

For Better Health

For Paramount Elite Members

Need Help
With Medical
Expenses? See
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PARAMOUNT
Elite[™]

Member of
 **PROMEDICA**
HEALTH SYSTEM

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Summer 2009

Help a Loved One **Stop Smoking**

Has your family member or friend decided it's time to throw out the cigarettes and toss the ashtrays? Quitting smoking is one of the toughest things they can go through. They'll have to hang in there and fight the cravings—and that's hard work. There are a few things you can do to help.

Just Be There

It's tempting to give advice, but it's better to simply ask how you can help your loved one. Let your friend know that you're there, and he or she can call you for support and encouragement.

Realize, too, that the person may be grumpy and cranky, especially during the first two weeks. Don't take it personally—it's the nicotine withdrawal talking.

People often need distractions to overcome the urge to smoke, so one of the best ways to help is to make time to do things together. For example, play a game, go to a movie, meet for lunch, or take walks.

Stay Positive

Encouraging words are important. Praise your loved one for sticking

with his or plan and celebrate milestones. If he or she breaks down and has a puff or two at some point, don't make a big deal out of it—it's not uncommon. Instead, give kudos for the days he or she went without smoking.

Most people try to quit five to seven times before they kick the habit for good. So if your family member or friend relapses, try not to make him or her feel guilty. Stay supportive, give him or her credit for having made the effort, and encourage your loved one to try again when he or she is ready.

Spread the Word About Quit Line

Sometimes family members and friends need extra help quitting. Tell them to call **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)**. By calling, smokers can enroll in Quit Line cessation counseling and receive a Quit Kit with helpful tips on quitting smoking and more. They'll also be eligible to receive up to eight weeks of **FREE** nicotine-replacement therapy.

Don't Miss Our Big Band Dance Parties!

Be prepared to **swing the night away** at Paramount Elite's Big Band Dance Parties! Mark your calendar for:

Fall Fiesta
September 25, 2009

Jingle Bell Ball
December 4, 2009

Dance parties are held from 7 to 11 p.m., at Stranahan Great Hall at 4645 Heathersdowns Blvd., Toledo, Ohio.



Jeff McDonald's Swingmania Orchestra will provide the music. There will also be door prizes, free snacks, and a cash bar. Dance parties are **FREE to Paramount Elite members** who bring their ID card and \$5 for guests.

Questions? Call 1-888-891-0707.

Need Help With Medical Expenses?

You may qualify for **FREE** education and assistance with medical expenses through Medicare Savings Programs. To find out, call Cynthia Hodge at **1-419-887-2423** or email cynthia.hodge@promedica.org.





Spread the Word: Mammograms Save Lives

Mammograms are one of the best tools available for catching breast cancer early—when it’s most treatable. According to the Centers for Disease Control, screening mammograms can reduce breast cancer deaths by approximately 20 to 35 percent in women 50 to 69 years of age.

Help Reverse the Decline

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) recommends that women ages 40 and older have mammograms every one to two years. And for many years, women were heeding this advice. According to the American Cancer Society, the percentage of U.S. women ages 40 and older who were getting regular mammograms grew steadily between 1987 and 2000.


Unfortunately, studies show that the number of women who get

mammograms is on the decline. And researchers with the NCI have found that this is a national trend. One thing is clear: To win the battle against breast cancer, this trend needs to change.

The fact is, mammography does work. So follow your doctor’s advice about getting regular screenings.

More Ways to Detect Cancer

In addition to mammography, you should have a clinical breast exam performed by your doctor every year. You also may choose to do a breast self exam (BSE). Your doctor can show you how to perform one. Doing a BSE regularly can help you get to know how your breasts normally look and feel. If you notice any changes, talk with your doctor right away.

 **Test Your Mammogram IQ** There’s a lot to know about mammograms. Test your knowledge with a quiz. Go to www.paramounthealthcare.com and click on “Better Health for Life,” “Interactive Tools,” “Quizzes,” and then “Mammogram Quiz.”



