

Spring 2025

PrimeLines

A complimentary publication from PrimeWest Health

Member Services: 1-866-431-0801

It's Time for Ticks!

Ticks are most active from April through September. Because ticks can carry serious diseases, it's important to know how to prevent tick bites and how to remove ticks from your body.

Preventing tick bites

Be aware that ticks are common in wooded areas and areas with overgrown grass, shrubs, and brush.

Wear light-colored clothes that cover your body (long pants and long-sleeved shirts). Tuck your pant legs into your socks.

Apply an approved insect repellent. DEET and picaridin are 2 common active ingredients you can look for. Read the product labels and safety information carefully.

Check your clothing, gear, pets, and body for ticks when you come back inside. Be sure to check your head and hair, in and around your ears, under your arms, and behind your knees. A shower can help wash off ticks.

Getting rid of a tick

- **Remove the tick right away.** Use pointed tweezers to grab the tick near its head or mouth, and grab it as close to your skin as possible. Pull the tick straight up and off.
- **Clean the area** and your hands with soap and water or rubbing alcohol. You don't need to apply any medication to the area.
- **Dispose of the tick** by flushing it or putting it in a sealed container.

Keep an eye on the area for 30 days. If you develop a rash, especially one that looks like a "bull's-eye," or have a fever or flu-like symptoms, seek medical care right away.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



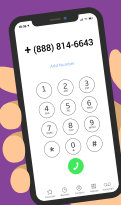
Need a Ride to Your Health Care Appointment? Call Our Member Transportation Line!

If you need transportation to and from health care services that PrimeWest Health covers, call our Member Transportation Line to schedule a ride.

Call **1-888-814-6643**.

TTY users call **1-800-627-3529**
or **711**.

These calls are free.



Call us to set up transportation as far in advance as you can. In most cases, we need notice at least 2 days in advance. But don't wait to call! As soon as *you* know you'll need a ride, let *us* know! If you reschedule or cancel your health care appointment, be sure to call the Transportation Line to reschedule or cancel your ride.

Other transportation tips

- 📍 Have the name and address of your destination ready when you call. It's also good to have an idea of how long your appointment may take. This helps with scheduling return transportation.
- 📍 Tell Member Transportation Line staff about any needs or requests you have. For example, needing someone to walk with you from the door to the car or wanting to be picked up at a certain exit. Please confirm this information each time you schedule a ride.
- 📍 Make sure the Member Transportation Line has your correct phone number. Be sure to check your phone for messages about your upcoming ride.
- 📍 Keep a good relationship with your transportation provider. Try to be on time for rides and avoid last-minute cancellations.



Dentures & the Dentist

If you have full or partial dentures, you may wonder whether you need dental checkups. The answer is YES! Dental health isn't just about teeth, and there are important things your dentist can do for you if you have dentures, including the following:

- Make sure your dentures fit right. The way your dentures fit can change over time. Dentures that don't fit right can be uncomfortable and make it hard to eat. If your dentures aren't fitting properly, your dentist can adjust them. Don't try to do this on your own!
- Keep your mouth healthy. Having your mouth and gums checked regularly can help prevent gum disease. If you have a partial denture and remaining teeth, regular dental visits can help keep those teeth healthy.
- Talk with you about how oral health relates to your overall health. Poor oral health puts you at risk for things like heart disease and endocarditis (an infection of the heart's inner lining). If you have diabetes, poor oral health can lead to poor blood sugar control.

- Spot other health concerns. Your dentist can identify early signs of oral cancer as well as throat, tonsil, and tongue cancer. They will also check for signs of osteoporosis (bone and tooth loss), HIV / AIDS (lesions in the mouth), and Alzheimer's disease (worsening oral health). Many people with dentures are older, and the risk for many of these conditions increases with age. This makes being checked by a professional extremely important.

So, get those dentures to the dentist for a checkup! Your smile—and your health—will be better for it!

Sources: American Dental Association, Mayo Clinic



New Guideline for Adult Pneumonia Vaccination

A new guideline from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults age 50 and over get vaccinated against pneumonia. Adults ages 19 – 49 with certain conditions or risk factors should also get vaccinated.

What's changed?

In late 2024, the CDC lowered the recommended age for vaccination from 65 to 50.

Why get vaccinated?

Pneumonia is an infection that affects your lungs and makes it hard to breathe. It can cause fever, cough, and fatigue. Pneumonia can be severe: the CDC reports that more than 41,000 people in the United States died from pneumonia in 2022.

What's the bottom line?

If you're 50 or over, talk to your health care provider about getting vaccinated! It's your best bet for avoiding a potentially serious illness. The adult vaccine is given in one or 2 doses, depending on the type of vaccine.

Source: CDC



Adults age 50 and over should be vaccinated against pneumonia.

What Can Fiber Do for You?

A lot! Fiber can help you do the following:

- ➔ Maintain regular bowel movements and relieve constipation
- ➔ Manage your blood sugar and cholesterol
- ➔ Manage your weight, which can improve your overall health

If you aren't getting enough fiber in your diet from things like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, you may want to talk to your provider about a fiber supplement. They may be able to prescribe one for you. A supplement called psyllium may be a good option.

