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Greetings!

Welcome to the Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield 2026 fourth quarter Newsletter. Your source for important health updates, helpful resources, and tips to support your well-being all year long!

Upcoming Events

Oct 6th

Member Health Advisory Committee / Virtual Meeting /
RSVP: MemberCommittee@mybcbswny.com / 1:30-3p

Oct 13th

Mammogram's with Roswell Park/ The Chautauqua
Center / 107 Institute St, Jamestown, NY 14701 / 9a-3p

Oct 16th

Breast Cancer Walk and Screenings / Johnnie B Wiley
Pavilion / 1100 Jefferson Ave, Buffalo, NY 14208 / 9a-3p

Oct 16th

Fresh Produce Pop-Up / JFK Community Center /
114 Hickory St, Buffalo NY, 14204 / 12-1p

Oct 31st

Community Baby Shower / Frank Merriweather
Library / 1324 Jefferson Ave, Buffalo, NY 14208 / 12-2p

Nov 21st

Winter Warming Event / Delavan Grider Comm Ctr /
877 E Delavan Ave, Buffalo, NY 14215 / 12-2p



OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH!

Screening can help find cancer early—sometimes before symptoms appear.



Breast Cancer Screening

Breast cancer happens when abnormal cells grow in one or both breasts. Screening can help find breast cancer early, including some cancers that are too small to feel or haven't caused symptoms.

Breast cancer may be easier to treat when it's found early.

Talk with your doctor about when you should start screening and how often you should be screened.



Mammograms are the best screening test for people at average risk of breast cancer.

Experts have different recommendations about when routine screening should begin and whether mammograms should be done every year or every two years.

AGE 40



Start at age 40 and have a mammogram every 1 or 2 years.

AGE 45



Start at age 45 and have a mammogram every year.

AGE 50



Start at age 50 and have a mammogram every 1 or 2 years.



Breast cancer isn't the only screening to keep on your radar. Other cancer screenings are important, too!



Colorectal Cancer Screening

What is colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer occurs when abnormal cells grow in the colon or rectum. These cells often begin in growths called polyps, although not all polyps become cancer.

Risk for colorectal cancer generally increases with age.

AGE
45

A key age to remember
Experts recommend beginning colorectal cancer screening at age 45 for people at average risk.

People at higher risk—including those with a family history of colorectal cancer—may need screening earlier or more often.

Know your risk. Know when to screen.

Talk with your doctor about which cancer screenings are right for you, when to start and how often you should be screened.



Questions about the new Medicaid changes?

We'll help you understand what's changing and how to stay covered

Starting January 1, 2027, some Medicaid members may need to renew their coverage every six months instead of once a year. Some members may also need to complete work or activity requirements. See if these changes may apply to you.

What are the new work requirements?

Some members may need to complete 80 hours of monthly activities, such as:

- Work
- Job training
- School
- Volunteering

Could this affect you?

It might, if you:

- Are age 19–64
- Qualify for Medicaid based on income
- Aren't eligible for Medicare

Don't miss a step



Many people lose coverage because they miss deadlines or important notices. Be sure to keep your contact information up to date with the state.

Check out Medicaid next steps:

<https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/stay-covered>

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ATTENTION: Language assistance services are available to you free of charge. Call 1-866-231-0847 (TTY 711).

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-866-231-0847 (TTY 711).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-866-231-0847 (TTY 711)。

HIV SCREENING

Testing is an important part of routine health care.

The CDC recommends that everyone get tested for HIV as part of regular medical care.

WHO SHOULD GET TESTED?

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends HIV testing for:

- People ages 15–65 as part of regular medical care.
- Anyone who is pregnant.
- People younger than 15 or older than 65 who are at higher risk for HIV.

Higher-risk activities can include having sex with someone who may have HIV or sharing needles, syringes, or other injection supplies.

You and your doctor can decide if HIV testing is right for you.

WHERE CAN YOU GET TESTED?

HIV testing is available at many:

Doctor's offices • Public health clinics • Hospitals • Planned Parenthood clinics

Home HIV saliva tests are also available at some drugstores or by mail. Choose only an HIV test approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

If a home test is positive, see a health care professional to confirm the result and discuss next steps.

HOW CAN YOU HELP PREVENT HIV?

• **Use condoms**

Use a condom every time you have sex.

• **Consider PrEP**

PrEP is medicine that can help prevent HIV for people at higher risk.

• **Support HIV treatment**

Encourage a sex or injection partner who has HIV to get treatment.

• **Don't share injection supplies**

If you inject drugs, don't share needles or other injection equipment.

HIV testing is quick, confidential, and an important part of taking care of your health.

Talk with your doctor about whether HIV testing is right for you.

Flu Vaccine: Your Questions Answered

The flu can make you very sick. A flu vaccine can help protect you and the people around you. Here are answers to common questions.

Is the flu really a big deal?

It can be. The flu can make you feel sick for a week or longer. It can be especially serious for young children, older adults, pregnant people, and people with health conditions. Even healthy people can get very sick.

Getting vaccinated is one of the best ways to protect yourself from the flu.

Can the flu vaccine give me the flu?

No. The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. You may have a sore arm, body aches, or a mild fever for a short time. These are common signs that your body is building protection.

Why do I need a flu vaccine every year?

Protection from the vaccine gets weaker over time, and flu viruses change. That's why the flu vaccine is updated each year. Most people ages 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year.

Can I still get the flu after getting vaccinated?

Yes. No vaccine works 100% of the time. It also takes about 2 weeks for your body to build protection.

But if you do get the flu, being vaccinated can help you avoid getting very sick or needing hospital care.

What if I don't like shots?

For some people, a nasal spray flu vaccine may be an option. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if it is right for you.

Protect Yourself. Protect Others.

Getting your flu vaccine doesn't just help protect you. It can also help protect your family, friends, and community—especially people who may become very sick from the flu.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about getting your flu vaccine today.

Contact us

Phone | 1-866-231-0847 (TTY 711)

www.bcbswny.com/stateplans