Get Fit, Thanks to Your Dog

Your dog offers you companionship, loyalty, unconditional love—and, research shows, motivation to exercise.

A study in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* of more than 2,500 older adults compared walking habits of dog owners and nonowners.

Dog owners were seven times likelier than nonowners to walk for two-and-a-half hours or more a week. That’s the exercise goal experts advise for older adults. At the end of the study, the dog owners were twice as likely to have kept up their good walking habits.

Don’t have a dog to walk? You can offer to walk a neighbor’s dog or volunteer at a local humane society. To find a dog who needs a home, go to www.petfinder.com.



A Shot at Good Health



Hepatitis B, human papillomavirus, shingles, and influenza are just a handful of the diseases that vaccines can prevent. Yet a recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that few adults are taking advantage of these immunizations.

Among adults ages 60 and older, only about 2 percent have been immunized against shingles, a painful skin rash that can lead to complications including blindness, pneumonia, and hearing problems. The CDC survey does show some welcome news: Vaccination rates for the influenza (flu) vaccine are higher than for any other adult vaccine—69 percent of those ages 65 and older received an influenza shot during the previous flu season.

Vaccinations are one of the safest and most effective ways to prevent disease, for both children and adults. Here is a closer look at some shots you may need.

Hepatitis A. The hepatitis A vaccine protects against liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A is still widespread in many parts of the world and is the most common vaccine-preventable disease acquired by travelers. If you travel to countries where hepatitis A is common, you should be vaccinated. You should also get a shot if you have chronic liver disease or a blood-clotting disorder, such as hemophilia. Men who have sex with men and illegal drug users are also at high

risk for hepatitis A and should get the shot, too.

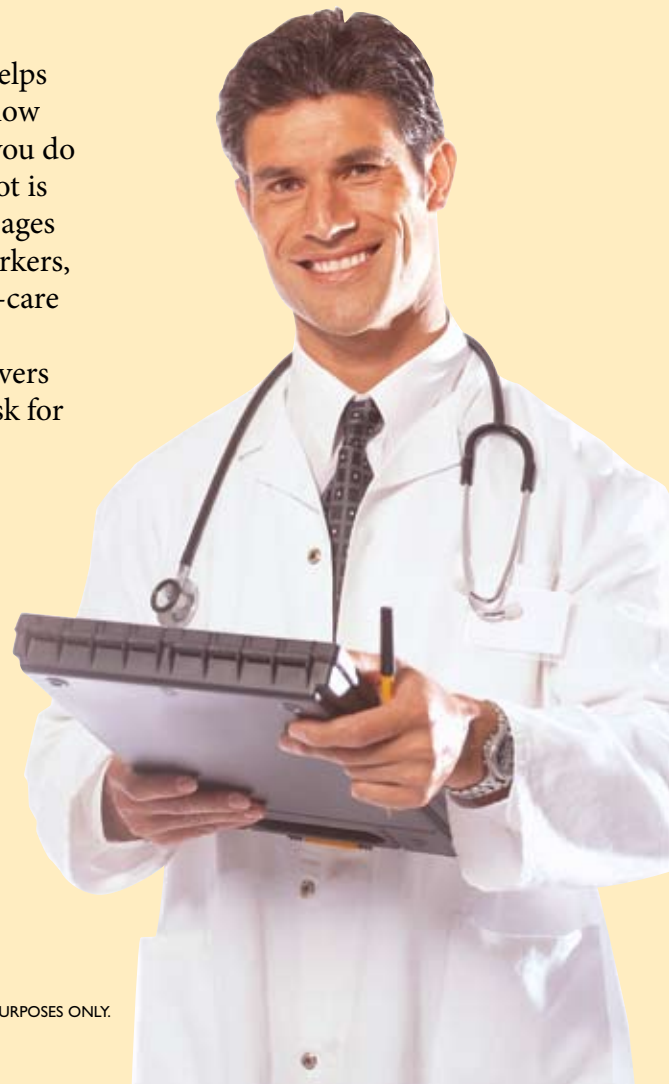
Hepatitis B. The hepatitis B vaccine prevents hepatitis B, a serious liver disease, which can lead to liver cirrhosis and liver cancer. A series of three hepatitis B vaccines is recommended for health care workers, those who live with someone who has hepatitis B, individuals traveling to countries where hepatitis B is prevalent, those who have had more than one sexual partner in the past six months, those who have been diagnosed with another sexually transmitted disease, and those who use injectable drugs.

