



Member Newsletter

Maryland HealthChoice Program

Vaccines are available at local drug stores.

During the past 50 years, vaccines (shots) saved more than a billion lives in the United States by preventing illnesses and disabilities. MedStar Family Choice members (ages 3 and over) can get shots at participating pharmacies, including CVS pharmacies, MedStar retail pharmacies, Target, Walmart, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Giant, Safeway and other pharmacy chains.



This program includes the flu shot as well as shots for shingles, hepatitis A and B, pneumonia, HPV (to help prevent cervical cancer), chicken pox, and tetanus. Flu shots are given on a walk-in basis. For other shots, members should call the drug store to make sure the shot needed is in stock. Your doctor will be notified when you receive a shot and add it to your medical record. Shots for traveling outside the country are not included. These shots are given according to the published recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC.gov/Vaccines/Index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/Vaccines/Index.html)).

Understand your benefits.

You can find valuable information about all of the healthcare benefits offered at MedStar Family Choice on our website, [MedStarFamilyChoice.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com). If you are interested in additional information about MedStar Health hospitals, please visit [MedStarHealth.org](https://www.MedStarHealth.org). If you do not have access to the internet, you may call our Member Services department at **888-404-3549**.

Para obtener una versión en español de este boletín, visite [MedStarFamilyChoice.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com) o llame a Servicios para Miembros al **888-404-3549**.

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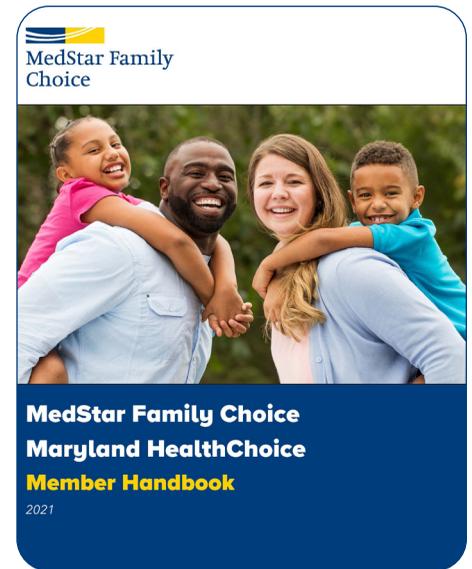
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The updated 2021 member handbook is online.

The MedStar Family Choice Member Handbook has been updated. All changes to policies and procedures in the handbook have gone into effect as of Jan. 1, 2021.

Please review the handbook in detail to learn about your member benefits, services, programs, rights, responsibilities, and contact information. The handbook also explains policies on billing, appeals, fraud, abuse, and more. Important phone numbers for members are included in the handbook as well.

The 2021 Member Handbook is now available for download on the MedStar Family Choice website or directly at [Bit.ly/MFC-Handbook](https://bit.ly/MFC-Handbook). For printed hard copy, please call Member Services at **888-404-3549**.



Dental benefits are included as a member.

Routine dental care is covered for adult members of MedStar Family Choice. Dental benefits for members over 21 include a dental exam and cleaning two times a year, x-rays, fillings, and simple extractions. The maximum dental benefit limitation is \$1,000 per calendar year for non-preventative services. Visit Avesis.com/TPS/MedStar/StartSearch.aspx or call **844-478-0512** to help you find a dentist in the network.

Routine dental care for pregnant women and children under 21 years of age is provided by the Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program. Please visit MDMWP.ScionDental.com/MWP/Landing for more information or to find a dentist.

Learn about the member compliant, grievance, and appeal process.

The MedStar Family Choice complaint, grievance, and appeal procedure can be found at MedStarFamilyChoice.com or in your member handbook. If you do not have access to our website, you may call our Member Services department at **888-404-3549** for a copy of the process.

The process includes information on:

- How to file a complaint, grievance, or appeal, and the differences between them
- How quickly we will respond to you
- What to do if you do not agree with our decision

If you have a concern about a decision made by MedStar Family Choice, members always have the right to contact the HealthChoice Enrollee Help Line at **800-284-4510** Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

HEDIS® 2020 scores for 2019 are available.

