

Member News

VNS Health Total (HMO D-SNP)



Stay Cool with Hot Weather Tips

As temperatures rise, it's important to stay comfortable and well-hydrated. Here are some tips for coping with the heat.

Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Foods like watermelon, strawberries, and cucumbers can also help keep you hydrated.

Dress for the weather: Wear loose, lightweight, and light-colored clothing to stay cool.

Go outside when temps drop: If you need to be outside, try early mornings or late evenings when it's not as hot.

Use fans and AC: If you don't have air conditioning, consider visiting an air-conditioned space like community centers or cooling centers.

Cool down: Take cool showers, baths, or sponge baths if you feel warm. In a hurry? Use wet washcloths or towels with cold water on your wrists, ankles, and neck.

Know the signs: Watch for symptoms like heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, or nausea. Seek medical help if you experience these signs.

Source: *American Geriatrics Society's Health in Aging Foundation*

Help Us Help You

From now through November, you may be asked to complete a Health Outcomes Survey (HOS), which would arrive in the mail from Press Ganey on behalf of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).



If you receive it, please complete the survey, which asks about your mental and physical health over a two-year period. We'll use the results to identify ways we can improve services for you.

In This Issue – Summer/Fall 2024

• Dig In: Explore the Benefits of Indoor Gardening

- Choosing the Right Care: PCP, Urgent Care, ER
- Understanding Depression: Know the Signs and Get Support

Dig In: Explore the Benefits of Indoor Gardening

Indoor gardening can help you feel calm and stay healthy at home. Whether you grow herbs in your kitchen or care for colorful blooms in your living room, it can be a helpful way to stay healthy indoors. Grab your watering can, and let's start growing!

One benefit is stress relief. Taking care of indoor plants creates a calming space that can help you relax.

Indoor gardening also keeps you moving. Planting, watering, and looking after your plants are ways to get some exercise. It can help you get stronger and improve your balance.

Watching your plants grow can be enjoyable. Whether they're on your kitchen windowsill or brightening up your living room, indoor gardening lets you enjoy nature's beauty right at home.



Source: *Cleveland Clinic*

Choosing the Right Care: PCP, Urgent Care, ER

Not all health problems need a visit to the hospital's emergency room. Many issues can be handled at urgent care clinics. Other times, it might be best to see your primary care physician. Consider your symptoms before deciding where to go for help. This way, you can get the right care at the right place.



Call your Primary Care Physician (PCP) for:

- Sore throat, earache, runny nose, cold
- Mild pain
- Medication refills, annual exams, screenings

Go to Urgent Care for:

- Burns, broken bones, sprains, strains, minor injuries
- Fever, flu-like symptoms
- Cannot reach your primary care provider

Go to Emergency Department or Call 911 for:

- Severe pain, serious injury
- Chest pain, difficulty breathing
- Sudden loss of vision, blurred vision

Source: *Mayo Clinic*

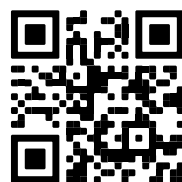
More NYC Providers to Choose From

VNS Health Medicare has expanded its network in NYC with more hospitals, facilities, and primary care providers (PCP) to serve you better.

- More hospitals and health centers, with more facilities in every borough
- Hundreds of new in-network providers, including outpatient providers, for more care options
- Increased Primary Care services citywide

For more information and to find an in-network provider, please visit vnshealthplans.org

See the flyer inside on the **importance of cancer screenings** and learn how completing these health activities can also earn you rewards.



Scan the QR code to view eligible rewards.

Understanding Depression: Know the Signs and Get Support

Depression is a common mood disorder that can affect anyone. It can change how you feel, think, and handle everyday activities. If this sounds familiar, know that help is available. Here's how to get support.

Talk openly with your Provider: Share how you're feeling with your primary care provider (PCP). They can help find the right treatment for you.

Get a check-up: Your plan covers yearly screenings for depression. Yearly check-ups can help catch signs early. To schedule, call 1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711) 7 days a week, 8 am – 8 pm (Oct. – March), and weekdays, 8 am – 8 pm (April – Sept.).

More tips to feel better:

- Talk to a professional who can help you understand your feelings.
- Doing exercises or 30 minutes of movement can improve your mood.
- Spend time with friends, family, or groups who support you to feel less lonely.

Emergency Help: If you're in crisis, call the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988. For TTY, dial 711 then 988. More information is available at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)

Source: *National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH)*



Transportation update

How to Schedule Non-Emergency Transportation:

- **Contact MAS:** Call Medical Answering Services (MAS) to arrange transportation.
- **Online:** www.medanswering.com

Phone:

- **For NYC, Long Island, Westchester, and Putnam:** 844-666-6270, Monday–Friday, 7am–6pm.
- **For upstate:** 866-932-7740, Monday–Friday, 7am–6pm.

Advance Notice: Contact MAS at least three days before your appointment with:

- Appointment details (date, time, address)
- Provider's name
- Medicaid ID number
- Any special needs (e.g., wheelchair use)

If you require non-emergency transportation by ambulance because of a medical condition, please call **Modivcare** at **1-877-718-4220 (TTY: 711)**, 7 days a week, 8 am–8 pm.

Emergency Reminder: For medical emergencies requiring an ambulance, dial 911.

Join the Member Advisory Council

The VNS Health Medicare Member Advisory Council is your chance to help us make our plan better. Plus, you can earn rewards for going to meetings with our Member Rewards program. Want to join? Contact your Care Team through your online account at vnshealthplans.org/account or call us at **1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)**.

VNS Health Health Plans complies with Federal civil rights laws. VNS Health Health Plans does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-866-783-1444 (TTY/TDD: 711). 注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-866-783-1444 (TTY/TDD: 711)。



Any questions? Check your online account anytime at vnshealthplans.org/account or call us toll free at **1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)**.

October – March
7 days a week, 8 am – 8 pm

April – September
Weekdays, 8 am – 8 pm

vnshealthplans.org

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

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First Class
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If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us

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

Anonymous Reporting

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



Asian Coleslaw



Put a spin on traditional coleslaw and enjoy a vegetable serving with your meal.

Servings: 6 | Serving Size: ½ cup

Ingredients

Cole Slaw:

- 12 ounces packaged, shredded cabbage
- 1 medium cucumber, sliced
- 1 medium bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 5 medium green onions, sliced
- 1 tsp dried basil

Dressing:

- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
- ½ tsp minced garlic
- 3 Tbsp white or cider vinegar
- ½ tsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp low sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp olive oil

Directions:

Toss together the cabbage, cucumber, bell pepper, green onions, and basil. Mix the dressing ingredients, then pour over the slaw and mix well.

Source: *American Heart Association*