



Enrollee Newsletter

Summer is for wellness and earning gift cards!

Yearly screenings and shots are important to keep you and your family healthy. So we offer gift cards for various amounts to enrollees who get their screenings (tests) and immunizations (shots) each year.

Without screenings, you may not know of health issues that could get worse without treatment. Our Outreach Department can assist you and your family with scheduling any of the following appointments:

- Yearly physicals
- Well-child visits
- Lead testing
- Mammograms
- Pap smears
- Diabetic testing

Once you have completed one or more of the services listed above, you could be eligible to receive a gift card. We offer the following rewards just for going to wellness doctor appointments:

- Up to \$75 for completing your baby's six well-child visits before 15 months of age.
- \$10 for getting your child's lead screening by 12 months of age and \$10 for their second screening by age 5.
- \$25 for your first prenatal care visit during the first three months of pregnancy.
- \$25 for your first postpartum visit within 21 to 56 days of delivery.
- Up to \$50 for completing your well-child visits including dental exam (ages 3 to 11).
- \$25 for completing your adolescent physical (ages 12 to 21).
- \$25 for completing your mammogram (50 years and older).
- Up to \$75 for completing diabetic testing and lowering A1C to below 8 by September 30, 2021.

To learn more call our Outreach Department at **855-798-4244 (select option 1, then 2)**.

Exercise your way to a healthy summer.

Try to get at least 75 minutes of aerobic activity each week. Spread out your exercise during the week. Greater amounts of exercise provide greater health benefits like:

- Giving you energy and keeping you healthy.
- Making your bones and muscles strong.
- Making your heart strong and healthy.
- Keeping you from gaining weight.
- Helping you feel good about yourself.

Exercise should be simple at first. There are so many ways to exercise and have fun with your family, such as walking, jogging, riding a bike, playing with pets, swimming, and so many more!



All new or soon-to-be moms, you could earn \$50 in gift cards.

Did you know that MedStar Family Choice-DC has a postpartum program that can help meet all your medical needs? You may also qualify to receive \$50 in gift cards just for following District appointment guidelines.

It is important that you receive your postpartum exam 21 to 56 days after you deliver your baby. If you have a C-section birth, your doctor may want to see you in the office within two weeks for a suture check in addition to your postpartum exam.

We will provide you with transportation to and from your visit and you will receive a gift card for going to your exam. You can also earn additional gift cards for going to your well-child visits. If you have any questions or would like assistance with scheduling your appointment, please call the Outreach Department at **855-798-4244 (select option 1, then 2)**.



Keep your children up to date on vaccinations.

Vaccines will protect your children from serious illnesses. Reach out to your child's doctor to schedule appointments for any missing vaccinations. You can see the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Immunization Schedules at [CDC.gov/Vaccines/Schedules/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/Vaccines/Schedules/index.html).

The Outreach Department can help you with:

- Scheduling an appointment.
- Arranging transportation to an appointment.
- Answering questions about your benefits.

Call the Outreach Department, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., at **855-798-4244 (select option 1, then 2)**.

Did you or your grown "child" just turn 18?

If so, it may be time for a new doctor. As an adult, your healthcare needs are changing. If you or your grown child are currently seeing a pediatrician, you may want to find a primary care provider (doctor). Types of adult primary care provider offices include: Family Practice, General Practice, and Internal Medicine.

Ask your doctor if you have questions about what type of provider to see. MedStar Family Choice-DC can also help you find a new doctor in your area. If you would like help, please call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**.

Learn about COVID-19 vaccinations.

We care about your health and want you to have as much information as possible about the vaccine. The District has information online about COVID-19. [Coronavirus.DC.gov](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov) is the District's homepage for COVID-19. [Coronavirus.DC.gov/VaccinateDC](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov/VaccinateDC) enables you to find a vaccination clinic near you. It offers information on walk-up, no appointment vaccination sites. These walk-up sites are for the first dose. When you receive your first dose, you will make an appointment to get your second dose. If you do not have access to the internet or are not able to leave your home, call **855-363-0333** for assistance.

You're invited to our virtual events.

Medstar Family Choice-DC offers a variety of monthly virtual events for you and your family.

New Enrollee Orientations:

Learn more about your health plan services, benefits, and rights.

