

Use your benefits wisely and save money

MAKE YOUR HEALTH A PRIORITY IN 2012

Your health affects many areas of your life...from how much you pay for medical expenses to how much you enjoy time with your family and friends. You can make your health a priority by participating in The Prevention Plan (TPP), the **confidential*** health improvement program for CARES Health Plan Members.

TPP will collect an inventory of your health which includes an online Health Risk Appraisal and blood test. TPP health specialists will review the information you provided and the results of your blood test to complete an analysis of your top health risks. You will receive a personalized action plan to help you identify small steps you can take to begin improving your health. TPP also provides a summary of your information for you to share with your doctor if you choose.

To become a member or continue your membership, you will need to take some key steps before March 31st, 2012:

Step 1: Register on the Prevention Plan Website

Step 2: Complete your health risk appraisal online

Step 3: Schedule and complete a free blood test

And complete the following step by May 31st, 2012 to earn a \$150 gift card:

Step 4: Complete 2 action programs

Prevention Plan members have access to valuable health information and more:

- Personal health coaching
- A private website to keep your health records
- Free smoking cessation support and nicotine replacement therapy products
- Educational programs to help you achieve your health goals
- Health and fitness trackers
- Your *Personal Prevention Score* to help you track your progress and keep you motivated
- Discounts for health resources such as Massage Envy and Weight Watchers
- Prize drawings and team challenges

Commit to a healthier 2012 by participating in The Prevention Plan. Check your mail for additional details. Materials will be mailed to your home address in mid January 2012.

* TPP is confidential. Your personal health information will not be shared with your employer or CARES.

Grieving during the holidays

If you have lost a loved one, grieving can intensify during holidays. Be honest with yourself about your feelings and decide how much celebrating you can handle and what feels most comfortable for you. If you wish to continue the family traditions, do so; if you want or need to make changes that is okay too.

Helping others can be a great way to heal your own pain. Volunteer, spend time with others less fortunate, or donate to charities. Do your best to be positive—feel gratitude for the things that are going well in your life. Remind yourself that you are allowed to experience joy and happiness. If it offers you comfort, reminisce with friends and family about your loved one.

The Employee Assistance Program is available if you are having trouble coping or need someone to talk to. They can refer you for more help if you desire. If you are experiencing severe anxiety and/or depression, seek professional help immediately.

The **Employee Assistance Program** is available to all employees and members of their household regardless if they are members of CARES. The EAP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The phone number is **800-327-1393** or you can log on to www.magellanhealth.com/member.

Healthy Holiday Eating

The holidays are often a time of overindulgence, but that doesn't have to be the case. You can make some healthier choices at the holidays that won't derail your healthy eating plan AND still enjoy some of the holiday favorites!

Portion Size—Fill most of your plate with low-calorie choices and enjoy small tastes of the higher calorie goodies.

Balance—If you know you will be indulging in holiday goodies, plan the rest of your day accordingly. Make healthy, low-calorie choices for your other meals and snacks—but don't skip meals. Eat a healthy snack before you go to a party so you don't arrive famished.

Don't drink your calories—Remember that cocktails can have as many calories as a dessert! Drink only in moderation and enjoy lighter drinks like wine spritzers to cut down on empty calories.

Provide a healthy option—Contribute to the party with a healthy salad, fresh fruit or veggies, a light dessert or a low-calorie dip.

Keep Moving—This is not the time to decrease your exercise efforts! Not only will exercising help keep off the pounds, but it also fights holiday stress!

Source: American Dietetic Association www.eatright.org

CARES *CommonSense* is a publication of Collegiate Association Resource of the Southwest, Inc.

The information in CARES *CommonSense* is intended to complement the advice of your health care provider and not to replace it. Before making any changes in your medication, diet or exercise, consult with your health care professional.

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