reach all crevices of your hands and wrists. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers kill most types of bacteria, viruses and fungi in a few seconds. While rubbing your hands with sanitizer for 15 seconds is ideal, poor hand-sanitizer use still has advantages over poor hand washing. Although proper hand washing is technically superior to alcohol gels most of the time, hand-sanitizers are an incredibly effective means to reduce disease transmission. However, you cannot rely solely on alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Alcohol kills bacteria but does not necessarily clean your hands of dirt or organic material.

Resistant Bacteria?

Alcohol kills bacteria usually by dissolving its cellular membrane. It is a serious killer, like fire or bleach, and germs don't develop resistance to it. Also, the alcohol evaporates quickly after killing the first layer of germs on your skin. This means that, although benevolent bacteria are killed, enough remain on lower levels or elsewhere up the arm to re-colonize.

To be effective, alcohol-based hand sanitizers must contain at least 60 percent alcohol. Some cheaper brands contain less and are no better than water. Worse, they offer false protection.

For best protection, wash your hand with soap and water in the restroom and kitchen and use hand sanitizers to rid your hands of germs inadvertently picked up in hallways, entrances, offices, and public areas.

Mini Health Screening at Work

All State employees and Benefit Options members are eligible to participate in mini health screenings.

The basic screenings are **FREE** and optional screenings are priced as indicated:

- Height & weight; BMI; blood pressure; and percent of body fat (body composition).
- Cholesterol and blood sugar (**8-hour fasting is recommended**)
- Free osteoporosis screening for women 40 and older. \$30 for women under age 40.
- \$5 PSA screening (blood draw) for men 40 and older. \$42 for men under age 40.

You will need your Employee Identification Number (EIN) and Insurance card for this event.



No appointment necessary. These screenings are done on a first come, first serve basis.



“Early detection is the best defense we have at this time for catching breast cancer in its earliest stages,” says Catherine Midgette, Executive Vice President of MOM. “If we find the cancer in its earliest stages, the patient has a 97 percent survival rate.” Mobile On-Site Mammography (MOM) travels to perform mammography screenings at worksites across Arizona.

MOM will directly bill insurance. Benefit Options health plan members do not have to pay a copay at these events. (Other insurance plan members may have a copay. Check with your insurance’s member services department for more information.)

Call MOM at 480-967-3767 to schedule your appointment.

This service is generally provided on a request-basis. Call MOM at 480-967-3767 or 1-800-285-0272 to schedule this service at your worksite. There is a minimum of 25 people required.

The MOM van is not scheduled to be at any State of Arizona work sites during the month of November. If you are interested in finding other locations you may attend please call MOM directly using the above number to ask about their schedule

What Services & Programs are Offered by Benefit Options Wellness?

The Wellness website has the complete list of screenings, classes and other programs available for request and scheduling at State worksites.

Wellness events are requested and coordinated by State employees at worksites. If you are interested in hosting a program at your worksite, visit the Wellness website at www.benefitoptions.az.gov to view what is available and learn what Wellness has to offer.

Event requests must be submitted online by clicking this logo:



Complete the brief form, including contact information and the event requested and hit submit! A Wellness team member will reply to your request and begin scheduling your event.

Log on Today!



Take advantage of the many programs and services to keep employees healthy

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