What is psyllium?

Psyllium is a plant-based fiber. You may find psyllium sold under the brand name Metamucil®, but the same ingredient is in the generic products. Just make sure "psyllium husk" is on the label. It comes in powder and capsules.

Can it help with weight management?

Psyllium can help with weight management because it can make you feel fuller, and this can reduce snacking and overeating. However, psyllium is not a magic weight loss solution. A healthy lifestyle that includes working with your provider, exercising, and eating nutritious foods is the best place to start for weight loss.

Check if psyllium is right for you

Always talk to your provider before starting any medication or supplement. Psyllium may cause bloating and gas, especially in the first few days. You can ease this by starting at a lower dose and slowly increasing it. As always, be sure to read the directions carefully.

Source: Cleveland Clinic

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Services and Resources

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that usually shows up in early childhood. It can cause social and behavioral challenges and make communication difficult. There are many different signs and symptoms of ASD, and they are different for everyone. This can make knowing how to best help a child with ASD confusing. Having the right services and resources can help.

Services

Services that can help children under age 21 with ASD are called “Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention (EIDBI).” These services are designed to provide education, help the person with ASD be more independent, and improve the quality of life for the person and their family

A “Comprehensive Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (CMDE)” is required to determine eligibility for EIDBI services. Providers who can give a CMDE, as well as EIDBI service providers, are listed in PrimeWest Health’s *Provider and Pharmacy Directory*. Go to www.primewest.org/programs and click the name of your program. Then click *Provider and Pharmacy Directory* in the orange box on the left side of the page labeled “Member Materials.” All EIDBI services must be approved by PrimeWest Health in advance. This is called a Service Authorization. You can work with your provider



to submit a Service Authorization. Or, you can submit one on your own. To learn how, call Member Services.

Resources

The Minnesota Autism Resource Portal has resources and information to help parents and other caregivers learn more about ASD and helpful services. The portal is at <https://mn.gov/autism>.

Questions

Let us know if you need help finding a provider or have questions about Service Authorizations. We also provide care coordination services. Call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** and ask to speak with a behavioral health care coordinator to learn more. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.

Talk to A NURSE

Hurt or sick and not sure what to do? Try our 24-hour nurse line! Just call **1-866-201-4601** (TTY **711**). You’ll get advice about whether you can take care of yourself at home, if you need to make an appointment with your health care provider, or even if you need to go to the emergency room.* Calls to the nurse line are free.

In an emergency that needs treatment right away, call **911 or go to the nearest emergency room.*

Pregnant?

Here Are 5 Things to Do and Know!

- 1 **Tell your county or MinnesotaCare worker.** They will update your eligibility to show you are pregnant. This means you won't have copays or premiums while you're pregnant, and for up to 12 months after pregnancy.
- 2 **Make a prenatal appointment.** Do this as soon as you know you are pregnant to lower the risk of complications. Your first appointment should be within the first 8 – 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- 3 **Get a car seat from your local Public Health agency.** Tell them you are a PrimeWest Health member and they will set you up with a car seat and make sure it is installed correctly.
- 4 **Ask questions about your health and your child's health.** Call Member Services at the number below and ask for Sheila or Jennifer K.
- 5 **Learn about your benefits.** The links on the web page at www.primewest.org/pregnancy describe many of these benefits. For more information, call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 and ask for Sheila or Jennifer K. TTY users call 1-800-627-3529 or 711. These calls are free.



Medications for Treating Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)

An estimated 6.1 million people in the United States have opioid use disorder (OUD). A person with OUD has a pattern of misusing opioids—a type of drug used to treat pain—in a way that negatively affects their life.

If you have OUD, it can be fatal, so it's important to get treatment right away. Your provider will talk with you about different treatment options, including medication. It can be helpful to know a little about some of the medications they may mention.

- **Buprenorphine** can help lessen the effects of withdrawal and ease cravings. It is for people who are in the early stages of withdrawal.
- Buprenorphine can be prescribed alone or it can be prescribed with another medication called **naloxone**. Naloxone can help deter people from misusing buprenorphine.

- The buprenorphine/naloxone combination may be prescribed under the brand name **Suboxone®**.
- **Methadone** is another option for reducing cravings and withdrawal. To make sure it is taken safely and does not cause adverse effects, methadone prescribed for OUD is administered at special clinics. Before being prescribed methadone for OUD, you need to have a comprehensive assessment. If you need help scheduling this, call PrimeWest Health Member Services at 1-866-431-0801. TTY users call 1-800-627-3529 or 711. These calls are free.

Your provider will talk with you about which medications are right for you. PrimeWest Health's *List of Covered Drugs* tells you about your coverage information. Go to www.primewest.org/programs and click the name of your program. Then click *List of Covered Drugs* in the orange box on the left side of the page labeled "Member Materials."

Sources: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

A map of the United States is shown, filled with a collage of various colored pills and capsules. A purple banner is overlaid on the map with white text.