Influenza. The flu vaccine helps prevent the flu and lessens how serious its symptoms are if you do get the flu. An annual flu shot is recommended for all adults ages 50 and older, health care workers, those who live in long-term-care facilities, those with certain chronic illnesses, and caregivers of people who are at high risk for the flu.

Measles-mumps-rubella (MMR). The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps, and rubella, which can all cause serious complications in adults. People born after 1956 should receive at least one dose of MMR. A second dose may be necessary.

Pneumococcal (PCV). The pneumococcal vaccine protects against a bacteria that can cause pneumonia. All adults ages 65 and older and those with certain chronic illnesses, including heart, kidney, liver, or lung disease, should receive a one-time shot.


Tetanus-diphtheria (Td) or tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap). The Td vaccine protects against tetanus and diphtheria, two potentially deadly illnesses. The Tdap vaccine also prevents whooping cough, a dangerous infectious disease that has seen a resurgence in the U.S.

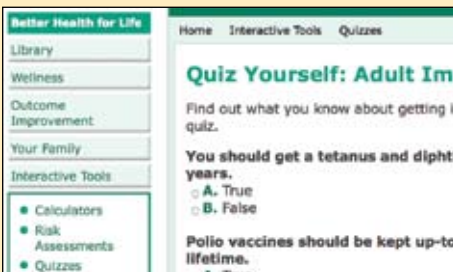


during the past 10 years. Because immunity from childhood pertussis vaccination wears off, the Tdap booster vaccine was approved for use in 2005. All adults should receive a Td booster once every 10 years.

Varicella. The varicella vaccine protects against chickenpox. Although you may think of chickenpox as a mild illness, it can be deadly—and the symptoms are often more serious in adults. All adults who haven't previously been diagnosed with chickenpox or herpes zoster or who have not been previously immunized against chickenpox should get this shot.

Zoster. A new vaccine for herpes zoster (shingles) was approved in 2006. The vaccine prevents shingles in about 50 percent of those who are vaccinated and can lessen the severe pain associated with a complication of shingles. All people ages 60 and older should receive a single dose of herpes zoster vaccine.

 **See How Much You Know**
You may know a lot about adult immunizations, but do you know enough? Test yourself at www.paramounthealthcare.com. Click on “Better Health for Life,” “Interactive Tools,” “Quizzes,” and then “Adult Immunizations Quiz.”



Q&A: Relief for Incontinence

Embarrassed to ask about urinary leakage? You don't have to be. It's a common condition, and here are some things you should know about it.

What causes incontinence in women?

Childbirth can weaken pelvic muscles, which contributes to stress incontinence. Women who have stress incontinence involuntarily lose urine during physical exertion. Stress incontinence also develops or worsens after menopause, when estrogen levels are low. The hormone estrogen helps keep pelvic muscles toned.

Another type of urinary leakage, called urge incontinence, is not related to weak pelvic muscles at all. In fact, it is the result of bladder muscles that are too active. Urge incontinence might be caused by nerve damage or an injury. Women who have urge incontinence get sudden urges to urinate. This can happen when they hear running water or even while they are sleeping.

Is surgery the only treatment for incontinence?

