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# Together for Better Health



## VACCINES: Important to your good health



Some people call them immunizations. Others call them vaccinations or shots. Whatever you call them, immunizations are one of the best weapons we have against many serious diseases.

This newsletter offers information from First Plan Blue and the Minnesota Department of Health on shots you and your family need to stay healthy.

**See more stories inside!**

## Get help to STOP SMOKING

Tobacco use causes one of every six deaths in Minnesota. About 112,000 children who today are under the age of 18 will die in their adult years from diseases caused by smoking. People ages 18-24 are smoking at twice the rate of older adults. Many of them start as “social” smokers to “fit in,” only to find later that they have become addicted and cannot quit on their own.

Help is available to those who want to stop smoking. **The BluePrint for Health Stop-Smoking program is available free to First Plan Blue members.**

Call 1-888-662-2583.



# Together for Better Health

For a healthier life, become a partner  
with your doctor and your health plan.

This newsletter shows you  
how to make the most of your  
health care partnership with First Plan Blue.

# Vaccines needed at all ages – infancy through adulthood

Not only are vaccinations important during the growing-up years, they're good for adults, too. You're never too old to be immunized!

When you make an appointment, ask for a complete Child & Teen Checkup. These exams ensure your child receives all the right shots and screenings.

**Babies, children and pre-teens** all need specific shots starting at birth and at 2, 4 and 6 months old, then again between 12-23 months. Boosters are needed between 4-6 years of age, then again when they're 11-12.

**Teens** need shots too, and maybe a tetanus booster. Check with your health professional. Young adults at college should ask about risk of meningococcal disease and the need for a vaccination.

Many **adults** also may need a pneumococcal vaccine (see story below). If you haven't had a tetanus shot in 10 years, you need a booster dose! Call your clinic if you get a deep or dirty wound.

It's a good idea to keep your own record of your children's immunizations. Ask your doctor or nurse to write down shots given at each visit, note the date, and keep the record handy.

## Pneumococcal vaccine protects seniors, people at risk

Disease due to "streptococcus pneumoniae" is serious threat, especially to older adults. A vaccine is available, but not many people age 65 and older receive it.

Ask about getting a pneumococcal shot when you get your flu shot. When in doubt, vaccinate! A re-vaccination will not hurt you.

### Who should receive the pneumococcal vaccine?

- People age 65 or older.
- Adults living in nursing homes.
- People age 2 and older who have chronic lung or heart disease, diabetes, other chronic health conditions, or a weakened immune system.

You recently received a Being Well booklet in the mail that includes an immunization schedule. Call Customer Service at 724-3083 or toll free at 800-635-4159 if you would like another booklet.

## Health plans measure quality of care

Each year, health plans measure how many members receive certain health services. This process goes by the name HEDIS. We share results with our members. A summary of our 2003 HEDIS report appears below, with comparisons to 2002:

### Childhood Immunizations

Children who turned 2, were continuously enrolled 12 months prior to birthday, and received the following vaccinations: **DTP** - diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis **IPV** - polio **MMR** - measles, mumps, rubella **Hib** - Haemophilus influenzae B **HepB** - Hepatitis B **VZV** - varicella **Combo 1** - all vaccines except varicella **Combo 2** - all vaccines

PMAP MEMBERS	2002	2003
<b>DTP</b>	60%	71%
<b>IPV</b>	72%	77%
<b>MMR</b>	73%	80%
<b>Hib</b>	61%	68%
<b>HepB</b>	72%	84%
<b>VZV</b>	54%	68%
<b>Combo 1</b>	47%	54%
<b>Combo 2</b>	37%	50%

### Adolescent Immunizations

Members who turned 13, were continuously enrolled 12 months prior to their birthday, and received these vaccinations:

PMAP MEMBERS	2002	2003
<b>MMR</b>	70%	85%
<b>HepB</b>	34%	64%
<b>VZV</b>	7%	11%
<b>Combo 1</b>	32%	62%
<b>Combo 2</b>	5%	9%

### Cervical Cancer Screening

Women 18-64 continuously enrolled during the measurement year and two years prior who had a Pap test for cervical cancer.

PMAP MEMBERS	2002	2003
<b>Rate</b>	69%	81%

### Medications for People with Asthma

Members with persistent asthma age 5-56 being prescribed medications acceptable as primary therapy for long-term control of asthma.

