

winning health



Gold Coast
Health PlanSM
A Public Entity

Issue 3 • Winter 2016



New diabetes program

Gold Coast Health Plan (GCHP) cares about you and your family! That's why the Plan is starting a diabetes program for members. If you or someone in your family has diabetes or is at risk, this program is for you.

The program is free with your GCHP membership. Learning materials are available in English or Spanish. You can also work with a nurse coach. The coach can also help you create a plan of action.

GCHP can connect you with

health classes throughout Ventura County. Classes include information about managing blood sugar, high blood pressure and cholesterol.

The classes can also teach you to eat healthy and be active.

Partnering with GCHP is easy. For more information, visit GCHP's website, www.GoldCoastHealthPlan.org. To sign up, call **1-805-437-5588**/TTY **1-888-310-7347**. After business hours, leave a message.

Don't be a 'no-show'

A "no-show" is when a patient does not show up for an appointment and does not cancel it. There are times when you may not be able to keep an appointment. But when you do not cancel, you may be keeping someone from getting care.

GCHP is committed to giving you the best care. By calling your doctor to cancel or reschedule, you can help us provide care to another member.

Medi-Cal benefits

GCHP has monthly Benefits Meetings in English and Spanish. You will learn about your benefits and how to receive them, along with other resources.

For meetings near you, visit

www.GoldCoastHealthPlan.org, or call Member Services at **1-888-301-1228**/TTY **1-888-310-7347**.

» **LEARN MORE!** GCHP offers diabetes classes throughout the county. For dates and times, please email HealthEducation@goldchp.org.

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6 medication safety tips

Managing medications is a complex task. Here are six ways to help you keep things safe and simple:

- 1** Make a list of every medication you or your loved one takes. This includes prescription and non-prescription drugs, as well as supplements and vitamins. Give a copy to each health care provider. And keep one with you in case of an emergency.
- 2** Ask a doctor or pharmacist to review that list at least once a year.
- 3** Be sure you know what each medication is for and how each one should be given. You might want to use a pill box to

help keep it all straight.

- 4** If a medication has to be injected or requires special preparation at home, be sure you learn the proper technique. Work with your doctor or nurse until you're comfortable doing it yourself.
- 5** Store medications together. Look for a cool, dry place out of reach of children. Medications that need to be chilled should have their own spot in the refrigerator.
- 6** Never share your medicine. Properly discard any leftover or expired medicines. Ask a pharmacist for instructions if you don't know how to do this.

Sources: Family Caregiver Alliance; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

» **DO YOU NEED help communicating with your doctor? Gold Coast Health Plan provides interpreter services:**

- In American Sign Language.
- Over the phone.
- In person (with pre-authorization).

Call 1-888-301-1228/
TTY 1-888-310-7347 to learn more.

GCHP Care Management

Care managers work with you and your family, your health team and others to get you the health care and services you need. This may require working with other agencies to give you the best options to improve or maintain your health.

There may be times when you need help:

- Finding assistance.

- Understanding your doctor's plan.
- Learning about your condition.
- Learning about your medications.
- Managing a new diagnosis.

Your care manager's responsibility is to advocate for you. If you feel that Gold Coast Health Plan's Care Management team can help you, ask your doctor to contact the Plan. A team member will call you so that you can join the program.

Make your wishes known

The Physician Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form:

- Does not replace an advance directive.
- Becomes the doctor's order that states the medical treatment you want.
- Will be placed in your medical file if you are in a hospital or other type of care center.
- Should be printed on bright pink paper and placed at home where it can be easily found by medical personnel.

The benefits of long-term care

We may come to a point in our lives when age, illness or disability makes it hard for us to take care of ourselves or for our families to care for us.

That's when we might seek long-term care. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, about 70 percent of people age 65 and older will need long-term care.

Different types of facilities offer different care options. You can learn more about them at www.longtermcare.gov.