Enrollee Advisory Committee:

Share your thoughts about our healthcare services. Your opinion can help make MedStar Family Choice-DC better for you and all enrollees.

Health Education Classes:

- Maternity Mondays - For all expectant and new mothers
 - Learn about the best safe sleep practices for your baby.
 - Attend and get a free Cribette.
- Health Forums
 - Learn about topics relating to women's health, men's health, and more from a physician's panel.

Exercise and Cooking Classes:

- Diabetes Management & Cooking Classes
 - Receive diabetes education from registered instructors.
 - Manage A1c levels with healthy tips and resources.
 - Receive fresh produce for the virtual cooking class.
 - Learn to cook healthy, great-tasting meals from a professional chef.
- Foodie Fridays with Giant Nutritionist
 - Manage your weight and eat healthy on a budget.
- Wellness Wednesdays
 - Join our fitness instructors and learn how to reduce stress through yoga, mindfulness, cycling and more.

For more information about these classes call the Outreach Department at **855-798-4244 (select 1, and then 2)**.

How to have better talks with your doctor.

You play a very important part in your health care. Good communication with your doctor is key. Here are some things that can help you make the most of your doctor visits:

- Write your questions down before your visit.
- Listen carefully to the advice your doctor gives you.
- Make sure you follow your doctor's instructions. Get the lab work or other tests that your doctor asks you to get.
- Make certain your blood pressure is taken at every doctor visit. This includes your primary care doctor and specialist appointments.
- If you had a hospital admission or an emergency room visit, tell your doctor. All doctors involved in your care need to know.
- Your primary care doctor should receive information about your hospital stay, known as a discharge summary. The discharge summary provides detailed information about your care in the hospital. It is very important that you schedule a follow-up visit with your doctor regarding any hospital stay. Ask your primary care doctor if he or she has received a copy of the hospital discharge summary. If not, suggest that your primary care doctor request a copy from the hospital, as it is very important in managing your health care.



Transportation is provided to DC Healthcare Alliance enrollees.

We now offer transportation services, through Access2Care, for both DC Healthy Families and DC Healthcare Alliance. If you need transportation for a medical appointment, including COVID-19 vaccinations, it can be scheduled 24/7 by calling **866-201-9974**. Transportation must be scheduled at least three business days before a regular appointment. It must be scheduled at least one business day before EPSDT or urgent visits.

Our provider locations are safe and ready to serve you.

Many of us have experienced fear and anxiety about the COVID-19 pandemic when seeking medical care. MedStar Family Choice-DC wants to make sure you don't delay your medical needs. Early detection and treatment are important for good health. Your health and safety are always top priorities. Our focus is on protecting you, while providing the care you need in the most appropriate and safe setting. Video and telephone appointments may be options for many medical needs. But in some cases, an in-person visit may be best. We want to assure you that if you need an in-person visit, you will be protected.

When you come to any MedStar Family Choice-DC location, here's what you can expect:

- **Safe providers:** Our doctors, nurses, and other healthcare staff use the proper safety gear to protect themselves and you to keep everyone healthy.
- **Masking:** All patients and visitors must wear a mask during their visit, regardless of symptoms. We will provide one for you, if needed.

- **Cleaning and disinfecting:** We thoroughly sanitize and disinfect all patient exam, waiting, and procedure rooms multiple times each day.
- **Hand sanitizing:** Hand sanitizer dispensing stations are available throughout every facility.
- **Staggered appointments:** We are carefully managing our schedules to minimize the number of people coming in at the same time.
- **Screening patients and visitors:** We are screening all patients and approved visitors for symptoms at every hospital, medical office, and physical therapy location.
- **Physical distancing:** While inside our facilities, we'll help you practice physical distancing with floor markers, signage, and reconfigured waiting areas. You will never feel socially distant.

We care about you and your family. If you have questions or need help scheduling a visit, please call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**.

Patient safety is vital to your health care.

Patient safety is one of the nation's biggest healthcare challenges. There are things you can do to help yourself get safer health care. Some are as simple as making sure that when you are in the hospital, your wristband has the right name on it. You have probably seen your chart at your doctor's office. In fact, you may have charts at several doctors' offices. If you've been in the hospital, you have a chart there too. To keep track of all this information, it is a good idea to keep your own records. What kind of information should you put in a personal health record?

