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Your health partner for life

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Northwest Health online
Go to blog.ghc.org to experience the digital version of this magazine. To receive the magazine via email, log in to MyGroupHealth on ghc.org and search "Communication Preferences." Choose which information, including the magazine, you'd like to receive via email.

Vol. 57, No.1, Fall 2016. *Northwest Health* (ISSN 1081-8928) is published by Group Health Cooperative, 320 Westlake Ave. N., Suite 100, Seattle, WA 98109. *Northwest Health* is an official Group Health publication, but opinions expressed by authors do not and are not meant to substitute for your doctor's or health team's advice or treatment. ©2016 Group Health Cooperative. All rights reserved.



The National Committee for Quality Assurance has awarded Group Health Cooperative its highest accreditation status of "Excellent" for service and clinical quality that meet or exceed NCQA's rigorous requirements for consumer protection and quality improvement.

Group Health does not discriminate against qualified persons in admissions, services, or employment on the basis of age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, or any other basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law. Carolyn Barton is Group Health's 504 compliance officer, responsible for coordination efforts.



Stephen Tarnoff, MD (left) and Scott Armstrong

Our enduring commitment to serving you

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN Group Health's recent campaign, "This Is Healthy," where we invite you to help us redefine health on your terms. Many of you have shared the ways you make healthy relationships, choices, and commitments part of your everyday lives. We know health care happens both in and out of the medical center, and your feedback and priorities, including those healthy everyday moments, help us focus our work.

Our strategic plan starts with you, our members and patients. We've heard from you that we must continue to innovate in how we bring you the highest quality, safest care that is affordable and easy to access. Each day we work to make your experience even better.

Don't just take our word for it. Group Health was rated the top performing health plan in the nation* in the 2016 eValue8™ survey, an independent review that looks at patient care and safety, chronic care population management, and cost control.

There also are many ways we're improving the care experience for you. For example, we are building a new medical center in Burien, improving MyGroupHealth, and preparing to join forces with Kaiser Permanente, a nationally recognized nonprofit health care leader.

In the spring, eligible voting members of Group Health formally approved the proposed acquisition by Kaiser Permanente, which is now undergoing regulatory review by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner. You've told us that quality, stability, improvements and investments in our facilities, technology, service, and affordability matter to you. The opportunity to join with Kaiser Permanente means we will be able to meet and exceed these expectations. Our commitment to high quality, safe care will not waver. The proposed acquisition will not change your current health care plan, benefits, or the physicians and care teams you rely on. Expect to hear more as this process moves forward.

Thank you for trusting us as partners in your health. We're committed to staying on the leading edge of health care, and helping you make sense of today's health-related news and choices as you define "This Is Healthy" on your terms.

Scott Armstrong
President and CEO
Group Health Cooperative

Stephen Tarnoff, MD
Chief Medical Executive
President, Group Health Physicians

nwnotes

Taking a ride toward broader horizons



Can a bicycle be the path to a healthier lifestyle, expanded community awareness, and individual empowerment for underserved youth in the Puget Sound area? You bet!

Group Health supports Cascade Bicycle Club's Major Taylor Project, a year-round, youth development cycling program that introduces middle school and high school students from diverse communities to recreational cycling, healthy living, bicycle maintenance, and road safety awareness. The program encourages youth to expand their worldview and explore the idea that they have the power to change themselves and their community.

Thanks to our sponsorship, the program expanded from 10 to 16 middle schools and high schools in 2016, making it available to nearly 400 kids in Central and South King County and Tacoma every year.

In addition to weekly rides and lessons in everything from map reading to healthy nutrition, students may participate in an eight-week bicycle maintenance course that culminates in getting a bike. Learn more at blog.ghc.org/major-taylor-project.

Don't miss the Annual Membership Meeting

Celebrating our past and present accomplishments and our bright future is the theme of the 69th Group Health Cooperative Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, Dec. 3, at the Washington State Convention Center in downtown Seattle.

Come enjoy a brunch, displays of historic photos and artifacts, and more from 10:30 a.m. to noon, followed immediately by our annual business meeting. Highlights of the meeting will include presentations by Susan Byington, chair of the Cooperative; Scott Armstrong, president and CEO; and Susan Mullaney, regional president designate, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Washington.

