

Member News

VNS Health Medicare (HMO)

Know Your Numbers: Understanding Your Blood Sugar

Knowing your blood sugar numbers can help you stay as healthy as possible, feel your best, and get the support that is right for you.

The A1C blood test shows your average blood sugar over the last 2–3 months, not just one day. This helps you and your provider decide what to do next.

Many people with prediabetes or diabetes feel fine at first. That's why testing matters. Checking your A1C can help find changes early and help lower your risk for heart, eye, or kidney conditions. Knowing your number does not mean you did something wrong. It is just information. You cannot pass or fail.



Taking care of your health is not always easy. Every step counts.

Your next step:

- Ask your provider: “What is my A1C number?”
- Write it down and ask what it means for you.

Source: *CDC; American Diabetes Association*

Get Help Finding Healthy Food

With the right support, finding and choosing healthy food is possible. We're here to help. If you have trouble getting enough to eat, we can assist you in several ways:

- Check if you qualify for 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.
- Join a senior center or adult day care where lunch is provided if you meet the requirements.



Need help finding the right support? Connect with your Care Team through your online account vnshealthplans.org/account or call us at 1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711).

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You Are Not Alone: Help Is Here When You're Ready

Many people struggle with mental health, alcohol, or drug use. Feeling sad, stressed, or overwhelmed is common. You are not alone.

Mental health concerns can affect anyone at any age. Life changes, health conditions, or loss can make these feelings harder to manage.

Even when help is available, many people do not ask for it. Feeling unsure or wanting to handle things on your own is normal. Asking for help is a strong and healthy step.

Treatment may look different for everyone. It may include talking with a therapist, meeting with your provider, joining a support group, or getting help with alcohol or drug use.

Your Care Team can help connect you to support that feels right for you. Call **1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)** to learn more about your options. You can also talk with your health care provider.

If you are feeling upset, stressed, or in crisis, call or text 988. This is a free line where you can talk to a trained counselor (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline). You can call any time.

If you are in danger or need urgent medical help, call 911 right away.



How Statins Help Your Heart

Statins lower bad cholesterol (low-density lipoproteins). This keeps arteries clear and reduces heart attack and stroke risk.

Who Needs Statins?

Doctors give statins to people with high cholesterol or other risk factors for heart disease. Ask your doctor if a statin is right for you.

Benefits of Statins:

Reduce Heart Attack and Stroke Risk: Statins lower your cholesterol. This helps lower your risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Improve Heart Health:

Statins help keep plaque stable and reduce swelling in blood vessels, which helps your heart.

Tips for Using Statins:

Take as Prescribed: Follow your provider's instructions and take your statin at the same time each day.

Monitor Your Health:

Schedule regular visits with your provider to check your cholesterol levels and tell them about any side effects.



Stay on Track with Your Medications

Taking your medications as prescribed is important for your health, especially for long-term conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol. Missing doses, even for a short time, can affect how well your medicine works.

Here are some simple tips to help you stay on track:

- Ask your pharmacy about a 100-day supply to reduce trips and avoid running out. For most medications (except specialty ones), you can get up to 100 days' supply as part of your benefit.
- See if your pharmacy offers automatic refills.
- Request refills at least one week before you run out.
- Try to keep your provider's appointments, since a visit may be needed before refills can be approved.

Small steps can help you avoid missing doses and feel more in control of your care.



Help Us Help You

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. It asks about your mental and physical health over a two-year period. We'll use the results to find ways to improve services for you.

You May Be Able to Get CGM Supplies at a Pharmacy

Checking your blood sugar regularly is an important part of managing diabetes. One tool that can help is a Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM).

For some members with diabetes who use insulin, CGM supplies may be available at a pharmacy, depending on eligibility and health plan coverage. Insulin includes medicines like NovoLog®, Humalog®, and Lantus®. Some other injectable diabetes medicines are not insulin. Talk with your health care provider to see if you can get CGM supplies at a pharmacy.

A CGM checks blood sugar throughout the day using a small sensor placed on the body. Readings are sent automatically to a reader or smartphone. Common brands include Dexcom and FreeStyle Libre.

How this can help you:

- See blood sugar numbers throughout the day
- Get readings sent automatically to a reader or phone
- Help manage diabetes every day

If you have diabetes, talk with your health care provider to ask if a CGM is right for you.





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

If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us

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

Anonymous Reporting

VNS Health Medicare Compliance Hotline:

1-888-634-1558 (TTY: 711).

File an online report: vnshealth.ethicspoint.com.

Learn more: vnshealthplans.org/compliance-program.



Tuna Tomato Pasta with Vegetables



Tuna adds protein and helps make this a heart-healthy meal. Protein helps keep you full longer. This recipe can be adapted using a microwave or hot plate.

Ingredients:

- 8 oz pasta
- 2 tbsp oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can diced or crushed tomatoes
- 1 can tuna, drained
- 1-2 cups vegetables
- Salt and pepper

Instructions:

- Cook pasta and drain.
- Heat oil and cook garlic briefly.
- Add tomatoes, tuna, and vegetables; heat through.
- Stir in pasta, season, and serve.