

# good health report

FALL '09

YOUR FAST TRACK TO LIVING WELL

## Get Answers

Our website has helpful tools and info

## Listen Up, Men

Protect yourself from the top three threats to your health

**It's all about choices.** If you made a New Year's resolution last year and didn't quite see it through, you're not alone. But if you're intending to make a another promise to improve your health this year, here's a thought: Instead of committing yourself to one major change, like losing those love handles, why not commit to a couple of smaller changes that are a little easier to manage? When faced with the option of fries or side salad, choose the salad. On the fence between TV-watching or going for a walk? Opt for the stroll. The right choices—however small—will make a big difference.

 **PRIMETIME**  
HEALTH PLAN  
[primetimehealthplan.com](http://primetimehealthplan.com)

## Utilization Management Update

- **Utilization Management** decisions are based on the appropriateness of care and services as well as the eligibility and coverage for the requested services.
- **PrimeTime Health Plan** does not reward practitioners or other individuals for issuing denials of coverage or service of care. There are no financial incentives for Utilization Management decision makers that result in underutilization.
- **The specific criteria** used in decisions are available at no cost by contacting the Utilization Management Department at the numbers listed below.
- **A physician, nurse or pharmacist reviewer** is available to discuss Utilization Management denial decisions. Please contact the Utilization Management Department at these numbers: 330-363-7407 or 1-800-577-5084, TTY 330-363-7460 or 1-800-617-7446. Fax: 330-363-2350.

Business hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. After hours and on weekends and holidays, communication can be made via fax and/or voice mail. Emergency care should be provided as deemed appropriate by the treating physician and should not be delayed for an after-hours response.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### CHECK IT OUT ↓

**Check Yourself:** Make time to study up on the safety of your home. Visit [homesafetycouncil.org/safetyguide](http://homesafetycouncil.org/safetyguide).

**Do Your Part:** November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Support research or just learn more at [lungcanceralliance.org](http://lungcanceralliance.org).



**Go Green:** Looking for a way to incorporate fruits and veggies in your winter diet? Visit the Fruit & Vegetable of the Month

webpage at [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/index.html](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/index.html), where you can see what's in season all year-round. Plantains, anyone?

### DO THIS ↓

**Put It Out for Good:** On November 19, celebrate life and wellness by quitting your smoking habit. Join thousands of people who will put down their lighters and cigarettes for the Great American Smokeout.

**Watch Your Back:** Back injuries are more common in the winter, as many of us get to shoveling snow,

sledding with the kids or skiing in the Valley. Warm up your muscles before any activity, and call your doctor if back pain persists for more than a few days.



**Get Organized:** Before the new year finds you setting resolutions and returning holiday gifts, why not take a few minutes to review your medical files? Make sure you and your family are up to date on screenings and immunizations, and create a folder to save future claims information and forms.

## A Unequal Threat

When it comes to equality of the sexes, lung cancer remains a sexist disease.

According to a 10-year study using computed tomography screening, women are twice as likely to develop lung cancer as men, regardless of how much they smoke, their age, or the size and texture of nodules found in their lungs. Researchers, however, have not yet determined why.

The study, reported in the journal *Lung Cancer*, also found that the more tobacco a smoker has used and the older a smoker gets, the greater the chance he or she will develop lung cancer.

Lung cancer is the No. 1 cause of cancer-related death in both men and women. Smoking is the leading cause of most lung cancers, but exposure to asbestos, radon and secondhand smoke may also contribute to its development. Genetics also play a part.

If you're concerned about your risk, talk about screening options with your doctor. And, if you smoke, quit.



## How to Save a Life

Are you in good health and age 17 or older? Do you weigh more than 110 pounds? If you answered “yes” to these questions, then you may be eligible to give one of the greatest gifts possible: your blood. Donating blood is a safe and effective way to make a big difference.

To view eligibility guidelines or to locate a donor site near you, visit the Red Cross online at [givelife.org](http://givelife.org) or call 1-800-448-3543.

## Sorting Fact From Fiction

What to know about antibiotics.

