

Renew your Medicaid benefits

Do you or a family member currently have health insurance through Medicaid or the Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP)?

Medicaid renewals will not be automatic this year.

Check in to make sure your contact information is up to date so that you can receive important notices on any changes to your health insurance.

If you have already received your notice, don’t wait - complete your renewal today! You’ll have 45 days to respond. Start by logging in to your account at marylandhealthconnection.gov/checkin/. Checkin or call 855-642-8572.



Para obtener una versión en español de este boletín, visite MedStarFamilyChoice.com o llame a Servicios para Miembros al **888-404-3549**.

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COVID-19 updates for MedStar Family Choice members

As the COVID public health emergency has ended, MedStar Family Choice has returned to its normal operations. What does this mean for you?

1. COVID treatment, vaccines and testing will continue to be a covered benefit and must be provided by in-network providers.
2. If you require an emergency prescription on a weekend or holiday that normally needs approval from MFC, the pharmacy may be able to give you a 3-day fill until approval can be obtained on the next business day.

For more information regarding COVID-19, please visit our [COVID-19 Information page](#).



Exercise your way to a healthy summer

It's the movement of your body! If you move your arms and legs enough, it will make your heartbeat faster.

- Regular exercise gives you energy and keeps you healthy.
- Regular exercise makes your bones and muscles strong.
- Regular exercise makes your heart strong and healthy.
- Regular exercise helps you feel good about yourself.
- Regular exercise keeps you from gaining weight.



Keep your exercise simple at first. There are so many ways to exercise and have fun with your family, such as walking, jogging, riding a bike, hiking, jumping rope, playing with your pets, roller skating, housework, swimming, mowing the lawn, and many more activities.

MedStar Family Choice is on Facebook

The MedStar Family Choice has a private Facebook group just for our members. Our Facebook group includes information about member benefits, wellness incentives, COVID-19, events, healthy tips, provider scheduling recommendations, and more.

We encourage all members to join our new group to remain connected. Please visit

[Bit.ly/MFCGroup](https://bit.ly/MFCGroup) and click on "+ Join Group" as soon as possible.

Did you or your grown "child" turn 18?

If so, it may be time for a new doctor. As an adult, your health care 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:

- Family Practice
- Internal Medicine

Ask your doctor if you have questions about what type of provider to see. MedStar Family Choice can also help find a new adult doctor in your area. If you would like help, please call us at 443-692-1094 or call Member Services at **888-404-3549** to select a new provider.



Understand fraud, waste, and abuse

MedStar Family Choice works to prevent healthcare fraud, waste, and abuse. Fraud is when someone knowingly does something wrong or dishonest in order to obtain healthcare benefits for themselves or someone else. Waste is when too many or unnecessary tests or procedures are ordered that lead to extra costs. Abuse describes provider behaviors that do not follow sound financial, business or medical practice and result in unnecessary costs or do not meet a standard of care

While MedStar Family Choice looks for possible fraud, waste, and abuse activities, we need your help to stop fraud, waste, and abuse. MedStar Family Choice has a strict non-retaliation policy. You do not need to give your name. If you know of a situation that may involve fraud and abuse, please report it immediately by calling our Compliance Director at **410-933-2283**, Member Services at **888-404-3549** or the MedStar Health Corporate Integrity Hotline at **877-811-3411**. Your report will remain confidential. You may also call the Maryland Department of Health Office of the Inspector General toll-free at **866-770-7175**, report on-line at <https://health.maryland.gov/oig/Pages/ReportFraud.aspx>, or in writing to the MDH Program Integrity Unit, 201 West Preston Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. Again, you do not have to give your name.



It's okay to ask the Pharmacy

Have you ever tried to fill a prescription only to be told 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 my medicine not covered?

1. Is there a way my medicine could be covered?
2. Is there another medicine that could be used that is covered by my insurance?

Here are some common reasons why your prescription is not covered:

- The medicine is not on the formulary (a list of covered medicines).
- The medicine needs approval first (also known as prior authorization).
- It may be too soon to fill the medicine 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 wants you to get the medical care and medicines you need to keep you healthy. We want you to know it's okay to ask the pharmacy if there is a problem getting your medicine.

If, after asking the pharmacy, you still can't get your prescription medicines, there is help here at MedStar Family Choice.

For help with medicines, please call MedStar Family Choice at **800-905-1722** Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition, MedStar Family Choice members can submit pharmacy issues online using this form ([Bit.ly/MFCPharmIssues](https://bit.ly/MFCPharmIssues)).

For help with Mental Health and Substance Abuse related medications, please call the Maryland Department of Health Pharmacy Hotline at **800-492-5231, option 3**.

For more information about your pharmacy benefits, please visit [Bit.ly/MFCPharmacyBenefits](https://bit.ly/MFCPharmacyBenefits).

