

# THE STATE WELLNESS CONNECTION

STATE HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN

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## Simplify Your Life

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**Magellan Health Services**

In today's fast-paced world, it is easy to feel like you are running (literally) from one task to the next and not really taking time to enjoy anything you are doing.

If this sounds familiar, it is time to simplify your life. Here are some helpful tips to help you do just that.

None of these is rocket science and you probably have heard them

before, but the key is **DOING IT!**

Look at the list and commit to doing three of the suggestions provided.



- Think about what really matters to you. What is most important? Spending time with family? Achieving

influence?  
Expressing yourself? Et cetera? You cannot do them all. Cut out

activities that are not consistent with your core values and find time for activities that are.

- Focus on doing a few things really well. You cannot add hours to the day, but you can cut down on activities.
- Know your own limits. Realize when you are getting short with family, or co-workers. Ask yourself what you need to do to get back in a positive frame of mind.

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

**Which Health Plan is Best for Me?**

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## Immunizations for Good Health

**Kelly A Turner,**  
**United Healthcare**

Immunizations are used to protect our bodies against preventable diseases. Immunizations are usually given in the form of a shot or vaccine. When we get immunized, our bodies develop the ability to fight

off a given disease. Some immunizations are given to prevent a single disease, while others will take care of two or three diseases.

Children need immunizations to protect them from dangerous childhood diseases.

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# Simplify Your Life... (continued from page 1)

- Stop being a slave to communication tools. Do you really need three phones, a fax, pager and e-mail?
- Stop spending time to save money. Instead, spend money to save time. Do not drive across town to save a few cents on a grocery item. Hire someone to do chores you are not fond of.
- Include time for fun. Re-charging your batteries is necessary. Create balance in the activities you have to do versus those you want to do.
- Make a plan for the weekend that does not involve work.

Plan to spend more time with your family or with people who make positive contributions to your life. Stop spending time with people who are a drain on your energy or vitality.

- Plan time for a vacation every year. Some people claim “I haven’t had a vacation



- in three years” as if it was a badge of courage. It is not.
- Cut back on your children’s planned activities. If they have to use a time planner to schedule their activities, and you spend all of your time taxiing them around, they are probably too busy.
- Something has to give if you want to be serene. Simplifying your life has a lot to do with letting go of what you were told were the right things and finding out what are the right things for you.

## Traveling:

# Taking Your Medications Safely

**By: David Renstrom; Clinical Pharmacy Intern, Express Scripts**

You can never know enough about the medicines you take.

Ask your pharmacist questions about your medications.

Ask what each is treating.

Find out if you need to avoid certain foods, drinks, medicines, or activities while taking any of your medicines.

Determine if there are any side effects and ask what to do if these should occur.

If anything looks unfamiliar or different to you (different tablet color, size) question it. Sometimes these things change and the pharmacist may have forgotten to inform you.

Try to have all of your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy, so the pharmacists can get to know you and everything you’re taking (prescriptions, over-the-counter products, herbal supplements, and vitamin supplements) to prevent any harmful reactions.

Finally, never store your medicines in the bathroom (or any room with a lot of heat and/or

moisture); store them in a cool, dry place in your house.

Some medications can cause photosensitivity, which means you are more sensitive to sun exposure.



Make sure to apply a sunscreen of at least SPF-15 every 30-60 minutes when you’re outside even if the sun is not out.

If you are flying, place your medications in your carry-on luggage. Then you can access them during the flight.

Keeping your medicines in your carry-on also prevents them from being lost or exposed to extreme temperatures in the baggage compartment.

If you’re a diabetic who requires insulin shots, the American Diabetes Association suggests carrying a copy of your prescriptions to pass through airport security.

Keep a list of all medications you currently take and your physician’s and pharmacy’s numbers in your wallet or purse, in case a situation arises where you need to contact them.

Finally, take more medication than is necessary for the time you will be gone. Most insurance companies will allow a one-time override for vacations.

# Sneeze Control: Get Help for Allergies

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If you suffer from allergies, getting relief from your symptoms does not have to mean choosing either sneezing or snoozing.

Your doctor can work with you to find an allergy medication that can help you say goodbye to allergy symptoms without falling asleep.

## Know the Triggers

Seasonal allergy symptoms occur when our immune system attacks the pollen or mold spores you inhale.

People are typically allergic to pollen from trees, grass and ragweed, and mold spores that can be in the air throughout the year.

Outside, mold lives in soil as well as on compost and damp plants. Inside, mold is often in damp places, bathrooms, fabrics, carpets, wallpaper and books.

When your immune system attacks allergens in your body, it releases a chemical called histamine. Histamine makes your eyes water, airways swell and nose run.

## Choose Medications Carefully

Antihistamines block the action of histamine. Your sensitivity to an antihistamine's side effects vary. Side effects may include dry mouth, drowsiness, and stomach upset.

You may need to try several antihistamines to find the one that works for you. Ask your doctor about medicines without these side effects.

Decongestants shrink blood vessels, which lessens nasal congestion. Side effects can include a rise in blood pressure or nervousness.

## See Your Doctor

Describe all your symptoms to your doctor. If medically necessary, he or she may refer you to an allergist.

The allergist will test you to find out what you are allergic to and which treatment will work best for you.



# Benefits of Walking...and it's easy!

Candace Patterson, AVP,  
1st Medical Network

Hippocrates believed that walking was man's best medicine.

While that may be a disputable statement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it remains one of the few prescriptions that can benefit an individual AND their environment.