- 1 Antibiotics only work against infections caused by bacteria.** They don't cure infections caused by viruses—including colds, the flu, most coughs and sore throats.
- 2 When antibiotics are used improperly, some bacteria become resistant so the antibiotics no longer kill them.** This is called antibiotic resistance.
- 3 Don't ask your doctor for antibiotics if you have a viral infection.** You can help prevent antibiotic resistance by using these drugs judiciously. Let viruses run their course. If your illness becomes severe or if you're still sick after two weeks, call your doctor.
- 4 Antibiotics may be used to fight infections,** like a persistent cough, strep throat, certain ear infections and sinus infections.

**NO FLU FOR YOU** Antibiotics can't help fight the flu, but common-sense prevention can. Wash your hands regularly and talk to your doctor about getting a seasonal flu shot and the vaccine for the H1N1 virus.



## Men: Do You Know Your Threat?

**P**oint blank: Heart disease is the leading killer of men. Nearly 30 percent of men die from it, with death from cancer following close behind, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The next most deadly risk to your health? Keep on reading.

➤ **Unintentional injuries cause roughly 6 percent of deaths among men.** Many of these accidents are work-related, in fields such as construction, agriculture and mining. Practice safe work habits, and pay attention to warnings.

Preventive actions can help protect you in other situations too. Wear your seat belt, obey the speed limit and don't drive drunk. Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home, and have gas appliances regularly serviced by a trained technician. Read medicine labels carefully. Ventilate properly if

you are using paint, cleaning fluid or other chemicals. Use nonskid ladders to reduce the risk of falling. And don't swim or boat alone in an open or unfamiliar body of water.

➤ **Cancer leads to almost a quarter of male deaths.** The most common type is lung cancer. Ninety percent of lung cancer cases are related to smoking. If you smoke, work with your doctor to stop. And always avoid secondhand smoke and cancer-causing chemicals in your home and workplace.

Prostate and colorectal cancers are also leading causes of male death. A healthy lifestyle may reduce your risk for these cancers. Take advantage of preventive screening tests, particularly if you have a family history of cancer, to help spot the disease early, when it's easiest to treat.

➤ **Now, back to heart disease.** One of the markers of increased risk for heart disease is abdominal fat—and men are genetically predisposed to it. Your best bet to decrease your risk is to eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and low in fat, salt and fried foods. Watch your weight, get daily exercise, quit smoking and limit alcohol intake.

### IS IT TIME FOR A TUNE UP?

The most common mistake a man can make is to assume that just because he's feeling fine, he is fine. Dangerous health conditions like high cholesterol and high blood pressure don't typically have symptoms. Every adult male should have a general physical every year.

## 6 Steps to Quitting Time

An occasional cookie or glass of wine won't kill you. But smoking once in a while does more harm than you may realize.

**E**ven infrequent cigarette smoking can impair the functioning of your arteries. In fact, just a couple of cigarettes over a weekend can decrease arterial function into the next week—or even longer.

And smoking as few as one to four cigarettes a day can lead to serious health issues, including an increased risk of heart disease. Tobacco use also accounts for at least 30 percent of all cancer deaths, says the American Cancer Society.

Quitting isn't easy, but the right plan can go a long way. If you're ready to give up the habit once and for all, follow these six steps for success.

- 1** Set a quit date and stick to it. Don't forget to plan ahead for cravings.
- 2** Ask your doctor about medicines that can control your nicotine cravings or withdrawal symptoms.
- 3** Join a support group or telephone-counseling program.
- 4** Tell the people in your life that you're quitting, and ask them to assist you in whatever way you need.
- 5** Throw away all of your cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays.
- 6** Write down your reasons for wanting to quit and refer to the list when you need encouragement.

► The American Cancer Society can help you quit. Call 1-800-ACS-2345 for details.





## Working (Out) at the Office

Don't let your desk job be an excuse for not being active.

**U**nless you're literally chained to your desk, there are plenty of ways to stay active during your days. Short bursts of exercise can be as beneficial as a full workout when you do them throughout the day, every day. And paying attention to your workstation setup and posture can help you avoid aches, pains and injuries caused by too many hours at the computer. Try these tips for working more activity into your work.