Making the move. While leaving home can be difficult, there

are benefits to moving into a home with long-term care. Aides, nurses and others are there to manage health care and personal needs. They may also offer help with medications or treatment plans. Cooking and cleaning are taken care of, and help is available for tasks such as bathing. The facility may have group dining areas, activity rooms and even an exercise area. Family members are able to visit. Every effort is made to ensure that the place is homelike.

Perhaps the biggest gain that long-term care offers is peace of mind. There is access to help whenever it's needed.



Hospice care offers comfort

WHEN SERIOUS ILLNESS CAUSES PAIN AND OTHER DISTRESS, SPECIAL CARE IS AVAILABLE.

Chances are you have heard of hospice care. But do you know what it is?

Hospice care is compassionate, end-of-life care that helps people die with dignity. It is for those who need care during the last six months of life, when they are no longer getting treatments aimed at curing them. It offers support to relieve pain and improve quality of life. It also gives comfort to surviving loved ones.

Hospice care is given where the patient lives (at home, in an assisted living or nursing care facility, or in the hospital). It relies on a team approach. The patient's loved ones serve as the primary care givers. They are supported by primary care and hospice doctors, nurses, home health aides, social workers, counselors (including clergy), and trained volunteers.

If you or a loved one has a serious illness, it may help to know this kind of care exists.

Sources: National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

Do you have an advance directive?

An advance directive (living will):

- Is a legal health care form that will ensure your wishes are followed.
- States the kind of care you want if you are unable to make medical decisions.
- Allows you to choose a person you

trust to make health care choices for you when you can't.

You can get the form at your doctor's office, a hospital or on Gold Coast Health Plan's website,

www.GoldCoastHealthPlan.org.



To your good health

SIMPLE THINGS HELP MAKE HEALTHY AGING POSSIBLE

There's no question that age brings changes.

Stiffening joints can make it harder to get around. And many people find that their short-term memory isn't what it used to be. Often, difficult situations, such as the death of a spouse, can add to the negative changes.

But age can bring positive changes too. One survey found that many older people say they have less stress and more time for family and hobbies than they used to. In fact, the majority report they are satisfied with their lives.

What older age will be like for you depends on how you live now. It also depends on how you cope with the changes that come your way. You can take steps to make getting older easier.

These five tips can help:

1 Eat smart. Start with colorful fruits and vegetables. Fish is also a good choice—aim for two

servings a week. Choose whole-grain breads and pastas. Go light on red meat and processed meat. Stick to low-fat or nonfat dairy products.

2 Get enough sleep. You still need seven to eight hours each night. Lack of sleep can make it harder for you to learn and remember. It also may raise your risk for heart disease. What's more, healthy sleep can help you stay well and avoid getting sick.

3 Move more. Exercise strengthens muscles and

» **COME SEE US!** Look for Gold Coast Health Plan at health fairs in your community. For details, contact outreach@goldchp.org.

bones. It also helps improve your balance, which can lower your risk for falls. Active people tend to weigh less and have better heart and lung function. Ask your provider what's best for you. Most people should be active four to six days a week. Walking is a good way to start. Aim for 30 to 60 minutes a day.

4 Take your medicine the right way. Tell your provider about all your medicines. That includes vitamins and supplements. Take them just as your provider tells you, and get a flu shot every year.

5 Don't smoke. Stay away from other people's smoke too. Smoking leads to lung disease, heart disease and cancer. If you smoke, ask your provider about help with quitting.

Sources: AGS Foundation for Health in Aging; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Mental Health America; Pew Research Center

What is a geriatrician?

A GERIATRICIAN:

- Is a doctor who is trained to handle health issues for those who are aging.
- Often works with a team of other professionals to provide care.
- Is someone you may only need to see once in a while or who may become your Primary Care Provider (PCP).

YOUR PCP MAY REFER YOU TO ONE IF YOU:

- Are frail and have trouble with simple tasks.
- Have concerns caused by aging, including bladder problems, falls or memory problems.
- Have multiple conditions, take several medicines or see more than one doctor.

Sources: American College of Physicians; American Geriatrics Society