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At Manatee Your Choice Health Plan, we're dedicated to finding ways to help our members live healthier lives. Our Nurse Advocate team of experienced and highly trained nurses and our additional Employee Health Benefits team (including behavioral health, pharmacy, nutrition, fitness and certified diabetes educator) are here when you need someone to guide you.

WHAT IS NURSE ADVOCACY?

For the YourChoice Health Plan at Manatee County Government, the concept of Medical Management is consistent with the entire YourChoice Health Plan in that it is an integrated model that is focused on relationship building with members and their providers in order to achieve the best results. Member Advocacy encompasses assisting, encouraging, and empowering our membership to take care of their health and that of their family through wellness services, education, community resources, and linkage to appropriate providers.

Nurse Advocates have multifaceted medical management responsibilities under Manatee YourChoice Health Plan where each Nurse engages in all functions, rather than assigning one Nurse to a specific discipline. While the Nurses tend to specialize in specific areas, the environment is an integrated one where each Nurse can provide the care to the member and the service needed by the provider.



OUR NURSE ADVOCATES MAY CALL YOU ON THE PHONE AND HELP YOU:

- Understand your diagnosis and treatment options
- Coordinate your care with your Primary Care Physician, Specialist and other providers
- Understand your medications and how to take them as prescribed
- Address barriers you may have with obtaining your medications
- Understand your plan of care
- Get support for you/your family/caregivers to keep you safe at home
- Understand your benefits
- Link with community resources
- Understand health issues related to aging

WHEN AND WHY WE CALL OUR MEMBERS:

If you've been in the hospital with a serious health condition or experienced complications, are living with multiple health conditions and finding it difficult to manage your daily activities, a NURSE ADVOCATE may call to help:

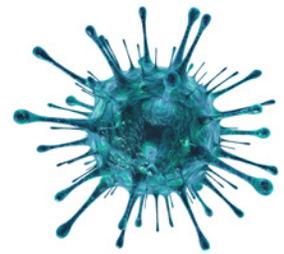
- Identify what's important to you, to manage your health condition such as asthma, cancer, COPD, diabetes, heart disease.
- Guide you to appropriate resources
- Keep you on the road to recovery by assisting you with your discharge instructions

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Nurse Advocates are provided as part of your plan benefits at no additional cost. If you or a family member could benefit from the Nurse Advocacy program, please call us Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at **(941) 741-2963 option 3.**

COLD & FLU: MAKING SENSE OF THE SYMPTOMS

Both a cold and the flu are infections that typically affect the respiratory tract. They are caused by viruses, which means they can't be cured by an antibiotic. One of the best ways to help fight the common cold or the respiratory symptoms of the flu is with plenty of fluids and rest.



Here are a few of the common respiratory symptoms related to the cold, flu and bacterial infections. If any symptoms worsen or continue — call your doctor.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU	BACTERIAL INFECTIONS OF THE RESPIRATORY TRACT
Onset	Gradual	Sudden	Gradual; occasionally acute
Fever	Rare	Typical – high (over 101°F) and lasting 3 to 4 days	Typical – high (over 101°F)
Cough	Hacking	Nonproductive; can become severe	Can be dry or productive
Headache	Rare	Prominent	Sometimes
Myalgia (aching muscles)	Slight	Usual; often severe	Sometimes
Fatigue, weakness	Very mild	Can last up to 2 to 3 weeks	Common
Extreme exhaustion	Rare	Early and prominent	Rare
Chest discomfort	None	Common	Common
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes	Rare
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU AVOID COMING IN CONTACT WITH COMMON COLD AND FLU VIRUSES:

- If you know someone has a cold or the flu, give them plenty of space. The virus is spread through airborne transmission or personal contact.
- Eat a well-balanced, healthy diet and drink plenty of water and get a good night's sleep.
- Get a flu shot if you are age 50 or older, have a weakened immune system, have certain chronic health problems, or if you will be pregnant during flu season.
- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid sharing mugs, cups, utensils or towels.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

The CDC and WHO are actively monitoring the outbreak of a new coronavirus strain called the "2019-nCoV" causing respiratory illness. Human coronaviruses are usually spread from an infected person to others through the air by coughing and sneezing and through close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death. People with heart and lung disease or weakened immune systems, as well as infants and older adults, are at higher risk for lower respiratory tract illness.

Remember to take everyday preventive actions that are always recommended to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible. Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Get up-to-date, reliable information at www.cdc.gov/ncov.

CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF HEART DISEASE

(From the American Heart Association)

It's true: Heart disease is the No. 1 killer in women. Yet, only 1 in 5 American women believe that heart disease is her greatest health threat.

Take Amy Heintz, for example, an avid marathon runner and fitness devotee. Heart disease was the furthest thing from her mind – until she collapsed during an early-morning workout. A diagnosis of heart disease followed, and it took her completely by surprise.

"I really couldn't believe this happened to me," Amy says. "I thought of myself as a healthy person, and I was exercising when it happened. I truly believed I had pulled a muscle." Which is why her friend called 9-1-1, not Amy.

The truth is, women are less likely to call 9-1-1 when experiencing symptoms of a heart attack themselves. It simply doesn't occur to them to do so. And why would it? The bulk of media attention on the disease is focused on men.

HERE ARE MORE UNSETTLING FACTS:

- Heart disease causes 1 in 3 women's deaths each year, killing approximately one woman every minute.
- 90 percent of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease.
- Since 1984, more women than men have died each year from heart disease and the gap between men and women's survival continues to widen.
- The symptoms of heart disease can be different in women vs. men, and are often misunderstood.
- While 1 in 31 American women dies from breast cancer each year, 1 in 3 dies of heart disease.
- It's time to focus on finding, and becoming the solution. Here's what you need to know about the causes of heart disease and ways you can prevent it.

WHAT CAUSES HEART DISEASE?

Heart disease affects the blood vessels and cardiovascular system. Numerous problems can result from this, many of which are related to a process called atherosclerosis, a condition that develops when plaque builds up in the walls of the arteries. This buildup narrows the arteries, making it harder for blood to flow through. If a blood clot forms, it can stop the blood flow. This can cause a heart attack or stroke.

BUT IT DOESN'T END THERE. HEART DISEASE CAN TAKE MANY OTHER FORMS AS WELL:

Heart failure or congestive heart failure

This means that the heart is still working, but it isn't pumping blood as well as it should, or getting enough oxygen.

Arrhythmia or an abnormal rhythm of the heart

This means the heart is either beating too fast, too slow or irregularly. This can affect how well the heart is functioning and whether or not the heart is able to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs.

Heart valve problems

This can lead to the heart not opening enough to allow proper blood flow. Sometimes the heart valves don't close and blood leaks through, or the valve leaflets bulge or prolapse into the upper chamber, causing blood to flow backward through them.

How can I prevent it?

Many things can put you at risk for these problems – one's you can control, and others that you can't. But the key takeaway is that with the right information, education and care, heart disease in women can be treated, prevented and even ended.

Studies show that healthy choices have resulted in 330 fewer women dying from heart disease per day.

Here are a few lifestyle changes you should make:

- Don't smoke
- Manage your blood sugar
- Get your blood pressure under control
- Lower your cholesterol
- Know your family history
- Stay active
- Lose or manage your weight
- Eat healthy



American
Heart
Month

F E B R U A R Y