

Member News

VNS Health MLTC



Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones

The Public Health Emergency has ended but **COVID-19** is still here.

You need a booster if you are over 5 years old and:

- You haven't gotten a COVID-19 vaccine yet; or
- You were vaccinated against COVID-19 but your last dose was before September 2022.

Your doctor may recommend that you get additional boosters depending on your age and your health.

It's also important that you get your flu shot every year. For most people, September and October are the best times to be vaccinated against the flu.

Both vaccines are free, safe, and available and you can get them both at the same time.

Ask your doctor which shots are best for you and when you should get them.

Source: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Do You Need Urgent Care or Emergency Care?

Save time by going to urgent care for non-emergencies.

Go to your doctor or an urgent care center if you have:

- Cough or sore throat
- Fever and chills
- Sprains, bruises, or cuts
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomachaches
- Slips or falls without serious pain
- Ear and sinus infection
- Rashes and bites
- Back, joint, or muscle pain

Call 911 and go to the emergency room if you have:

- Shortness of breath
- Sudden, severe, or unusual pain anywhere in the body
- Sudden weakness, dizziness, or numbness
- Slurred speech
- Fever with rash
- Fainting
- Any life-threatening emergency

When possible, visit an in-network hospital or urgent care center. Find one at vnshealthplans.org.

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Check Your Hearing

Having trouble hearing may seem like a minor problem. But if you lose your hearing, you're more likely to be lonely, start forgetting things, or fall and hurt yourself.



Hearing loss is more common as you get older but it doesn't have to happen. Getting your ears checked regularly can catch problems before they seriously affect your health.

It's especially important to get tested if you notice that you have to:

- Ask people to repeat themselves;
- Turn up the volume; or
- Focus more while listening to conversations.

Routine hearing exams are included among your plan benefits. Ask your doctor to give you an exam or refer you to a specialist if necessary.

Sources: asha.org, aafp.org

Watch Out for Medicaid Scams

Scammers have been calling people with Medicaid and asking them to pay hundreds of dollars to keep their health insurance active.

Don't fall for it!

Sixty days before it is time for you to recertify, you will get a letter with instructions. **You may already have received this letter.**

Respond within 90 days or you will lose your Medicaid benefits and VNS Health MLTC will be required to disenroll you. If you need help recertifying, call your Care Team at 1-888-867-6555 (TTY: 711).

Do NOT pay to keep your coverage active.

Neither VNS Health nor any government agency will ever ask for money to recertify for Medicaid.



If you have received a suspicious text, phone call, or email, please contact your local Medicaid office.

Reminder

Please make sure to update your contact information with us as well as with your local Medicaid office.

How to Talk to Your Doctor about Bladder Leaks

Having leaks or accidents can be embarrassing. But it is a common problem, especially for people who:

- Are older
- Are female
- Smoke regularly
- Are overweight
- Have prostate problems, diabetes, or constipation

Many things can make it hard to control your bladder. **To help your doctor figure out what's making it tough for you, write down:**

- What you ate and drank and when
- When you went to the toilet (including during the night)

- What happened each time you went to the toilet (for example, did you suddenly feel like you needed to pee but then very little came out?)
- Whether you had any accidents and what caused them

Keep these notes for 2 or 3 days and share them with your doctor. It may feel awkward but it's best to take care of the problem before it gets worse.

Sources: nafc.org, medlineplus.gov, mayoclinic.org



Get Help Getting Healthy Food

Staying healthy is not just about avoiding germs or preventing accidents. Not having enough to eat, struggling to pay your bills, having to go out of your way to find fresh fruits or vegetables—these kinds of worries can make you sick, too.

Your Care Team can help. If you have trouble getting healthy food, for example, they can help you:

- See if you qualify to get benefits from the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help pay for food;
- Find a local food bank;
- Sign up for home-delivered meals (which may be covered by your health plan); or
- Join a senior center or adult day care where lunch is provided (if you meet the requirements).

Speak to your Care Team about the resources that may be right for you.



Any questions? Call us toll free at:
1-888-867-6555 (TTY: 711)

Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm

vnshealthplans.org

Health Plans
220 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017

Transportation Reminder

To schedule transportation, call 1-877-718-4220 (TTY: 711) at least 48 hours in advance from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday – Friday.

If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us.

VNS Health MLTC is committed to finding and stopping fraud, waste, or abuse in our health care plans.

Anonymous Reporting

VNS Health MLTC Compliance Hotline: **1-888-634-1558**.
File an online report: vnshealth.ethicsspoint.com.
Learn more: vnshealthplans.org/compliance-program.
24 hours, 7 days a week.



4-Layer Stuffed Avocado

Avocados are a good low-carb source of fiber and heart-healthy fat. Topped with black beans, salsa, cheese, and yogurt, these make a hearty snack, appetizer, or side dish. You can use your favorite jarred salsa or quickly make your own by mixing together chopped tomato, onion, and cilantro with lime juice, salt, and pepper.

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 avocados
- 4 tablespoons plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- 4 tablespoons salsa
- 4 teaspoons reduced-fat shredded cheddar or Mexican-style cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 lime, cut into 4 pieces

Directions

1. Place the beans in a small bowl. Using the back of a fork, mash until smooth.
2. Cut avocados in half and remove the pits. In the center of each avocado, layer 1 tablespoon of the beans, 1 tablespoon of Greek yogurt, and 1 tablespoon of salsa and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of cheese.
3. Sprinkle the salt evenly over the avocados. Serve each avocado half with 1 piece of lime to squeeze over the dish.

Source: *The Create-Your-Plate Diabetes Cookbook*.
Recipe Credit: Toby Amidor, MS, RD, CDN