For more details, and to reserve a spot at the meeting, go to ghc.org/annualmeeting. Please make your reservation by Monday, Nov. 28.



Prepare now for flu season

Flu vaccines are available at all Group Health Medical Centers clinics from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays, and at CareClinics,

located at select Bartell Drugs in the Puget Sound area, daily. The vaccines are free to all Group Health members. For details about your care options, go to ghc.org and click under "Need care now?"

COVER & INSIDE FRONT COVER PHOTOS: © TIMOTHY AGUIERO PHOTOGRAPHY

*Group Health Cooperative's commercial HMO was rated the top health plan in the United States in the 2016 eValue8™ survey. Managed by the National Business Coalition on Health, eValue8™ is an evidence-based resource created by business coalitions and employers like Marriott and General Motors to measure and evaluate health plan performance.

Taking life too seriously?

Surround yourself with reminders to laugh and lighten up. Keep a silly toy on your desk. Post cartoons on your fridge. Frame photos of you and your family or friends having fun. Refresh frequently.



FOR MEDICARE PART D MEMBERS:

New online services, new ID card

Beginning Jan. 1, 2017, you'll have access to our new pharmacy benefits manager, OptumRx, with expanded online services that allow you to:

- View your prescription drug history at any pharmacy you've used while a member of Group Health.
- Locate pharmacies that belong to your health plan's network.
- Price medications based on your pharmacy benefit and selected pharmacy.
- View details about reimbursement claims you've submitted.
- Find Mail Order Pharmacy details, formulary lists, and more at ghc.org. Search "Pharmacy Services."



As part of this upgrade, you'll receive a new Group Health ID card in December. Your new card, with updated pharmacy codes, **will be activated on Jan. 1.**

Be sure to use your old card until the end of the year, then discard it.

Easing the way to winter slumber

The shorter days of winter and colder weather can often send sleep patterns a bit topsy-turvy. Charles Anderson, MD, a pulmonary physician at Group Health Tacoma Medical Center, offers these tips for nurturing healthy, healing cold-weather slumber:

Get moving. Regular exercise goes a long way toward improving winter sleep and fending off weight gain, which can worsen conditions like sleep apnea. If you can exercise outdoors—and soak up some natural light while you're at it—all the better.

Keep your nasal passages moist. Dry air from indoor forced air heating can cause more congestion and lead to more snoring—and breathing patterns that aren't conducive to restful sleep. To remedy this, stay hydrated during the day, use a humidifier during the night, or try a neti pot to flush saline solution through your nasal passages before bedtime.

Eat lighter fare for dinner. Cold weather is often accompanied by warm, heavy meals that aren't great for a good night's sleep. Instead of meat and potatoes, try making your own healthy soup for dinner (see page 13 for tips and a recipe), and check out blog.ghc.org for other healthy recipes.

Stay cool—but not cold—at night. "We generally sleep better when it's a little cooler," says Dr. Anderson. Remember to lower the thermostat before you go to bed, but not too much. Many people find around 65 degrees to be a comfortable setting.

For more tips, go to ghc.org and search "sleep tips."



Safety first, all the time

Keeping patients safe is a top priority at Group Health. It's every patient's right and every staff member and physician's responsibility. We promote safe care by:

- Encouraging patients and families to be active, involved, and informed members of their health care team.
- Creating a culture of safety in which we continually evaluate and improve our systems of care.
- Regularly reviewing your health care providers to make sure they maintain the high standards that we expect and you deserve.
- Providing patient safety and error prevention training for all staff.
- Supporting the standards of the Leapfrog Group, a national consortium that focuses on several hospital care requirements to improve patient safety.

For more details about patient safety at Group Health, go to ghc.org and search "patient safety."



PHOTO © TIMOTHY AGUIERO PHOTOGRAPHY



It's coming: New Burien Medical Center

The same great Group Health care, clinicians, and services—all under one roof. More spacious exam rooms, lobby, and waiting areas. And a covered drop-off area. These are some of the improvements coming your way when the new Burien Medical Center opens in summer 2017.

Groundbreaking for the new facility, which will be adjacent to the existing clinic, was held in the summer and construction is now underway. The existing clinic will remain open, with normal operations, during construction of the new facility.