Spring Into Wellness and Earn Gift Cards!

MedStar Family Choice cares about your health. Yearly physical exams are important to keep you and your family healthy. Your health and wellness is very important to MedStar Family Choice. So, we offer the gift cards with various amounts to members 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. Don't worry, because MedStar Family Choice is here to help you! Our Outreach Department can assist you and your family with scheduling any of the following appointments with your doctor:

- 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 prepaid card. MedStar Family Choice offers the following incentives on gift cards just for going to your wellness doctor appointments:

- Up to \$250 for getting your baby's well-child visits before 30 months of age, as well as getting a lead test
- Up to \$100 for your first prenatal care visit during the first three months of pregnancy and \$50 for your first postpartum visit within 21 to 56 days of delivery
- \$25 for completing your well-child visits (ages 3 to 7)
- \$50 for completing your adolescent physicals (ages 12 to 21)
- Enter a \$100 drawing for completing your Pap test
- \$25 if you sign up for mail order delivery of medication to treat diabetes, asthma, or high blood pressure
- \$50 for completing your mammogram in 2023 (50 years and older)
- \$50 for getting your child's lead test screening, up to 12 months of age
- \$50 for diabetic lab tests and eye exam in 2023, and an additional \$50 if your A1C is below 8 by Dec. 31, 2023

Learn more at [MedStarFamilyChoice.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com) or call our Outreach Department at **800-905-1722, option 1.**

Attention All New or Soon-to-Be Moms: You Could Earn a \$50 Gift Card!

Did you know that MedStar Family Choice has a postpartum program that will meet all your needs? You can also qualify to receive a \$50 MedStar Family Choice Prepaid Mastercard® just for following the state guidelines.

It is more important that you to 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. While you're at the appointment, you can schedule an appointment for your postpartum exam (remember the exam must be within 21 to 56 days after you deliver).

MedStar Family Choice will provide you with transportation to and from your visit and you will receive a \$50 prepaid card for going to your exam. You can also earn an additional \$10 prepaid card for going to your first well-child visit within 14 days of birth. If you have any questions or would like assistance with scheduling your appointment, please call your postpartum program coordinator at **410-933-7237** or **800-905-1722.**



In addition, the MedStar Healthy Life Portal offers additional Momma & Me classes where you can earn while you learn. Log onto the Healthy Life Portal at [MedStarFamilyChoiceHealthyLife.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceHealthyLife.com) to enroll and earn a \$25 gift card for completing the Prenatal/Breastfeeding courses, and a \$10 gift card for completing Infant Safety courses.

Card is issued by MetaBank®, N.A., Member FDIC, pursuant to license by Mastercard International Incorporated. Mastercard is a registered trademark, and the circles design is a trademark of Mastercard International Incorporated. No cash access or recurring payments. Card valid for up to 12 months, funds do not expire and may be available after card expiration date, fees may apply. Card terms and conditions apply.

Free Nurse Advice Line

Feeling sick or need medical advice? A registered nurse is just a phone call away. The Nurse Advice Line **(855-210-6204)** is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Call and talk to a registered nurse to help you figure out what to do or where to go based on your symptoms.

The nurse can provide you with nearby urgent care locations if need be.

Emergency Care is for when you need care right away for a serious, sudden injury or illness. Therefore, non-emergent care can take longer in an Emergency Room.





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 to treat severe pain for medical conditions such as cancer and other serious conditions. This article is not about taking opioids for these serious conditions, it is about taking these medications for an acute pain problem like you may have following surgery or an injury. Common types of opioids are oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin), morphine, and methadone.

What are the side effects of over usage or addiction?

Tolerance—meaning you might need to take more of the medicine to achieve the same pain relief.

Physical dependence—meaning you have symptoms of withdrawal when the medicine is stopped.

- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting, and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression

Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy, and strength Itching and sweating

How much medicine should I take?

Follow the directions on the bottle—it is not safe to take any more than 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 automatically 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.

You should notice that you need less and less opioid medicine as you start to feel less pain. Take less and less of your opioid medicines each day as your pain gets better. This may mean taking a smaller dose each time, or waiting for a longer amount of time between each dose you take. This is called tapering. 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 you are more sleepy

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: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/ensuring-safe-use-medicine/safe-disposal-medicines> and follow the instructions from the FDA.

For more information on opioids, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/basics/prescribed.html>.





Patient safety issues

Patient safety is one of the nation's most pressing 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
- Date of your last physical
- 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
- Any allergies
- Any chronic diseases
- Any history of illnesses in your family

Also be sure to:

1. Ask questions if you have doubts or concerns, and make sure you understand the answers. Choose a doctor you feel comfortable talking to. 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.

Breaking down barriers when communicating with your doctor

You play a very important part in your care when visiting your doctor. Here are some things that can help make your visit more pleasant:

Have your questions already written down before your visit.

