


# healthkeys<sup>®</sup>

Fall 2009

## A message from Choice Medical Group

**C**hoice Medical Group's (CMG's) Health & Wellness Center is dedicated to our members and is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The center is in the Choice Plaza in Apple Valley, at 18522 Highway 18, Suite 206, on the second floor. The Center provides comprehensive services for all members. Members can access services at the Health & Wellness Center without a referral from their primary care physician.

Services provided to our senior patients include free physicals, flu shots, congestive heart failure management, fall-prevention clinics, dementia clinics, hypertension management, daily case management, diabetes education, senior flexibility classes and our Nurse In program.

For more information about Choice Medical Group and our comprehensive programs, turn to page 8 or call our member services liaison at **(760) 242-7777, ext. 224.** 

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**2** Keep your colon healthy

**4** Put an end to memory problems

**6** 10 tips to prevent injury



# 10 ways to keep your colon healthy

How fiber, fruit and fitness can help



**W**orried about developing colorectal cancer, one of the most common cancers in men and women? Stick to these 10 habits to keep your colon healthy:

**{1} Boost calcium.** Calcium may reduce the risk of colon cancer. Get it from almonds, low-fat milk, dark-green veggies, cottage cheese and yogurt. Men should limit calcium to 1,500 mg a day, as too much calcium may increase the risk of prostate cancer.

**{2} Eat more fruits and veggies.** They're good sources of fiber, which adds bulk to the waste that moves through your intestines.



**{3} Seek a bit of sun.** Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium. It comes mainly from sunlight (10 minutes a day is all you need), but can also be found in salmon, mackerel, fortified milk and eggs.

**{4} "B" smart.** Folic acid, an essential B vitamin, may reduce your risk of colon cancer. Lentils, collard greens, chickpeas, asparagus, broccoli, peas, papaya and oranges are good sources.


**{5} Butt out.** Smoking can cause colorectal cancer, so if you smoke, quit.

**{6} Get slim.** Obesity raises the risk of colon cancer in both men and women. If you're overweight, ask your healthcare provider about a weight-loss plan that will work for you.

**{7} Cut back on beef.** Eating too much red or processed meat has been linked to an increased risk of colon cancer, so choose chicken instead.

**{8} Ease up on alcohol.** Drinking too much (more than one drink a day for women; two for men) can cause colon problems, so if you drink, do so in moderation.

**{9} Stay active.** The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days a week. It may reduce your risk of colon cancer.

**{10} Get screened.** The ACS recommends that all men and women get screened for colon cancer at age 50. Colonoscopy is the gold standard when it comes to colon cancer screening. Your doctor looks inside your large intestine using a tiny camera that's attached to a long, thin tube. Schedule your appointment now—people who get screened regularly greatly reduce their risk of colorectal cancer. 

A colonoscopy can detect cancer early, when it's most treatable.

# Nixing pneumonia

## What to expect and when to take action

**Y**ou've got a bad cough, a fever and the chills. Are you fighting the flu or something worse? It could be pneumonia, a lung infection caused by bacteria, viruses and fungi. Pneumonia affects millions of people a year, and can be life-threatening for older adults, babies and those with chronic diseases like asthma or heart disease. Symptoms include chills, fever, sweating, chest pain, cough and headache. Prompt treatment can minimize complications, so see your doctor if you suspect you have more than a cold or the flu.

### PREPARE AND PROTECT

What can you do to prevent pneumonia?

- If you smoke, quit. Tobacco damages your lungs' ability to fight infection.
- Avoid contact with people who have a cold or the flu.
- Ask your healthcare provider if you should be vaccinated to prevent pneumonia. Two vaccines may help:
  - **Flu vaccine.** Sometimes, pneumonia develops after a bout of the flu, so experts recommend getting the flu vaccine to ward off both illnesses. Anyone who wants to reduce the risk of flu can get vaccinated, but children ages 6 months to 18 years, adults older than 50, healthcare providers and those with chronic health problems should definitely get the vaccine yearly.
  - **Pneumonia vaccine.** It prevents illnesses caused by the *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria.