- **Watch your posture at the computer,** suggests the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Your workstation should be set up so your ears are naturally in line with the tops of your shoulders and your shoulders are in line with your hips. Don't hunch your shoulders, and keep your arms close to your body. Keep your hands in line with your lower arms.

- **Take relaxation breaks.** To stretch your neck, slowly tilt your head to one side, bringing your ear toward your shoulder; hold and relax, then repeat on the other side. Stretch your shoulders by bringing them up to your ears and holding briefly.

- **Stand up to talk on the phone or eat lunch,** since standing burns more calories than sitting.

- **Walk and talk,** by conducting meetings as you walk around the office with co-workers.

- **Rely less on e-mails and instant messaging** and more on getting up and walking down the hall.

- **Bring exercise equipment to work,** such as resistance bands or small hand weights. Use them for a few minutes between meetings or during breaks.

# Do You Have Questions?

Find the answers at [primetimehealthplan.com](http://primetimehealthplan.com).

**W**e continue to enhance the information available on our website. You'll find interactive health tools as well as information about your plan coverage, claims status, pharmacy benefits and claims history. PrimeTime Health Plan puts the answers to your questions right at your fingertips, anytime you wish to go online.

Here's a list of the other information and services you'll find on our site:

- Information about network healthcare professionals and our Provider Directory
- Pharmacy benefit information for your plan
- Updates to our Prescription Drug Formulary
- Complaint or appeal filing
- Benefits and services included and excluded from your coverage
- How to obtain primary care
- How to obtain specialty care and behavioral health services
- What to do if you need to be hospitalized
- Obtaining care when outside the service area

- Obtaining care after normal business hours
- Obtaining emergency services
- Notice of Privacy Practices
- Enrollee rights and responsibilities
- When and how to submit a claim for covered services
- Chronic disease management programs
- Case management programs
- Quality management programs, evaluations and outcomes

You can find all of this by viewing our website at [primetimehealthplan.com](http://primetimehealthplan.com), referencing your EOC (explanation of coverage) or by contacting our PrimeTime Customer Service Center.

If you would like a written copy of any of this information: Provider Directory, Notice of Privacy Practices or Formulary, please call our Service Center at 330-363-7407 or 1-800-577-5084, and a representative will be happy to assist you. If you are hearing-impaired and have access to a TTY phone, you may also call our TTY line at 330-363-7460 or 1-866-633-4752.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

PrimeTime Health Plan investigates all requests for coverage of new technology using a medical technology assessment company as a resource for scientifically sound and evidence-based information and review. If additional information is needed, PrimeTime Health Plan utilizes sources including, but not limited to, Medicare and Medicaid

policy. The Food and Drug Administration releases any current medical peer-reviewed literature.

This information is reviewed and evaluated by PrimeTime Health Plan's medical director and other physician advisors in order to determine if a new technology is appropriate for coverage under your plan.

# Know Your Options

Heartburn medicines are available over the counter and through prescriptions, but what the medicines do and how they help you differ from one remedy to another. Here's a quick rundown:



## OVER-THE-COUNTER ANTACIDS

(Tums, Alka-Seltzer, Mylanta)

neutralize stomach acid and are best if you are already experiencing discomfort. The same is true for bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol), which coats the esophagus and prevents stomach acid from reaching it.



## ALGINIC ACID (Gaviscon) both

neutralizes existing acid and acts as a barrier between the esophagus and the stomach.



## FOR MORE SERIOUS CASES, H2 BLOCKERS

(Pepcid, Zantac,

Tagamet), which both prevent and relieve heartburn, work by attacking histamine, a substance that stimulates production of stomach acid.



## PROTON PUMP INHIBITORS

(PPIs) stop the acid-producing

“pumps” in the stomach. Both



H2 blockers and PPIs (Prilosec, Nexium) are available over the counter and in prescription strengths.

No matter what medicine you choose, experts suggest seeing a doctor if you are experiencing persistent discomfort even after taking over-the-counter remedies, or if your heartburn is interfering with daily activities. Always tell your doctor what medicines you've been taking, because some treatments do not interact well with other medicines.

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