6.1 million people in the United States have opioid use disorder (OUD).

Recognizing and Reporting Fraud and Abuse

Medical fraud and abuse can happen to *anyone*, and it affects *everyone* by leading to higher health care costs and taxes. That's what makes stopping fraud and abuse so important. Below are examples of fraud you might experience.

Fraud involving health care providers

- A provider billing for services you never had, or supplies you never got
- A provider charging twice for a service or item that you only got once
- A provider offering you something of value in exchange for choosing them as your provider. For example, offering you cash or lottery tickets if you schedule an appointment with them.

Fraud involving prescriptions

- A company offering you a drug that hasn't been approved
- A pharmacy substituting a more expensive drug for a cheaper one
- A pharmacy refilling a prescription after you no longer need it

Fraud involving other individuals

- A person stealing your identification or PrimeWest Health Member ID card and submitting false claims in your name

If you think someone has committed fraud or used your health care benefits or your identity, report it right away. Call the PrimeWest Health Compliance Hotline at **1-866-763-2925**. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free. You can also email our Compliance team at compliance@primewest.org. Please do not include personal information in emails.



Service Accessibility Survey Information

PrimeWest Health surveyed home health providers to learn about barriers they face when providing services to members in our Special Needs BasicCare (SNBC) and Prime Health Complete (HMO SNP) programs. This information helps us know how we can help home health providers serve you better. You can view the survey results and next steps on our website. Visit www.primewest.org/snbc or www.primewest.org/phc depending on your program. Then click *SNBC Service Accessibility Survey Information* in the yellow box labeled "Other Important Plan Information" on the left side of the screen.

If you need help finding a home health provider, call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801**. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.



Let's Be Social!

Give us a follow on Facebook and Instagram! PrimeWest Health on social media is a great source for bite-sized health education with links to more information from trusted and reliable sources. It's also a great way to check out what PrimeWest Health staff members are up to in the community. If you notice we'll be at an event near you, stop by and say "hi!"

Here are some snapshots of the fun we had in 2024. We hope to connect with you in 2025—on social media and in person!



Help Manage Your Diabetes with Exercise and Nutrition

Exercising and eating right can help you manage your blood sugar, improve your overall health, and feel better.

Exercise

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends most people get 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week. You should spread your activity throughout the week. A goal might be to exercise for 20 – 30 minutes each day.

Be sure to check your blood sugar before you exercise. Exercising when your blood sugar is too high or too low can cause serious problems. You should check your blood sugar again when you're done exercising.

Talk with your health care provider about an exercise plan that is right for you and then get started getting moving!

Good nutrition

Your provider can help you come up with a meal plan that helps keep your blood sugar under control *and* includes foods you like. Your provider can also refer you to a nutritionist, dietician, or diabetes educator who can help. Some general tips for healthy eating with diabetes are below.

- Limit added sugar. This includes sweetened drinks!
- Try to eat whole grains instead of refined grains. Look for labels that say "whole grain" instead of "enriched."

- Focus on non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, spinach, and green beans.
- Limit processed foods.
- Choose lean protein (for example, skinless chicken breast, round steak and roast, pork loin, and plain Greek yogurt) and plant-based protein (for example, chickpeas, tofu, and beans).

Important Screenings for People with Diabetes

Talk to your provider about how often you should have these screenings.

Blood pressure – People with diabetes are 2 times as likely to have high blood pressure as those without diabetes. Untreated high blood pressure increases your risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems, and kidney disease. High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so getting screened is important.

Retinal or dilated eye exam – Diabetes is the #1 cause of vision loss in people ages 18 – 64. An annual eye exam can detect problems early so you can get treatment and protect your vision.

HbA1c – This test measures your average blood sugar over the past 2 – 3 months. Your provider can use this information to check how well your treatment plan is working and make changes if needed.

Sources: American Diabetes Association, CDC, Johns Hopkins Medicine

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Health and wellness or prevention information

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NOTE: The information in this magazine is not professional medical advice. It is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment. Do not ignore your health care provider's advice or wait to ask for it because of something you read here. Links to other websites are provided as a resource only. PrimeWest Health does not endorse, recommend, or pay for products or services offered by such sites.

1-866-431-0801 (toll free); TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

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ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

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請注意，如果您需要免費協助傳譯這份文件，請撥打上面的電話號碼。

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, veuillez appeler au numéro ci-dessus.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

ဟ်သုဉ်ဟ်သးဘဉ်တက့ၢ်. ဖဲနမ့ၢ်လိဉ်ဘဉ်တၢ်မၤစၤကလိလၢတၢ်ကကျိးထံဝဲဒၣ်လံာ် တီလံာ်မိတခါအံၤန့ၣ်,ကိးဘဉ် လိတဲစိနီၣ်ဂံၢ်လၢထးအံၤန့ၣ်တက့ၢ်.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

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Hubachiisa. Dokumentiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenname bilbili.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la'aan ah ee tarjumaadda (afcelinta) qoraalkan, lambarka kore wac.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, llame al número indicado arriba.

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