The National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA) is a national not-for-profit company that measures quality across the country. NCQA has many quality measures that they ask each health plan to report on yearly. The quality measures are rolled up in a tool called HEDIS®. The results are audited and reported to NCQA.

MedStar Family Choice reports many different quality measures for HEDIS each year. The measures include how care is provided to children, adults, and pregnant women. The scores look at how all managed care organizations provide care. Overall, MedStar Family Choice scored above the Maryland average for HEDIS 2020 in many of the areas.

If you would like additional information about the HEDIS report, you can contact the Quality department at **800-905-1722** or visit the website at **MedStarFamilyChoice.com** and enter "HEDIS" in the search bar in the top right corner.

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

Here are your options for emergency care.

You should only visit the emergency room (ER) when you need care right away for a serious, sudden injury or illness.

We understand that it can be hard to know the difference between what is or is not an emergency. When you are unsure if you are experiencing a medical emergency, you should call the Nurse Advice line for help at **855-210-6204**. The nurse line can help you decide where to go for your care.

MedStar eVisit also gives 24/7 video access to trusted providers from your tablet, smartphone, or computer. To learn more or sign up, please visit **MedStarFamilyChoice.com/eVisit**.

It pays to think about the right place to go. It will often take longer for you to be seen in the emergency room, and you may be exposed to other illnesses while in the waiting room.

If you have an emergency, call **911** or go to the emergency room.

How to request out-of-network services.

If MedStar Family Choice is unable to provide a necessary and covered service to a member within our network, MedStar Family Choice may allow the service to be provided outside of the network. In order for this to happen, the provider must contact MedStar Family Choice for approval.

MedStar Family Choice requires two business days to process a request once all necessary information has been received. However, the final decision cannot take longer than 14 days, even if all of the information has not been received.

The decision may be shorter, depending on the urgency of the request. MedStar Family Choice will review all requests on an individual basis.

In cases where out-of-network services have been approved, you are not responsible for the cost of these services.

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.



Please take the member satisfaction survey.

MedStar Family Choice is always looking for ways to improve the quality of care you and your family receive. A random survey is conducted on an annual basis. If you receive a HEDIS®/CAHPS® 2021 satisfaction survey, don't forget to complete it.

The CAHPS surveys collect data from health plan members that measure the experience of care for children with chronic conditions. Visit [MedStarFamilyChoice.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoice.com) to find additional information about the CAHPS satisfaction survey.

What are some early signs of asthma?

Watching for these early signs can help parents give asthma medicine before the child gets worse and has to go to the emergency room.

Early signs include:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest feeling tight or painful
- Needing to sit down while playing
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sneezing
- Feeling tired after playing
- Fast breathing while at rest



Be sure to call the doctor if you are worried that your child is getting worse, even though you have given him or her asthma medicine.

Help prevent fraud, waste and abuse.

MedStar Family Choice works to prevent healthcare fraud, waste, and abuse, and follows state and federal laws to prevent fraud and abuse. Fraud is when someone knowingly does something wrong or dishonest in order to benefit himself or herself or someone else. Abuse consists of behaviors or actions that are unnecessary and create waste, and could be dangerous in a healthcare setting. You must report fraud and abuse when you think it might be occurring.

Some examples of member healthcare fraud are:

- Not reporting all of your financial information or giving false information when you apply for benefits
- Allowing someone else to use your health insurance card
- Permanently living in another state while still receiving health benefits from Maryland
- Selling medicines or supplies given to you by your doctor
- Changing or forging prescriptions given to you by your doctor

Some examples of how providers might commit fraud and abuse are:

- Performing services that are not needed
- Billing for services that were never performed
- Billing numerous times for the same service
- Upcoding services

When someone is reported for possible fraud and abuse, MedStar Family Choice will perform an investigation. The results are reported to the Maryland Department of Health. Maryland Department of Health may perform its own investigation as well. People who perform these activities or any other dishonest activity on purpose may lose their health benefits, be fined or jailed.



While MedStar Family Choice looks for possible fraud and abuse activities, we need your help to stop fraud and abuse. MedStar Family Choice has a strict non-retaliation policy. You do not need to give your name. However, if you choose to give us your name, you don't have to worry about anyone denying you service, removing you from the managed care organization or treating you in any way that would cause you or a family member to feel that you did something wrong for reporting any incident.