You could start with:

- Your name, birth date, blood type, and emergency contact.
- The date of your last physical.
- The dates and results of tests and screenings.
- Major illnesses and surgeries, and the dates they took place.
- A list of your medicines, dosages, and how long you have taken them.
- A list of any allergies you may have.
- A list of chronic diseases you may have.
- The history of illnesses in your family.

Also be sure to:

- Choose a doctor you feel comfortable talking to. Ask questions if you have doubts or concerns, and make sure you understand the answers. Take a relative or friend with you to help you ask questions and understand the answers.
- Give your doctor and pharmacist a list of all the medicines that you take, including non-prescription medicines. Tell them about any drug allergies you have. Ask about side effects and what to avoid while taking the medicine. Read the label when you get your medicine, including all warnings.



Understanding tick bites and Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is an infection spread by the bite of ticks. Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tickborne infection in the United States. Untreated Lyme disease can produce a wide range of symptoms. These symptoms include fever, severe headaches, fatigue, rash, facial paralysis, muscle pain, and arthritis. While preventive measures against ticks should be taken year-round, ticks are most active in the warmer months. Extra caution should be taken April through September.

Here are some tips to avoid tick bites:

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.
- Use insect repellent with 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin (parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes, and mouth).

The Environmental Protection Agency has a website to help you find the right insect repellent for your family at [EPA.gov/Insect-Repellents](https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents).

Use the following steps to remove ticks from you, your children, or your pets:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure to remove tick. Avoid twisting or jerking.
- Clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
- Don't use nail polish, petroleum jelly, or a hot match to make the tick detach.
- If tick mouthparts remain in the skin, leave them alone. In most cases, they will fall out in a few days.

Visit [CDC.gov/Ticks](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks) to learn more about how to prevent tick bites, remove ticks, and check for signs and symptoms of tickborne illnesses.



What is Utilization Management (UM)?

To ensure enrollees get needed health care, MedStar Family Choice-DC (MFC-DC) follows a basic review process called Utilization Review. The process starts when an enrollee's doctor sends a request for medical services to the MFC-DC Utilization Management Department, usually by fax. Our experienced clinical staff review all requests and make decisions based on national criteria (standards), such as InterQual and Medicaid guidelines. Enrollee needs that do not meet normal criteria are reviewed by our physicians to see if they are medically necessary. UM decisions are only based on whether the service is medically needed and is a covered benefit.

Our UM staff, providers, or anyone contracted with us do not receive any financial rewards for issuing denials of coverage and care. In addition, they do not receive any financial rewards for encouraging decisions that result in less use of services. Requests are considered complete when MFC-DC receives all the necessary medical information. The final decision cannot take longer than 14 days, whether or not all clinical information has been received.

We will make a decision, or ask for additional clinical information for medication requests within 24 hours of receiving the request. The final decision will not take longer than 72 hours for urgent requests or 14 days for standard (routine) requests. If MFC-DC denies the request, the provider and the enrollee will receive a copy of the denial letter. The letter will list instructions on how to appeal the decision, if necessary.

Know the dangers of opioids and other pain medicines.

Pain medicines may not take away all of your pain. The goal is to control your pain while you heal. It is normal to still feel pain when moving around while you are getting better.

What are opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs used to reduce pain. Prescription opioids are often prescribed long-term to treat severe pain for medical conditions such as cancer and other serious conditions. This article is not about taking opioids chronically for these serious conditions. It is about taking these medications for an acute pain problem from having surgery or a serious injury.

What are the side effects of overuse or addiction?

- Tolerance (may need to take more of the medication to achieve the same pain relief)
- Physical dependence (may have symptoms of withdrawal when the medication is stopped)
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Sleepiness
- Dizziness
- Itching and sweating

How much medicine should I take?

Follow the directions on the medication bottle. It is not safe to take more than what your doctor prescribed for you. If the instructions say to take every four hours as needed, this means that dosage is the most you should take every four hours. You shouldn't take the medicine every four hours if you don't need it. Taking less is okay if the lower dose still controls the pain. As you heal, you should be taking less as time goes on. These medicines can have serious side effects and can cause you to become addicted. Taking any medicine in a bigger amount (dose) or more often could cause you to overdose or die. You may take your opioid medicines for moderate to severe pain. You can try other things, like using heat or ice, which may also help your pain. Talk to your doctor about what will work best for you. If you feel like your pain is not at a comfortable level, or is getting worse, call your doctor.