People ages 65 and older, and younger people who have a condition that lowers the body's ability to fight infection, should get vaccinated. One dose usually does the trick.


### BATTLE THE BUG

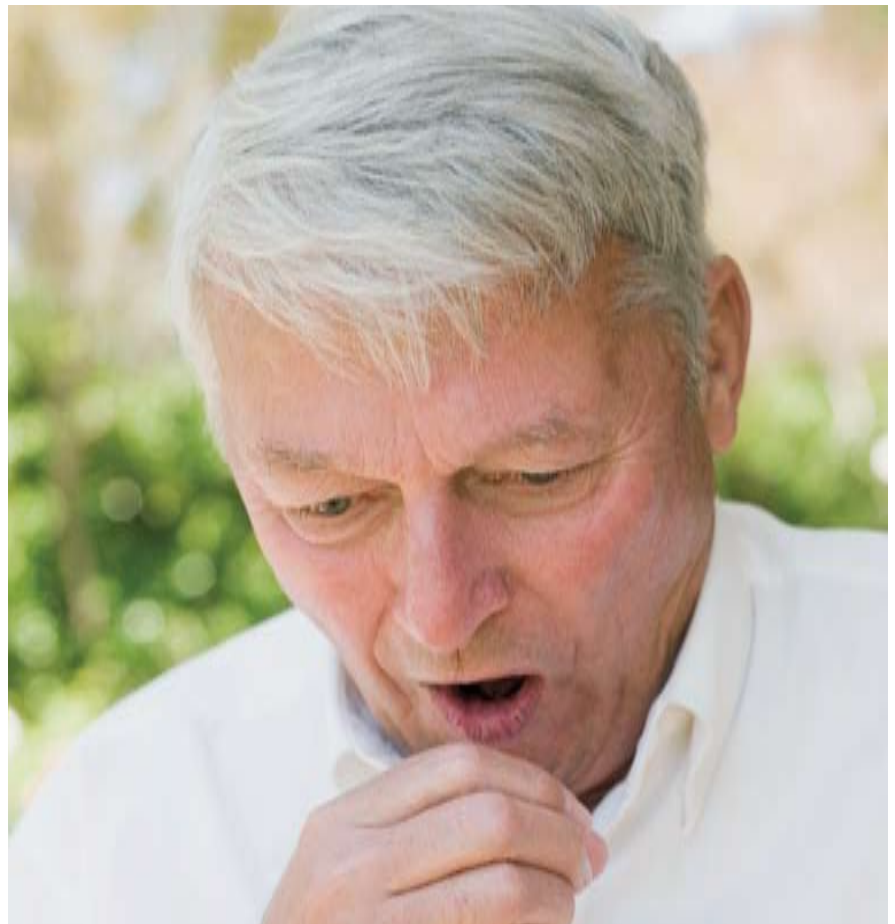
If you catch bacterial pneumonia, your healthcare provider will likely try to treat the infection with antibiotics. If the cause is viral, antibiotics won't help, so your healthcare provider may prescribe antiviral medication.

### Time to call the doctor?

**C**all your healthcare provider if you have any of these symptoms:

- shortness of breath, shaking chills or persistent fever
- fast or painful breathing
- a cough that brings up bloody mucus
- chest pain that worsens when you cough or inhale
- night sweats
- unexplained weight loss

Drinking lots of fluids, getting plenty of rest and taking acetaminophen will help you feel better. 





# Say goodbye to senior moments

Boost your brain power to fight the forgets

Everyone forgets things. It's a natural part of getting older. Maybe you can't remember someone's name, where you put your keys or if you locked the front door. But forgetting how to make change, use the telephone or find your way home may

Keep challenging your brain to help avoid memory lapses.

be a sign of a more serious problem such as mild cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia.