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**, or you may call Member Services at **888-404-3549**. Your report will remain confidential. You may also call the MedStar Health Corporate Integrity Hotline at **877-811-3411**. You may also call the HealthChoice Fraud hotline at **866-770-7175**. Again, you do not have to give your name. You may also send something in writing to the Maryland Department of Health Program Integrity Unit at **mdh.oig@maryland.gov** or via mail at 201 West Preston St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

Antibiotics aren't always the answer.

Antibiotic resistance is one of the most serious public health problems in the United States. Antibiotic overuse is the leading cause of antibiotic resistance. This happens when germs "outsmart" antibiotics and the antibiotics no longer kill the germ. To combat antibiotic resistance and avoid bad drug reactions, we must use antibiotics correctly. Antibiotics do not fight infections caused by viruses like colds, flu, most sore throats, and bronchitis (inflammation of the breathing tubes). Even many sinus and ear infections can get better without antibiotics. Instead, symptom relief might be the best treatment for these infections.

Taking antibiotics for viral infections (such as colds, the flu, most sore throats, and bronchitis):

- Will not cure the infection
- Will not keep other people from getting sick
- Will not help you or your child feel better
- May cause unnecessary and harmful side effects
- May contribute to antibiotic resistance

Rest, fluids, and over-the-counter products may be the best treatments for symptoms related to viral infections. Remember, there are potential risks when taking any prescription medicine. Unneeded antibiotics may lead to harmful side effects and future antibiotic-resistant infections.

What You Can Do

Just because your doctor doesn't give you an antibiotic doesn't mean you aren't sick. Talk with your doctor about the best treatment for you or your child's illness.

To feel better when you or your child has a viral infection:

- Ask about over-the-counter treatments that may help reduce symptoms
- Drink more fluids
- Get plenty of rest
- Use a cool-mist vaporizer or saline nasal spray to relieve congestion
- Soothe your throat with crushed ice, sore throat spray, or lozenges
- Use honey to relieve cough
- Treat flu illness with prescription flu antiviral medicines

** Note: Do not give lozenges to young children or honey to infants under one year of age.*

What Not to Do

- Do not demand antibiotics when your doctor says they are not needed
- Do not take an antibiotic for a viral infection
- Do not take an antibiotic prescribed for someone else, as the antibiotic may not be right for your illness. Taking the wrong medicine may delay correct treatment and allow bacteria to grow.

(Antibiotics article, continued from page 6)

If your doctor prescribes an antibiotic for a bacterial infection:

- Do not skip doses
- Do not stop taking the antibiotics early unless your primary care doctor tells you to do so
- Do not save any of the antibiotics for the next time you or your child gets sick

Using antibiotics only when needed is a win-win for everyone because it:

- Decreases antibiotic resistance
- Reduces risk of side effects
- Reduces cost of unnecessary medications and treatment
- Provides the safest possible care

MedStar Family Choice doctors are working to keep you and your family healthy by only prescribing antibiotics when you really need them.



Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment results are in!

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has completed its yearly review of medical records for MedStar Family Choice (MFC) certified EPSDT Providers. The Maryland Department of Health reviews medical records for MFC members age 0-20. The review of medical records is always for the previous calendar year. MedStar Family Choice must receive a total of 80% to pass. MedStar Family Choice received a total score of 86% this year. Our total score is 8 points lower than last year and 3 points above the Health Choice Managed Care Organization (MCO) average of 83%.

MedStar Family Choice results for 2020:

- 90% in Health and Development History
- 95% in Comprehensive Physical Exam
- 59% in Laboratory Test/At-Risk Screenings
- 80% in Immunizations
- 93% in Health Education/Anticipatory Guidance

MedStar Family Choice wants your child to visit their doctor every year to meet their healthcare needs. At your child's annual visit to their doctor, they will make sure all your child's healthcare needs and requirements are met; for example, they will make sure your child is up-to-date with all their required vaccinations. It is important to know that children two and under need to have a blood test to check for lead. It is also important for all children and young adults to have their cholesterol levels measured along with a blood test to check for anemia (lack of healthy blood cells).

Visit the MedStar Family Choice website for valuable information.

