

Member News

VNS Health Medicare (HMO)

Start Moving Again with Help from SilverSneakers

My name is Gloria*, and I want to share my story. Last year, I could barely walk to the corner. After my knee surgery, I felt weak and was afraid to move too much. I worried that any exercise would make my pain worse.

A Care Team member told me about SilverSneakers, a fitness program available to me through my plan. I decided to try an online class from home. The instructor showed slow, easy chair exercises. I could stop anytime and move in a way that felt safe for me.

After a few weeks, I felt stronger. Standing up became easier, and I had more energy. I also enjoyed seeing friendly faces in the class. Even online, people said hello, and it made me feel less alone.



Now I join two classes each week. Some days I go to a nearby location, and other days I do it at home. I still move slowly, but I feel more confident now. SilverSneakers helped me take small steps toward better health.

Want to try it too? Visit [SilverSneakers.com](https://www.silversneakers.com) to get started. Join a class from home today.

**Model used, not actual member. No personal health information is depicted.*

Manage Your Medications by Mail

Get your medicine by mail with Birdi, our mail-order pharmacy from our partner MedImpact. You can get up to a 100-day supply (except specialty medication). Sign up at [medimpact.com](https://www.medimpact.com) or call 1-855-873-8739 (TTY: 711) Monday–Friday, 8 am–8 pm and Saturday, 9 am–5 pm.

Going Away? Get Up to 100 Days of Medicine

For most medications (except specialty ones), you can get up to 100 days' supply as part of your benefit. Just ask your pharmacy before you go.

In This Issue – Spring 2026

- 3 Foods to Support Healthy Blood Pressure

- Using Your Healthy Extras Card for Some Common Medicines
- Plan Your Future Health Care Decisions

3 Foods to Support Healthy Blood Pressure

High blood pressure affects almost half of U.S. adults, according to the CDC. When your blood pressure is high, your heart has to work harder. This can raise your risk of heart disease and stroke. Small changes to what you eat can help support your heart and keep your blood pressure in a healthier range.



1. Oats

Oats are a whole grain with fiber that is good for your heart. They may help support healthy blood pressure. You can eat oats as oatmeal, mix them into yogurt, or blend them into a smoothie.

2. Lentils

Lentils have potassium, a mineral that helps balance sodium in your body. This balance is important for healthy blood pressure. Add lentils to soups, rice dishes, or salads.

3. Tomatoes

Fresh or canned tomatoes and tomato sauces have nutrients like potassium and lycopene. These support heart health. Add tomatoes to pasta, sandwiches, soups, or salads.

Try adding one of these foods to your meals this week to support your heart.

Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

Link: www.cdc.gov/high-blood-pressure/data-research/facts-stats/index.html

Choosing the Right Care: PCP, Urgent Care, ER

Not all health concerns 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 provider. 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 Room or Call 911 for:

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

Go Online:

- Search the Provider Directory for providers or urgent care centers near you:
vnshealthplans.org/find-a-doctor/

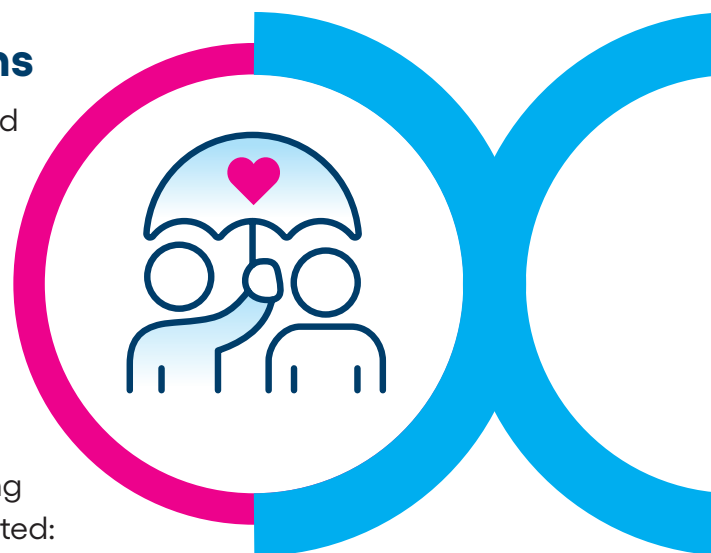
Source: *Mayo Clinic*

Plan Your Future Health Care Decisions

Advance care planning helps you prepare for unexpected situations. Having a plan ensures you get the medical care you want if you can't speak or make decisions about your care.

Advance care planning means choosing someone to make health care decisions for you if you can't. It also means thinking about the care you want or don't want, and writing it down.

By planning ahead, you can have peace of mind, knowing that your wishes will be respected. Here's how to get started:



Create a Plan

- **Think About Your Wishes:** What treatments do you want or not want?
- **Consult Your Provider:** Discuss your choices with your provider.
- **Complete Forms:** Fill out and sign the necessary documents.
- **Share Copies:** Give copies to your medical agent, family, and provider.

Communicate Your Plan

- **With Your Caregiver:** Share your wishes with those who care for you.
- **With Providers:** Make sure your provider has your advance directives.
- **With Family:** Keep your family updated on your wishes.

For more information and forms, visit VNS Health's Guide to Advance Care Planning at vnshealth.org/advanced-care-planning

Using Your Healthy Extras Card for Some Common Medicines

Some common medicines are considered over-the-counter (OTC) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). A provider may prescribe these items, but they are not part of your prescription drug benefit. You may be able to buy them in the store with your Healthy Extras card.

Examples include aspirin, pain relievers like Tylenol® (acetaminophen) or ibuprofen, vitamins, supplements, calcium tablets, cold and cough relief items, digestive aids, and some eye drops.

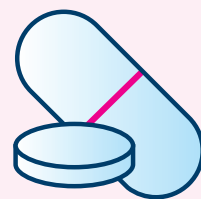
If your provider recommends one of these items, you may be able to use your Healthy Extras card at a participating store. At checkout, show your card to pay.

If you have questions, please contact your Care Team at **1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)** 7 days a week, 8 am – 8 pm

Source: www.fda.org

FDA – *Understanding Over-the-Counter Medicines*

FDA 101: *Dietary Supplements*





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

Presort
First Class
US Postage Paid
Hicksville NY
Permit 885

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.



Fruit Salad: A Simple, Healthy Treat



This fruit salad is a fresh, healthy snack that gives you vitamins and fiber to feel healthy.

Ingredients:

- 3 kiwis
- 1 pound of strawberries
- 1 mango
- 1 apple (any kind; Granny Smith works very well)
- Half a lemon or lime

Instructions:

- Rinse all the fruit with water and pat dry.
- Cut the apple into small pieces (you can keep the peel on or remove it).
- Cut the mango into small cubes. To do this, slice off the two large sides (“cheeks”), then cut the flesh into cubes while it is still in the peel and scoop it out.
- Peel the kiwis and cut them into small chunks or thin round slices.
- Remove the green tops from the strawberries and cut them into small pieces.
- Place all the cut fruit into a medium-sized mixing bowl. (Each fruit should give you about 1–1.5 cups.)
- Squeeze the lemon or lime over the fruit—use as much or as little as you like. About 2 teaspoons works well.
- Stir gently to combine. *Enjoy!*