## WHAT CAN CAUSE MEMORY LOSS?

Anything that affects cognition—the process of thinking, learning and remembering—can affect memory. Causes of memory loss, some of which can occur together, include medications, alcohol, stress, depression, head injury, thyroid dysfunction, lack of sleep, nutritional deficiencies and the normal aging process. Luckily, memory

slips caused by many of these conditions can be helped.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Memory lapses are usually just signs of a normal brain that's always doing something—prioritizing, sorting, storing and retrieving all kinds of information. So how do you know if your memory loss should be checked out? Ask yourself these questions:

- Is memory loss preventing you from doing activities that you once had no trouble handling, like balancing a checkbook, keeping up with personal hygiene or driving?
- Are you forgetting the same things every day or over and over?
- Do you forget whole conversations or the names of close friends or relatives?
- Are you repeating yourself or asking the same questions?
- Are you getting lost in once-familiar places or putting things in unusual places because you can't remember where they go?

## REMEMBER THIS

Try these tips to reduce your risk of developing memory problems and to prevent so-called senior moments:

➤ **Stimulate.** Regular physical activity helps maintain blood flow to the brain. To keep your brain in shape, find an activity that you enjoy, such as walking, biking or swimming, and do it daily.

➤ **Make friends.** Social interaction can help reduce stress and fight loneliness, both of which have been linked to an increased risk of dementia.





➤ **Challenge yourself.** Keep your brain active and sharpen brain cells by reading, writing, learning a new skill, playing games and gardening.

➤ **Sleep.** Getting enough shut-eye will fight fatigue, which affects memory and concentration at any age. If you snore and feel drowsy the next day, you may have sleep apnea, a condition in which you stop breathing briefly several times a night. Interrupted breathing robs the brain of oxygen and can affect your memory.

➤ **Slow down.** Multitasking makes it harder to process details because your memory circuits become overloaded. If you have too much on your mind, slow down and focus on the task at hand.

➤ **Relax.** If you're drawing a blank on something, give yourself a few minutes for it to come to you. Worrying about not remembering will only increase your stress.

➤ **Take notes.** Keep a list or a journal in which you write down appointments. Carry it with you to help you keep track of what you need to do, when and where.

➤ **Designate.** Give everything a place, like always putting your glasses on the nightstand, to help you keep a familiar routine. HK

## Foiling the flu

Simple steps to stop the spread

Influenza, more commonly known as the flu, is a respiratory illness caused by a virus. The flu can be mild or severe enough to cause death. Every year, approximately 36,000 people in the United State die from the flu. Older people, young children and people with certain health conditions are at high risk for serious flu complications. With the emergence of the swine flu during the 2008–2009 flu season, understanding how to prevent the flu is important.

The flu is different from a cold and usually comes on suddenly. Flu symptoms include high fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches. Stomach symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea can also occur but are more common in children than adults.

The flu is spread by coughing and sneezing and from the secretions of a runny nose. You can get the flu by breathing in infected droplets expelled from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces, then touching your face.

### Prevention tips

- Avoid sick people.
- Cover your own mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Use a tissue only once and then throw it away.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Get vaccinated against the flu.

The Health & Wellness Center is your flu vaccination headquarters. No appointment is necessary, and we're open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The center is closed for lunch from noon to 1 p.m. Look for our upcoming flu clinics that begin in October. See you there! HK

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**CHOICE**  
**MEDICAL GROUP**

"Doing our part in our community ...  
to keep you healthy."

### Administrative Offices

18564 Highway 18, Suite 105, Apple Valley, CA 92307  
**(760) 242-7777, ext. 224 or (800) 316-7836**  
**www.ChoiceMG.com**

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# Quick quiz

Test your health savvy

*Do you know what's best for your body? Take this quiz to test your knowledge of health, nutrition and fitness.*