MedStar Family Choice continues to update the website with valuable information, and we've made it easier to use the information most important to you. The MedStar Family Choice website, **MedStarFamilyChoice.com**, contains valuable information, including:

- Appeals process
- Benefit information
- Covered services
- Added services under MedStar Family Choice
- Copay information
- What to do if you are billed for a covered service
- Case and disease management services
- Contact information for MedStar Family Choice
- Find a Provider (searchable provider directory)
- List of medications (formulary)
- Hours of operation and after-hours instructions
- How to access specialty care, hospital services, and behavioral health services
- Interpreter services
- Member handbook
- Member newsletter
- Member rights and responsibilities
- MedStar eVisit
- Fraud and abuse Information
- New technology policies
- Notice of privacy practices
- Out-of-service area coverage
- Outreach program

- Preventive care programs
- Pharmacy protocols and procedures
- Pharmacy quick reference guide
- Quality improvement programs
- Schedule of health education classes
- Transportation guidelines
- Utilization management decision-making
- Utilization affirmative statement
- Utilization external appeal rights
- Wellness incentives

If you do not have access to the internet, all of these materials are available in print by contacting our Member Services department, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **888-404-3549**.

Also, visit our online wellness portal at **MedStarFamilyChoiceHealthyLife.com**.

Did you know a list of approved medications is on the web?

The MedStar Family Choice Formulary is the list of approved prescription drugs covered by MedStar Family Choice. Any changes made to the formulary will be included in the updated issue. The MedStar Family Choice Formulary is available online at **Bit.ly/MFC-pharmacy**.

If you don't have access to our website and you have questions about whether or not a specific drug is on the formulary, we can send the information you are requesting. Please call Member Services at **888-404-3549**.

Case management programs are available for MedStar Family Choice members.

A highly qualified team of nurses and social workers is available to MedStar Family Choice members with special needs, serious medical conditions or social issues, such as food, transportation, and utilities.

Our nurses and social workers provide education, support, and guidance to those members who need or would like extra assistance to manage their health. Our nurses and social workers can also assist with gaining access to healthcare services.

Below are a few examples of medical conditions or health care needs where we may be of help to you:



Complex Case Management Services

- One or more hospital-stay in 6 months
- Two or more ER visits in 6 months
- Stroke
- Cancer/tumors
- Sickle Cell Disease with severe crisis
- Acute trauma with complex care coordination needs
- Multiple chronic health conditions
- Complex psycho-social or behavioral needs
- Transplants
- Special healthcare needs

Comprehensive Case Management Services

- High risk pregnancy
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- COPD
- Hypertension
- Cardiovascular disease
- HIV
- Substance abuse disorder
- Social issues/mental health

You do not have to enroll in these services. You may be identified for enrollment if we see that you have certain conditions or medical needs. If identified for enrollment, a nurse or social worker will reach out to you by phone to explain your benefits and these services to you.

Membership in either Complex Case Management or Comprehensive Case Management is voluntary. A nurse or social worker will reach out to you by phone to explain your benefits and these services to you.

If you would like to ask about one of these programs, or if you are already in one of these programs and you would like to stop participating, please contact us at **410-933-2200** or **800-905-1722**. We are available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Any voice messages received after hours will be returned during the next business day.

Know your member rights and responsibilities.

As a HealthChoice member, you have the right to:

- Receive health care and services that are culturally competent and free from discrimination.
- Be treated with respect to your dignity and privacy.
- Receive information, including information on treatment options and alternatives, regardless of cost or benefit coverage, in a manner you can understand.
- Participate in decisions regarding your health care, including the right to refuse treatment.
- Be free from any form of restraint or seclusion used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation.
- Request and receive a copy of your medical records and request that they be amended or corrected as allowed.
- Request copies of all documents, records, and other information free of charge, that was used in an adverse benefit determination.
- Exercise your rights, and that the exercise of those rights does not adversely affect the way the Managed Care Organizations (MCO), their providers, or the Maryland Department of Health treat you.
- File appeals and grievances with a Managed Care Organization.
- File appeals, grievances, and State fair hearings with the State.
- Request that ongoing benefits be continued during an appeal or state fair hearing however, you may have to pay for the continued benefits if the decision is upheld in the appeal or hearing.
- Receive a second opinion from another doctor within the same MCO, or by an out of network provider if the provider is not available within the MCO, if you do not agree with your doctor's opinion about the services that you need. Contact your MCO for help with this.
- Receive other information about how your Managed Care Organization is managed including the structure and operation of the MCO as well as physician incentive plans. You may request this information by calling your Managed Care Organization.
- Receive information about the organization, its services, its practitioners and providers, and member rights and responsibilities.
- Make recommendations regarding the organization's member rights and responsibilities policy.