PMAP MEMBERS	2002	2003
<b>Ages 5-9</b>	33%	75%
<b>Ages 10-17</b>	62%	38%
<b>Ages 18-56</b>	50%	55%
<b>Combined</b>	54%	52%

### Diabetes Care

Type I and II diabetics 18-75 years old, continuously enrolled during measurement year, who had the following:

PMAP MEMBERS	2002	2003
<b>HbA1c Test</b>	89%	83%
<b>Poor HbA1c</b>	32%	40%
<b>Eye Exam</b>	84%	84%
<b>LDL-C Screening</b>	65%	75%
<b>LDL "130</b>	39%	49%

## Helpful advice from First Plan Blue

**Q. I would like to find a dentist. What do I do?**

**A. Dental coverage for First Plan Blue members is provided by the Delta Dental Community Network. A list of dentists and tips on choosing one are part of the Provider Directory you received when you enrolled in First Plan Blue. If you or a family member can't find a dentist, call Delta's Customer Service Department at 1-800-774-0949. For TTY/Hearing Impaired, call 1-800-916-9514. The Delta staff will help you.**

## Health at Work offers care support

First Plan Blue members with certain chronic conditions can get support to manage their health. Care support programs now fall under the new Health at Work name. The programs themselves have not changed. Members still have access to the same helpful services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you are eligible for care support, you will receive a letter inviting you to take part in the Health at Work program.

## Customer Service questions?

Our Customer Service staff is ready to answer your questions 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Call 724-3083 in the Duluth area or toll free 800-635-4159 outside of Duluth. Our TTY number is 218-727-9870.

## Have a health question?

If you are sick or injured and aren't sure what to do, call the 24-hour nurse phone line. Specially trained nurses will help you decide if you need to seek care immediately, or if it's something you can handle at home. The number is 800-622-9524.

## Women: You can live longer, stronger lives

Heart disease and stroke are the No. 1 and No. 3 killers of women. Fortunately, you can do a lot to protect yourself against these diseases. Your doctor can't do it for you. Neither can a hospital. Only YOU can manage and reduce your risk by the choices you make every day.

The American Heart Association offers this advice for women:

- Learn your risks. Women face six major heart risk factors that can be prevented, controlled or treated:
 

high blood pressure	physical inactivity
high blood cholesterol	overweight or obesity
tobacco smoke	diabetes
- Work with your doctor to reduce your risks. Here are 10 simple ways you can take charge of your health:
  1. Near your birthday every year, make a date with your doctor. Have your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels checked.
  2. Tone up as you tune in. Step, march or jog in place when you watch TV. Start at 15 minutes a day and work up to at least 30.
  3. Drink lots of water.
  4. Keep unhealthy foods hidden away and put raw veggies and fruit in plain sight.
  5. Choose lean beef, chicken or turkey (skin removed), fruits, veggies, low-fat/nonfat dairy, and pasta.
  6. Cut down on salt.
  7. Quit smoking.
  8. Lose excess weight by cutting back on calories and exercising more.
  9. Don't worry about slip-ups, but get back on track fast.
  10. Reward yourself for making good choices by doing something healthy that you enjoy.

Attention. If you want free help translating this information, call First Plan Blue at 1-800-635-4159.

ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية في ترجمة هذه المعلومات، فاتصل على الرقم الموجود أعلاه.

កំណត់សម្គាល់: បើអ្នកចង់បានព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមអំពីការបកប្រែឯកសារនេះជាភាសាខ្មែរស្តីពីសុខភាពស្ត្រី ទេសសេវាសេដ្ឋកិច្ច

Pažnja. Ako vam je potrebna besplatna pomoć za prevod ove informacije, nazovite gornji broj.

Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no dawb, thov hu rau tus xov tooj saud.

ໂປຼດຊາບ. ຖ້າຫາກທ່ານຕ້ອງການ ການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອ ໃນການແປ ຂໍ້ຄວາມດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ພໍດີ, ຈົ່ງໂທ ຕາມເລກໂທ ທີ່ຢູ່ຂ້າງເທິງນີ້.

Hubaddhu. Yoo akka odeeffannoon kun sii hiikamu gargaarsa tolaa feeta ta'e, lakkoofsa armaa olii bilbili.

Внимание. Если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в переводе этой информации, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkanii oo lacag la'aan ah, wac lambarka kore.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame al número que aparece más arriba.

Chú Ý. Nếu quý vị cần dịch thông tin này miễn phí, xin gọi số nêu trên.

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by calling (218) 724-3083 (voice), 1-800-635-4159 (toll free), (218) 727-9870 (TTY), 711, or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-877-627-3848 (speech to speech relay service).

First Plan Blue is administered by First Plan of Minnesota, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.