**1** Which food can lower your risk of age-related macular degeneration?

- A. eggs
- B. fish
- C. broccoli
- D. all of the above

**2** Which supplement can reduce your cholesterol?

- A. psyllium
- B. vitamin E
- C. calcium
- D. vitamin B<sub>12</sub>

**3** After age 40, doctors recommend an eye exam at least every:

- A. six months
- B. two years
- C. five years
- D. 10 years

**4** How many servings of fish do you need to eat each week to lower your risk of heart disease?

- A. at least one
- B. at least two
- C. at least five
- D. at least seven

**5** Which of the following may increase your risk of hip fractures?

- A. osteoporosis
- B. physical inactivity
- C. a poor diet
- D. all of the above

ANSWERS: 1.D, 2.A, 3.B, 4.B, 5.D

# Don't fall into autumn

## Outdoor safety rules to remember

Whether you're raking leaves, gardening, taking walks or mowing the lawn this fall, it's important to keep yourself healthy and free from injury. Outdoor tasks can be more demanding than you may realize, so keep these tips in mind to stay safe all season long:

### PREPARE FOR ACTIVITY

Raking, planting and mowing the lawn involve a lot of reaching, bending and lifting, so treat these activities like vigorous exercise.

- Start off by gently stretching for at least 10 minutes before and after your activities to prevent any soreness, paying attention to your arms and back. Don't stretch or reach too far.

- Vary your movements, such as switching your arm and leg positions, to help balance the workload.

- Bend at the knees—not at the waist—to keep the pressure off your lower back.

- Avoid overfilling leaf bags, soil pots and wheelbarrows so that they aren't too heavy.

### DRESS THE PART

- Wear shoes with slip-resistant soles to avoid falling; gloves to protect your skin from blisters, cuts and chemicals; and long-sleeved shirts and boots (or tuck your pants into your socks) to ward off ticks.

- Use goggles when you're operating motorized machinery.




- Apply sunscreen to all exposed areas of your body and use an insect repellent that contains DEET to fight mosquitoes and ticks.

### PUT SAFETY FIRST

- Don't use any equipment that has gotten rusty or isn't working properly.

- Summer's over, but temperatures can still soar during the autumn months, so drink plenty of water. Being out in the heat even for a short time can cause health problems.

- Take breaks. Try to rest in shady areas so that your body can cool down and relax, and stop working if you feel breathless or experience muscle soreness. 

# Understanding PTSD

Why it happens and how to overcome it

**P**ost-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a disorder that's triggered by a traumatic event.

It's common to experience a brief period of difficulty adjusting and coping after a tragic event. But with time and healthy coping skills, these problems usually go away. In some cases, though, it gets worse and can last for months or even years. Sometimes, the symptoms can completely disrupt your life. If this is the case for you, PTSD could be the problem. The good news: Getting treatment early can prevent PTSD from becoming a long-term condition.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

- anyone who has been victimized (survivors of rape, domestic violence or physical assault)
- survivors of unexpected events (car accidents, fires, floods)
- victims of combat (soldiers or veterans)
- emergency responders (police, firefighters, rescue workers)
- anyone experiencing the unexpected loss of a loved one


## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

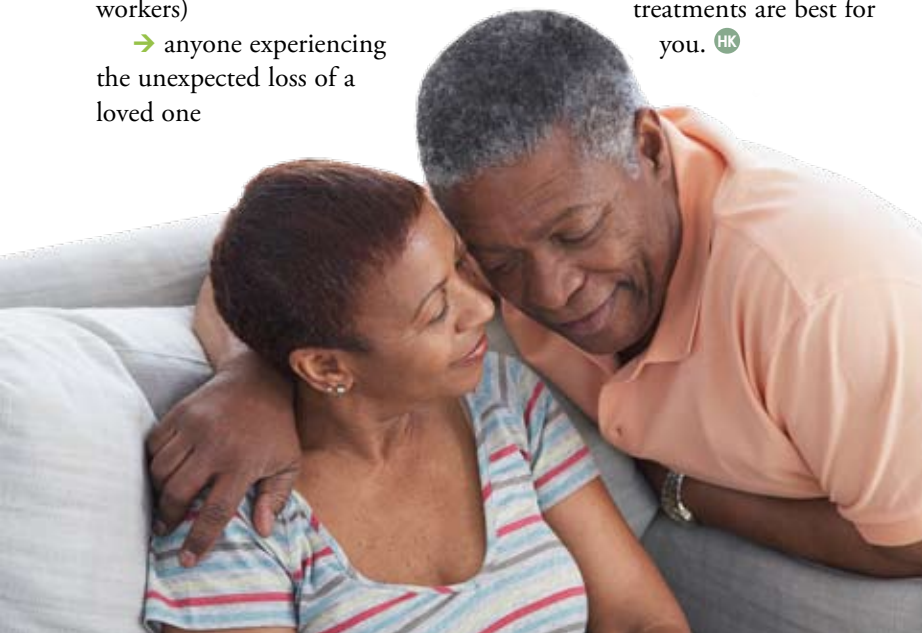
- having flashbacks, nightmares or bad memories
- trying not to think about the trauma
- avoiding people who remind you of the event
- forgetting parts of the event
- feeling numb or not connecting with others
- having trouble sleeping
- being irritable, angry or jumpy

## WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

If symptoms last for more than a month, if they're affecting your daily life or if you're having trouble handling your emotions, talk to your healthcare provider—especially if you're thinking about harming yourself or others.

## TREATMENTS

Medication, psychotherapy or both can help. You and a healthcare professional can work together to find out which treatments are best for you. 



# Health

dollars & sense

*Want to cut medical expenses without compromising your health? Try the following tips to help keep your costs in check.*


## Remember to network

**B**efore you make your next doctor's appointment, get in touch with your insurer to double-check that the doctor is still in your plan's network. Staying in-network will help you maximize your financial coverage. Going outside of the network may result in your insurance company paying only part of the bill, leaving you to foot the rest. If you go out of town and you need medical care, make sure you take time to call your insurance provider to find out the best way to get the services that will be covered.

## Be upfront about finances

**D**o you have a high insurance deductible for your health plan? Are you bogged down with other medical bills? Are you dealing with another financial problem? Don't be embarrassed to tell your healthcare providers about your situation. They may be able to recommend lower-cost treatment options or even agree to lower fees. In fact, a recent poll found that three out of five people who negotiated with their doctors received discounts. So speak up—it could save you some serious money!

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## HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND MORE

For more than 19 years, Choice Medical Group (CMG) has been committed to our mission statement to “deliver superior medical services, ensuring health and quality of life to the people within the community they serve.” For more information about CMG and our programs, call our member services liaison at **(760) 242-7777, ext. 224**.

<p>■ <b>Diabetes class for Choice members</b></p>	<p>First and third Mondays of each month</p>	<p>1:30–4 p.m.</p>	<p>Call the Health &amp; Wellness Center at <b>(760) 242-WELL</b> for more information.</p>
<p>■ <b>Nutrition class for Choice members</b></p>	<p>Third Wednesday of each month</p> <p>Third Monday of each month</p>	<p>4–8 p.m.</p> <p>8:30–11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Call the Health &amp; Wellness Center at <b>(760) 242-WELL</b> for more information.</p>
<p>■ <b>Senior flexibility class for Choice members</b></p> <p>■ <b>Senior flexibility class for nonmembers</b></p>	<p>Every Tuesday and Thursday</p> <p>Every Thursday</p>	<p>8:45–10:15 a.m.</p> <p>8:45–10:15 a.m.</p>	<p>Call <b>(760) 242-7777, ext. 228</b>, for more details. There's no charge for Choice members. A \$5 per-session fee applies to nonmembers.</p>
<p>■ <b>Clinically supervised weight management</b></p>	<p>By appointment only</p>	<p>Various</p>	<p>Call the Health &amp; Wellness Center at <b>(760) 242-WELL</b> for more information.</p>
<p>■ <b>Free physicals for Choice members</b></p>	<p>Monday–Friday, by appointment only</p>	<p>8 a.m.–5 p.m.</p>	<p>Call the Health &amp; Wellness Center at <b>(760) 242-WELL</b> for more information.</p>