As a HealthChoice member, you have the responsibility to:

- Inform your provider and MCO if you have any other health insurance coverage.
- Treat HealthChoice staff, MCO staff, and health care providers and staff, with respect and dignity.

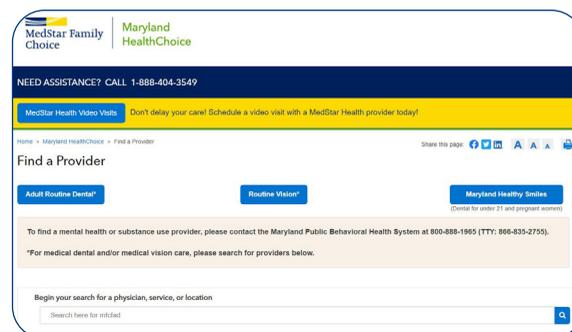
(Member Rights and Responsibilities, continued from page 10)

- Be on time for appointments and notify providers as soon as possible if you need to cancel an appointment.
- Show your membership card when you check in for every appointment. Never allow anyone else to use your Medicaid or MCO card. Report lost or stolen member ID cards to the MCO.
- Call your MCO if you have a problem or a complaint.
- Work with your Primary Care Provider (PCP) to create and follow a plan of care that you and your PCP agree on.
- Ask questions about your care and let your provider know if there is something you do not understand.
- Update the State if there has been a change in your status.
- Provide the MCO and their providers with accurate health information in order to provide proper care.
- Use the emergency department for emergencies only.
- Tell your PCP as soon as possible after you receive emergency care.
- Inform your caregivers about any changes to your Advance Directive.

It is easy to find a provider on the web.

Did you know that as a MedStar Family Choice member you are automatically assigned a primary care provider if you did not select one upon enrollment? If you need to change your primary care provider or find more information on selecting a provider, please call Member Services at **888-404-3549**.

MedStar Family Choice has made it convenient for you to find a provider on the website. Did you know you can search the website and narrow your search by specific categories to help you? You can select a doctor by the name or group, hospital affiliation, gender, language, specialty, city, or the number of miles from your home or ZIP code.



Our website also contains detailed provider information, such as office addresses, phone numbers, practitioner qualifications, office hours, education (such as residency and medical schools), and board certification information. If you do not have access to the internet and would like this additional information for a specific provider, you may contact Member Services. In addition, you should always call the office to make sure they are a participating provider. Remember, if you have any questions about selecting your primary care provider, please call Member Services at **888-404-3549**. You can also review our website at **MedStarFamilyChoice.com** for more information.

Understand how to get a referral to a specialist.

Did you know most primary care providers will give you great advice about the healthcare services? If any of your medical conditions require seeing a specialist, your primary care provider will refer you to one in our network. If an in-network provider is not available, MedStar Family Choice will help arrange one for you outside of our network. If your primary care providers can handle the condition without referring you, he or she will treat your medical condition.



Remember, if you are a female member and your primary care provider is not a women's health specialist, you have the right to see a women's health specialist within the MedStar Family Choice network without a referral. If you want a second opinion, you have the right to obtain one from another in-network provider. If another in-network provider is not available, MedStar Family Choice will help arrange a second opinion outside of the MedStar Family Choice network at no cost to you. You can contact your primary care provider or Member Services at **888-404-3549** for help getting a second opinion. A referral may be required. Always remember that most physicians will need to see you in the office before a referral is written to a specialist.

If you have any questions or concerns about the healthcare services you receive, don't hesitate to contact the Member Services department toll free at **888-404-3549** to ask for help.

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 interprete, por favor contacte al departamento de Servicio al Miembro al **888-404-3549**.



**MedStar Family
Choice**

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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 darin.a.tambascio@medstar.net.

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

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