Where should I keep my medicines?

Keep these medicines in a safe and secure place, away from other people in your family, children, visitors, and pets. Do not let other people take or use your medicines. This is very unsafe and against the law.

How do I stay safe while taking these medicines?

- Do not drive, operate machinery, or drink alcohol while taking opioid pain medicines.
- Check with your doctor before taking any other medicines that you did not talk about at discharge.
- Tell a friend or family member that you are taking these medicines and to call 911 if they are worried that you are sleepier than normal, and it is hard to wake you up.
- Your doctor may give you naloxone (Narcan®), which is a medicine that can quickly reverse an overdose of opioid pain medicines. Tell a friend or family member that you have this and to be ready to give it to you after calling 911.

What should I do with my opioid medicines after I stop using them?

If you are no longer using your opioid medicines, get rid of any that is leftover. Here are safe ways to do this:

- Find your local drug take-back program or your pharmacy mail-back program.
- Go to [FDA.gov/Drugs/Safe-Disposal-Medicines/Disposal-Unused-Medicines-What-You-Should-Know](https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/Safe-Disposal-Medicines/Disposal-Unused-Medicines-What-You-Should-Know) and follow the instructions from the FDA.

For more information on opioids, go to [CDC.gov/DrugOverdose/Opioids](https://www.cdc.gov/DrugOverdose/Opioids).



It's okay to ask the pharmacy.

Have you ever tried to fill a prescription only to be told that the medication is not covered by your insurance? If so, did the pharmacy offer to contact your doctor's office or insurance to resolve the issue? Many people will leave the pharmacy without their needed prescription due to these challenges. But did you know it's okay to ask the pharmacy:

- Why is the medication not covered?
- What would be the next steps to discuss with my provider?
- Is there another medication that may be used to treat my condition?

When a prescription is not covered, the pharmacy gets a code explaining why the medication is not covered. The code includes the insurance plan phone number to call for more help. Here are some common reasons why a prescription may not be covered:

- The medication is not on the formulary (a list of covered medications).
- The medication needs approval first (also known as prior authorization).
- It may be too soon to fill the medication if it is a refill.

No matter the reason, it's okay to ask the pharmacy why the prescription was not covered and what could be done to fix the issue. MedStar Family Choice-DC wants you to get the medical care and medications you need to keep you healthy. If, after asking the pharmacy, you are not clear on what to do next, please call us at **855-798-4244 (select option 1, then 3)**, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



Call the Nurse Advice Line 24/7.

Feeling sick or need medical advice? A registered nurse is just a phone call away. The Nurse Advice Line at **855-798-3540**, is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

You can call and speak with a registered nurse to help you decide what to do or where to go based on your symptoms. The nurse can provide you with nearby urgent care locations, if needed. Emergency care is for when you need care right away for a serious, unexpected injury, or illness. Non-emergency care can take longer in an Emergency Room.



If you do not speak and/or read English, please call **888-404-3549** between 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. A representative will assist you.

Si no habla o lee inglés, llame al **888-404-3549** entre las 8:00 a.m. y las 5:30 p.m. Un representante se complacerá en asistirle.

Nếu bạn không nói và/hoặc đọc tiếng Anh, xin gọi **888-404-3549** từ 8 giờ 00 sáng đến 5 giờ 30 chiều. Sẽ có người đại diện giúp bạn.

‘영어로 대화를 못하시거나 영어를 읽지 못하는 경우, 오전 8시 00분에서 오후 5시 30분 사이에 **888-404-3549** 번으로 전화해 주시기 바랍니다. 담당 직원이 도와드립니다.

Si vous ne parlez pas ou lisez l'anglais, s'il vous plaît appeler **888-404-3549** entre 8:00 du matin et 5:30 du soir. Un représentant vous aidera.

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如果您不能講和/或不能閱讀英語，請在上午 8:00 到下午 5:30之間給 888-404-3549 打電話，我們會有代表幫助您

Enrollee Newsletter Summer 2021

The Enrollee Newsletter is a publication of MedStar Family Choice-DC. Submit new items for the next issue to lisa.r.mcdonough@medstar.net. For more information on your plan or anything in this newsletter, please visit MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com.

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WE ARE WASHINGTON
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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

It's how we **treat people.**

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