## Walking is good for you:

- It reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, non-insulin dependent diabetes, and colon cancer.
- It helps control osteoporosis, body weight, and stress.



- It helps senior adults increase the chance of remaining independent with regular exercise.

## Walking is good for the earth, too.

A four mile walk keeps about 15 pounds of pollutants out of the air we breathe (World Watch Institute).

Since the majority

of pollution from automobiles is generated in the first few minutes of operation, the benefit of literally "running" errands in your neighborhood is significant.

You might consider walking one way to school, to work or to shop; and using public transportation on the return trip.

Georgia along with most other States has a bicycle and pedestrian program in its Department of Transportation. The goal of these programs is to promote non-motorized transportation to reduce traffic congestion, encourage environmentally friendly mobility and connect all forms of transportation in a safe manner. You can find out more about the Georgia Initiative at [www.dot.state.ga.us](http://www.dot.state.ga.us).

If you will start walking, just once a week, instead of driving, you will help reduce air pollution.

Help us all breathe better, help yourself - go for a walk!

# Immunizations for Good Health (continued from page 1)

## Immunizations can keep your child from getting:

- Chickenpox
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis B – can lead to liver disease
- Hib – hemophilus influenza bacteria; can cause a type of meningitis
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella (German measles)
- Polio
- Tetanus (lockjaw)
- Pertussis (Whooping cough)

## Adult immunizations :

Like children, adults need to be immunized to prevent some infectious diseases. You and your health care provider should discuss what is appropriate for you.

## Tips That Can Help

- Ask your doctor which immunizations you and your children need and at what age.
- Your child needs all of the shots your doctor tells you to get. Your child's health is not

protected if he or she only gets some of the shots.

- You or your child may run a fever or have a little swelling where the shot was given. If your doctor says it's OK, give your child acetaminophen.
- Ask your doctor for a shot record.

Immunizations generally are very safe. Any reactions usually are mild. Diseases are much more dangerous than the shots.

# Feel Better, Be Happier at Work!!!

MaryJo Grabowski  
Beech Street Corporation

Do you ever feel bad after a good day's work?

Often it is not what you are dealing with in your job, but how well your work environment works for you. You can work better and more efficiently, if your work environment works for you physically and mentally.

Here are some suggestions:

**Fit in exercise during your workday** – do not sit for too long in any one position; get up and move

around the office or go outside when you can. Work to fit in "10,000 Steps a Day" for a healthier body and mind.



**Ergonomically correct posture** – check with your human resources department to correct your



area ergonomically. Sitting in the correct position with hands, arms, legs, head and eyes in correct positions will create less tension and stress. You feel better and work better for longer periods. Also, you will not be as exhausted when you go home.

**Watch what you eat** – eat healthy and drink plenty of water.

You might need your coffee in the morning but keep your caffeine levels down. Do not forget to drink your eight 8-ounce glasses of water every day.

Your attention level and alertness will be at higher levels when

you are eating less sugar and more lean protein, fruits and vegetables.

**Stay current on your health screens** – like blood glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure and flu vaccines. Taking care of your health with your primary care physician is a good place to start for your overall wellbeing.

**And the benefit is:**

Once you feel good at work, you can help promote a more positive workplace environment.

Do your job well, stay interested in your tasks, and enjoy going to work every day.

Surround yourself with supportive people who will communicate openly and can work with you.



# Which Health Plan Is Right for You?

Choosing a health plan requires thought and planning.

Costs, services provided, benefits offered and provider networks are all major factors to consider when making a health plan decision.

Although no plan will cover all of your medical

costs, there are plans that may be better suited than others for you and your family's health needs.

You cannot predict exactly what your healthcare needs will be for the coming year, but you can anticipate services you and your family might need.

By taking the time to decide what benefits and services are

important to your family and comparing the available plans, you will be able to choose a health plan that is right for you.

A Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) is a plan that provides greater benefit coverage when using a provider in its network of providers. The PPO plan may reduce benefits when using providers outside of its network.

A PPO is designed for individuals and families who want to make more of their own healthcare choices, but still want some coverage for routine medical expenses.

Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) provide 100 percent coverage for preventive health care needs after paying applicable co-

payments. There are no bills or claim forms.

An HMO plan will not allow coverage outside of its network of providers or service area (except in emergencies).

Certain services are subject to a deductible and co-insurance (i.e., inpatient and outpatient hospital facility, inpatient professional charges, etc.).

In some HMOs, you are responsible for selecting a Primary Care Physician (PCP) from a list of participating providers (see note). In those plans, you must receive care from your PCP or from a physician or facility referred by your PCP, for your expenses to be covered.

Before choosing a health plan, decide what is most important to you.

*...you can anticipate...*

Note: UnitedHealth HMO does not require you to select a PCP or obtain referrals to see specialists.

## STATE HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN

### USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

[www.dch.state.ga.us](http://www.dch.state.ga.us)

...for all State Health Benefit Plan Information

800-483-6983 or

404-233-4479

[www.healthygeorgia.com](http://www.healthygeorgia.com)

...for PPO and Indemnity Specific Information

[www.bcbsga.com](http://www.bcbsga.com)

800-464-1367

...for BlueChoice HMO Information

[www.cigna.com](http://www.cigna.com)

800-244-6224

...for Cigna HMO Information

[www.kaiserpermanente.org](http://www.kaiserpermanente.org)

800-611-1811

...for Kaiser Permanente HMO Information

[www.provider.uhc.com/gdch](http://www.provider.uhc.com/gdch)

866-527-9599

...for United HealthCare HMO Information