

Great Expectations[®]

FOR HEALTH

A BlueChoice HealthPlan newsletter for women

Spring 2011

Women's Health Newsletter

In This Issue

Just for You

Voices from the Community:
Breast Cancer Awareness

Save \$\$\$ Using Generic Drugs

Talk to Your Doctor

Start a Tradition ... Family
Workouts

Colorectal Health and You

Chlamydia Screening Improves
Reproductive Health



Have You Had Your Annual “Me” Time?

We know it's hard to make time for you, but have you taken the time for your annual women's health exam? This once-a-year checkup with your family doctor or OB/GYN is an important exam that can help you maintain good reproductive health.

The annual women's health exam typically includes:

- General physical exam including breast exam
- Pelvic exam including Pap smear
- Update of life and work situation
- Update of family health history and any new serious illnesses in your family
- Review of your health history
- Update of current medications, herbs and supplements (Be sure to bring a list.)
- Update on immunizations
- Prescriptions for any needed medication refills
- Evaluation of need for health screening tests based on age and personal and family history (such as mammogram, test for sexually transmitted diseases and colon cancer screening)

Your insurance benefit covers an annual women's health exam at 100 percent after your regular office visit copayment as required by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. If you would like to find out benefit coverage for your women's health exam, you can contact Member Services at 800-868-2528.



Voices from the Community: Breast Cancer Awareness

At our annual women's health conference this winter, we had a breast cancer survivor share her story. Many women found this inspiring. One participant shared that she was motivated to get a mammogram screening after she heard about the passing of Elizabeth Edwards, who battled with breast cancer for years. A person's death, a survivor story or even education may be just what the doctor ordered to influence you to get your mammogram. Early detection saves lives, so remember to get your mammogram this year.

The American Cancer Society recommends women age 40 and over have a mammogram every one to two years. Please check with your doctor to see when you should schedule a screening mammogram.

Save \$\$\$ Using Generic Drugs

Generic drugs are medications that contain the same active ingredients as brand-name drugs but are generally available at a lower cost. Ask your doctor if there's a generic medication you can take for your condition.

If you fill a prescription for a brand-name drug that has a generic option, but you use a brand-name drug instead, you will pay the appropriate brand-name drug copayment and the price difference between the generic drug and the brand-name drug. You will not be charged more than the retail price of the medication.

Talk to Your Doctor ...

While all women should have regular checkups and immunizations, it is especially important that you see your doctor when you are having symptoms that are unusual for you. Changes in your body may be your body's way of letting you know that something is wrong. Some body changes in women that may be symptoms of more serious conditions include:

- **Unexplained weight loss** – if you lose 10 pounds in a month without increased exercise or decreased food intake
- **Bloating** – if bloating occurs almost every day and lasts for more than a few weeks
- **Breast changes** – if you notice lumps, redness and thickening of the skin, nipple changes or any nipple discharge
- **Unusual vaginal bleeding** – if you experience bleeding between periods premenopausal, or any vaginal bleeding postmenopause
- **Difficulty swallowing** – if it continues for no apparent reason
- **Mouth changes** – if you notice any white patches on the gums or tongue
- **Lymph node changes** – if you feel a lump or swelling in your armpit, crotch or neck; or, you have a lymph node that gets progressively larger over the span of a month
- **Fever** – if you're not experiencing other flu symptoms and you have no other infection
- **Persistent cough** – if you have a prolonged persistent cough lasting more than three or four weeks

Talk to your doctor if you are experiencing any of these symptoms so that he or she can perform a physical exam, go over your medical history, and order tests, as appropriate.

Source – WebMD

Start a Tradition ... Family Workouts



You are “Superwoman” – you work longer hours, take your children to their afterschool activities, cook those delicious meals, volunteer and even find time to fit in your regular physical activity. During your next workout, consider getting your family involved by walking 20-30 minutes around the local park. It’s good at any age, but everyone should check with their doctors first.

Source – WebMD



Colorectal Health and You

If you are 50 years of age and older, you are at risk for colorectal cancer (cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum). Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the U.S. However, this type of cancer can be prevented if you get screened as recommended by your doctor. At BlueChoice HealthPlan, screening colonoscopies are covered at 100 percent, so talk to your doctor about which colon cancer screening test is right for you.

Screening is important and you can also make lifestyle changes by quitting smoking, increasing your physical activity, maintaining a healthy body weight and maintaining a well-balanced diet (check out mypyramid.gov). Now the ball is in your court, so reduce your risk by making a few lifestyle changes that may improve your overall health.

Chlamydia Screening Improves Reproductive Health

Your teenage daughter is growing into a woman right before your eyes. You only experience this precious time once so talk with her about her reproductive health on a regular basis. There are many different facets of reproductive health so please remember to discuss the importance of screening for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) if needed at her next annual checkup. Some females may not show symptoms of STDs like chlamydia so screening is important. Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection that can damage a female’s reproductive organs and even cause infertility if left untreated. Please keep in mind that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends yearly chlamydia testing of all sexually active women age 25 or younger, older women with risk factors for chlamydia infections (those who have a new sex partner or multiple sex partners), and all pregnant women.

Check out BlueChoiceSC.com to learn more about our Weight Management and Quit Smoking programs. If you prefer to get this newsletter by email* or do not wish to receive future mailings from our women’s health program, please contact dorthea.lewis@bluechoicesc.com or call 800-327-3183, ext. 25294.

***Providing your email address is optional, but by doing so, you are allowing us to send you information via email.**



Post Office Box 6170
Columbia, SC 29260-6170

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO 1240
COLUMBIA SC

This newsletter is a publication of BlueChoice HealthPlan, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

This newsletter is for BlueChoice HealthPlan members. It provides information only and does not replace the advice of your doctor. You always should see your doctor for personal medical advice.

Do you have questions about your BlueChoice HealthPlan coverage? Try our website at BlueChoiceSC.com. We're open 24 hours a day here!

*Member Services Phone Numbers:
(803) 766-8476 or 1-800-868-2528
8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Monday - Friday*

Email: BlueChoice.SC@BlueChoiceSC.com

Website: BlueChoiceSC.com



For healthy lifestyle tips, find us
at [Facebook.com/BlueChoiceSC](https://www.facebook.com/BlueChoiceSC).



Women's Health Newsletter

Great Expectations
FOR HEALTH