Many women get significant relief from the following behavioral methods:

- Bladder training techniques, such as urinating on a set schedule
- Pelvic muscle exercises, which involve tightening and relaxing

pelvic muscles for 10 seconds at a time, 30 to 80 times a day

- Weight reduction, if necessary

A woman's doctor may suggest other therapies, including medication, surgery, or supportive devices.

Can men suffer from incontinence?

Yes. Although they have similar symptoms, the cause is different. For men, the problem begins with the prostate gland. As men age, the prostate can enlarge and press on the bladder, squeezing the urethra and inhibiting the passage of urine. It's common for men with this problem to retain urine in the bladder even after they urinate. The residual urine can cause pressure that damages the kidneys.

Behavioral methods generally do not provide relief for men's incontinence. Men who suffer from the condition should see their doctor to learn about treatment.

Women: Explore Your Options

Looking for more information about treating incontinence? Visit www.paramounthealthcare.org, click on “Better Health for Life,” and type “Incontinence” in the search box.



Tips to Manage Your Heart Medications



How many different medicines do you take? Many people with a heart condition take several. You might sometimes puzzle over which medicine to take when, how much to take, or what it's for.

To prevent missed or double doses, side effects, and drug interactions, keep your medications organized. Try following these tips to avoid problems.

- 1. Write down the basics about each medicine.** Here's what to record: medicine name (generic and brand name), what you use it for, when to take it, how much to take, how to take it, and how long to take it. Make sure you note whether to avoid mixing the medicine with any others or with any foods or drinks.
- 2. Tell your doctors which medicines you take.** This includes all prescriptions and any over-the-

counter drugs, nutritional supplements, herbs, and other remedies. Keep an up-to-date list of everything you take. Bring it whenever you see your doctor. Ask whether any of the items can cause problems when combined.

- 3. Use a weekly pillbox.** These boxes have seven compartments, one for each day of the week. Some have additional slots for different times of day, such as morning, midday, and bedtime. If you stock your pillbox at the beginning of the week, then all week long it's easy to tell whether you've taken a dose instead of trying to remember. You can also link taking your medicine with another routine activity, such as brushing your teeth, so you get used to taking it regularly.
- 4. Be alert for side effects.** Ask your doctor what side effects may occur with each of your medi-

cines and learn what you can do to avoid them. Find out when to report any side effects to your doctor. He or she may be able to adjust your dose or schedule, or substitute another drug, if side effects bother you.



Find Drug Info Online

Our online drug reference tool lets you find out more about the medicines you take. Go to www.paramounthealthcare.com and click on "Better Health for Life," "Library," and then "Drug Reference."



Gardening Is Good for Your Heart

Do you prefer digging in the dirt to sweating on a treadmill? Well here's some good news: Many of the common tasks you perform to keep your yard neat are also good exercise.

Moderate-intensity exercise is good for your heart. Health experts recommend 30 minutes of such activity on most days of the week. If you're already active, adding 20 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise three days a week may be even better for your heart.

These tasks use the same amount of energy as walking at a moderate pace:

- Raking and bagging leaves
- Digging or hoeing
- Weeding while standing and bending

- Trimming and hauling branches from shrubs or trees
- Mowing the lawn with a power mower

Yardwork that counts as vigorous exercise includes the following:

- Carrying heavy loads, such as sacks of compost
- Climbing and trimming trees
- Mowing the lawn with a push mower

So, why not consider getting out your gardening tools and getting a workout? The result may be a fabulous yard and a healthy heart.



Osteoporosis:

Not for Women Only

If you think only women need worry about osteoporosis, this may surprise you: Almost one-third of hip fractures due to osteoporosis occur in men.

Who Gets It

Estrogen and testosterone are important for maintaining strong bones. Both men and women lose bone density as they get older and their hormones decrease. Women's estrogen levels experience a sharp dip at menopause. For men, the levels of estrogen and testosterone lessen gradually as they age. By age 65 or 70, men and women lose bone mass at about the same rate.