The new clinic will offer Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Physical Therapy, Occupational Medicine, Lab, Pharmacy, and X-ray—plus Eye Care.

Update your mobile app by Nov. 1



If you're like many who love using our mobile app to refill prescriptions, you'll want to download the latest version by Nov. 1.

Our new pharmacy management system launches in early November and requires the latest version of the app to process mobile pharmacy refill orders. For more details about the app, visit ghc.org and search "mobile app."

A doctor to call your own

Big benefits come with long-term partnerships



OFFICE VISITS

Family physician Debra Gore, MD, with patient Anna Halloran at Riverfront Medical Center in Spokane.

There are plenty of ways to get care in a hurry when you don't have time to schedule a visit with your primary care doctor. But finding a doctor you like, and seeing them for most of your health issues, has some significant benefits too, as Sam Gibson Jr. and Anna Halloran point out.

At the Port Orchard Medical Center, family physician Ginny Sugimoto, MD, has been 49-year-old Gibson's doctor for about 10 years, and he chuckles when he says that she's seen him through "a few" health challenges: severe peripheral neuropathy, respiratory failure, paralysis, and high blood pressure.

"I had respiratory failure in 2009 and was on life support for about 10 days," he says. "When I got out of the hospital I was paralyzed on one side of my body and was in a lot of pain. But Dr. Sugimoto really went the extra mile to help me recover and get back to a more healthy and comfortable life."

History helps ensure holistic care

Gibson says he might go in to see Dr. Sugimoto for the flu, but because she knows him and his health history, she's on the lookout for other issues—things he's not even aware of.

"She might order a blood test to check one thing, but she also checks the results for other issues. If my blood pressure is too high, she asks what I was doing that morning or the day before. She knows about my

personal life and my stressors, so she can treat the whole me. That's a huge benefit."

Dr. Sugimoto says the continuity that comes from long-term doctor/patient relationships helps her keep her patients healthier and safer.

"I know what you look like when you're well, so I recognize when you're sick," she says. "And, because we've developed a trusting relationship over time, our shared decision making is more likely to result in care that really meets your personal needs."

On the other side of Washington state, Anna Halloran, a 32-year-old mom in Spokane, has had health coverage through Group Health since she was a teenager, and has been cared for by family physician Debra Gore, MD, at Riverfront Medical Center, for about 4 years. "I switched my whole family to Dr. Gore when my daughter was born, and now she also cares for our 1-year-old son," she says.

"Dr. Gore knows all of us, including our health history, our lifestyle, and what's important to us," Halloran says. "Luckily we haven't had any serious health issues, but she handles all our preventive care and just treated my son for a series of ear infections."

Clinic office visits offer added convenience

Halloran's family lived in Moscow, Idaho, when she was a teenager, where there wasn't a Group Health Medical Centers clinic nearby. Since moving to Spokane a decade ago, she's come to depend on the one-stop shopping that the clinics provide.

"I love having office visits, the pharmacy, and lab in one location, and the online services like scheduling appointments, emailing my doctor, and checking on my kids' immunizations are really convenient."

Gibson seconds Halloran's appreciation for the care he receives at his Group Health Medical Centers clinic. "It's so convenient to be able to pick up a prescription after an office visit. Or sometimes Dr. Sugimoto orders lab work or an X-ray in the middle of a visit. I go get the test done, come back to her office, and she already has the results. We can continue our visit with the added information—no lag time, no second visit, and I'm able to get answers right away." —Ginny Smith

Ready to choose a doctor?

A great way to get started is to go to ghc.org, click on "Get started," and watch our "Choosing a doctor" video. It walks you through the process of finding a doctor and making your selection online.

"The best way to have your selection become immediately effective is to call Customer Service and let us know which provider you've chosen," says Mariah Rogers, a customer service specialist. "Remember that you can change providers any time, for any reason. And Customer Service is always here to answer your questions and help you navigate the system."

PHOTO: © STEWART TILGER



PHARMACY



LAB



ONLINE



EMAIL

“

I love having office visits, the pharmacy, and lab in one location, and the online services like scheduling appointments, emailing my doctor, and checking on my kids' immunizations are really convenient.