- Listen carefully to the advice your doctor is giving you.
- Make sure you follow the doctor's orders. Please get the labs or other tests that your doctor asks you to get.
- Make certain that your blood pressure is taken at every doctor's visit, regardless of whether it is with your primary care doctor or a specialist.
- If you have had a hospital admission or an emergency room visit, tell your doctor. All doctors involved in your care need to know this information.
- Your primary care doctor should receive a copy of your hospital stay, known as a discharge summary. This document provides detailed information on your care in the hospital. It is very important that you schedule a follow-up visit with your doctor regarding any inpatient hospital stay.
- Ask your primary care doctor if he or she has received a copy of the 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.



Rare and expensive case management program

The Rare and Expensive Case Management (REM) program is a Maryland Medicaid benefit for members with certain qualifying conditions or diseases. The REM program is not another MCO (Managed Care Organization). The REM Program allows Medicaid recipients to be in traditional Fee-for-Service Medicaid but includes additional case management services.

Another benefit of REM is an assigned case manager who will meet with you on a routine basis to help achieve your healthcare goals. The case manager can help make doctor appointments, address medication problems or questions, and even attend appointments to help you ask your doctor questions.



If eligible for the REM program, you will no longer be in the MCO (MedStar Family Choice). You will be able to see any doctor that accepts the Maryland Medicaid Red and White card (also known as Fee-for-Service or Straight MA). This means you would have access to more doctors/specialists and would no longer need referrals. Children and adults also have dental and vision benefits with REM.

MedStar Family Choice has a case manager to assist you with the REM application. If you believe you or your child has a rare condition that might be eligible for the REM program, please contact our REM Coordinator, Tarsha Williams at **443-692-1184** for assistance. For a list of qualifying diagnoses, visit [MMCP.Health.Maryland.gov/LongTerm-Care/Pages/REM-Program.aspx](https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/LongTerm-Care/Pages/REM-Program.aspx).

What is utilization management?

To make sure that members get needed health care, MedStar Family Choice follows a basic review process called utilization review. A member's doctor sends a request for services to MedStar Family Choice, usually by phone or fax. Our experienced clinical associates review all requests.

MedStar Family Choice decisions are based on national criteria, such as InterQual and Medicaid guidelines. Member needs that fall outside of standard criteria are reviewed by our physicians to see if they are medically necessary. MedStar Family Choice approves or denies services based upon whether the service is medically needed and a covered benefit. We do not financially reward our providers, associates, or anyone contracted with MedStar Family Choice for denying services. In addition, we do not financially reward anyone involved in the decision process in such a way that would encourage less use of services.

MedStar Family Choice requires up to two business days to process a complete request for services, excluding medications. Requests are considered complete when the doctor sends the necessary medical information. The final decision cannot take longer than 14 calendar days, whether or not all clinical information has been received. MedStar Family Choice will approve or deny and make a notification within 24 hours (1 calendar day) from receipt of all medication requests. If MedStar Family Choice denies the request, the provider and the member will receive a copy of the denial. The letter will list instructions on how to appeal the decision. Members may also contact the HealthChoice Help Line at **800-284-4510**.





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, including 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. Therefore, extra caution should be taken from 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 (Note: 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 the 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.

MedStar Family Choice survey results

MedStar Family Choice wants you to stay informed on how we are doing. For updated information on survey results such as HEDIS®, Satisfaction Surveys, System Performance Reviews, EPS-DT audits, and the Consumer Report Card, please visit the MedStar Family Choice Quality web page:

[MedStarFamilyChoice.com/Maryland-HealthChoice/For-Maryland-HealthChoice-Members/Quality](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com/Maryland-HealthChoice/For-Maryland-HealthChoice-Members/Quality)

Paper copies are available upon request by calling **888-404-3549**. As we continue to improve and strive for high scores, your dedication to quality health care is very much appreciated.

HEDIS is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).





Free interpreter services are available

If you know a MedStar Family Choice member who does not speak English—or doesn't speak it well—call Member Services toll free at **888-404-3549**. We have interpreters to help members when visiting their doctors. We will also provide an interpreter to help members who do not speak English or read written information sent by Member Services. If you or someone you know is deaf or has trouble hearing, a TTY line is available. Just call **800-508-6975**. In addition, members can access Maryland Relay for TTY assistance. MedStar Family Choice also has people available who can use sign language to help you during doctor visits. You, or someone who can speak for you, must let the Member Services representative know that you need an interpreter.

Si necesita un intérprete, por favor contacte al departamento de Servicio al Miembro al **888-404-3549**.



**MedStar Family
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The MedStar Family Choice member newsletter is a publication of MedStar Family Choice.

Submit new items for the next issue to mary.e.ruland@medstar.net.

For more information on your plan or anything in this newsletter, please visit **MedStarFamilyChoice.com**.

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