Men—as well as women—are more likely to get osteoporosis if they:

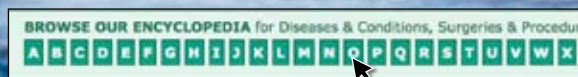
- Have a family history of it
- Are Caucasian or Asian
- Are thin and have small body frames
- Drink alcohol excessively
- Use glucocorticoid medicines—which treat asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and other conditions—for several years
- Have gastrointestinal disorders, hyperthyroidism, a poor diet, or an inactive lifestyle

Men are at even more risk if they have low testosterone levels or have a disorder called hypercalciuria, which prevents calcium from building bone. Hypercalciuria is more than twice as common in men than in women.

Prevention Tips

- Don't smoke. Cigarettes may damage bone directly or prevent your body from absorbing bone-building calcium and other nutrients.
- Watch your alcohol intake. Having more than two drinks a day can damage bone over time, in men of all ages. If you think you drink excessively, get help.
- Work out regularly. Weight-bearing exercise is vital for healthy bones. Walking, stair-climbing, and weight lifting are all good choices.

 **Living with Osteoporosis?** If you have osteoporosis, learn how to strengthen your bones and more at www.paramounthealthcare.com. Click on “Better Health for Life,” “O” in the encyclopedia at the top, and then “Osteoporosis.”



A Lifesaving Screening: How Much Do You Know?

Simple screenings are the key to preventing diseases such as colorectal cancer. How much do you know about detecting the signs of the second leading cause of cancer deaths among Americans?

Myth or Fact?

1. Only people who smoke, have a family history of colorectal cancer, or are overweight need to be screened at all.
2. There's no single “right” way to be screened for colorectal cancer.
3. You may need to start testing before age 50 if you have inflammatory bowel disease.

Check Your Answers

1. **Myth.** All men and women should start colorectal screening by age 50.
2. **Fact.** There are choices, so talk with your doctor about what's best for you. One option is an annual test to check for blood in the stool. Others include:
 - Every five years: a flexible sigmoidoscopy, in which the doctor places a lighted tube into the rectum to check the lower part of the colon
 - Every five years: a barium enema, a type of X-ray of the digestive system
 - Every 10 years: a colonoscopy, in which a doctor inserts a tube into the rectum to view the colon
3. **Fact.** Screening before age 50 also might be wise if you or a close relative has had polyps or cancer.

Member Services

Monday–Friday
8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

In Ohio:
1-419-887-2525
1-800-462-3589
TTY 1-888-740-5670

In Michigan:
1-734-529-7800
1-888-241-5604
TTY 1-888-740-5670

¿Necesita
un interprete?
1-419-887-2525

Please send suggestions
for the newsletter to
mindy.cross@promedica.org.

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Paramount Elite
Paramount Care Inc
P.O. Box 928
Toledo, OH 43697-0928

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Personal Call Center Representatives

As part of our Paramount Perks program, Paramount Health Care would like to offer you a Personal Call Center Representative to answer any claims, benefits, or general questions about your health plan.

If you would like a Personal Call Center Representative, you can enroll in one of two ways:

1) Complete the form online at www.paramounthealthcare.com/PCCR

OR

2) Complete the form below and mail it to:

Paramount Health Care
1901 Indian Wood Circle
Maumee, OH 43537

Once Paramount receives your information, you will be registered and receive a phone call from your assigned representative. At that time, you will be given the necessary information regarding how to make calls to your representative.

We hope you find the Paramount Perks services valuable. Be sure to watch your newsletters for additional services in the coming months. For more information, please visit our Web site, www.paramounthealthcare.com, and click on the Paramount Perks button. For more information about Paramount Perks, please call Member Services at:

Phone: **1-419-887-2525**
Toll-free: **1-800-462-3589**

TTY: **1-419-887-2526**
TTY toll-free: **1-888-740-5670**

ALL MODELS USED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.



Personal Call Center Representative Request Form

Member Name _____

Member ID No. _____ How Many on Contract _____

Daytime Phone No. _____

Comments _____