—Anna Halloran, Spokane member

”

member basics



Important information for Group Health members

Visit ghc.org to find a variety of member information. You can also receive printed copies of documents described below, and have questions answered by contacting Customer Service toll-free at 1-888-901-4636.

MEMBER GUIDE BOOKLETS

At ghc.org, you'll find our health plan member guides (enter "member guide booklet" in the search box). These guides offer important information on a number of topics:

- Access to new treatments
- How to file a claim for covered services
- Your provider network and network restrictions
- Primary and specialty care access, including behavioral health and hospital services
- Referral and preauthorization requirements
- Member rights and responsibilities
- Compliments, concerns, and complaints
- Appeals process
- Travel: Care and coverage outside our coverage area
- Getting care after business hours
- Complex case management program
- Urgent and emergency care
- Utilization management decision making, including absence of incentives or rewards in provider compensation
- Prescriptions and drug restrictions (pharmacy management procedures)

Additional disclosure information can be found at ghc.org (enter "disclosure information" in the search box).

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND SERVICES

Notice of Privacy Practices. This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed, how the information is protected, and how you can get access to this information. To review, go to ghc.org and enter "privacy practices" in the search box.

Benefits booklets. Your benefits booklet contains detailed information about the benefits and services covered under your health plan, your plan's exclusions, and the amount of your copayments and other cost shares for office visits, prescriptions, and other services. For Medicare members, this medical coverage document is called "Evidence of Coverage." Find yours by logging in to MyGroupHealth at ghc.org.

Preventive care schedules. Recommended health screenings and immunizations for children and adults are available at ghc.org (enter "adult wellness visit" or "well child visit" in the search box).

Language assistance. If you or someone you know needs professional language assistance (such as translation services) in getting health care or plan information, this is available at no extra cost.

Please call Customer Service and request language assistance.

Group Health's Commitment to quality. To help guide the improvement activities we think will help us reach our quality goals, we develop an annual work plan for the organization and monitor our progress and performance throughout the year (go to ghc.org and enter "quality work plan" in the search box).

Drug formulary. Many Group Health plans include coverage for prescription drugs. A formulary is a list of covered medications. Find information about our formulary, including quarterly updates, information on drug restrictions (for example prior authorization, step therapy, quantity limits), procedures for generic substitution, and processes for requesting formulary exceptions at ghc.org (enter "drug formulary" in the search box).

Provider and facility directory. Obtain information about doctors and other health care providers such as physical therapists, midwives, and alternative care providers who are covered by your plan.

Group Health Cooperative is an HMO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Group Health HMO depends on contract renewal. This information is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits may change on January 1 of each year. Other Pharmacies and Providers are available in our network.



From binkies
to bifocals
Care for every age
We're committed to keeping you as healthy as possible, no matter what your age, so you have the healthiest, happiest life you can.
by Ginny Smith, Kate Robinson, and Teddy Roberts

Birth to 12

"There's nothing quite like the incredible amount of progress that takes place in young kids. By the time they reach school age they've already been four or five different children. That's one thing I love about being a pediatrician."

— DR. JOHN DUNN

Group Health sees kids like clockwork during the first couple years of life

because they're changing so fast, says John Dunn, MD, a pediatrician at Northshore Medical Center. "We want to be sure they're progressing through milestones, like growth, the way they ought to. If they aren't, that's often a clue that something may be amiss."

In the first year of life, several office visits are largely focused on making sure babies get the vaccinations they need. "In terms of productive life saved, getting kids fully vaccinated—including the HPV vaccine at age 11 that protects boys and girls against cancer—is the single

most important thing I do on any given day," says Dr. Dunn.

Once kids reach grade school, a lot of their development is focused on cognitive skills—memory, reasoning, problem solving, decision making—and well-care visits are mostly about spot checking their progress, says Dr. Dunn. "Are they growing properly? Is their academic progress and motor skills development on schedule and are they keeping pace with their peers?"

If it becomes obvious that there are areas where the child is becoming "a bit



5 tips for fuss-free pediatric visits

Parents and a pediatrician offer these suggestions for fending off toddler meltdowns during office visits.

Don't surprise kids. "I talk to my 2-year-old about what will happen at the doctor's in the days leading up to the visit. I think it helps when she knows what to expect."

Be honest. "If there will be shots at the visit I tell my 3-year-old what's going to happen and how it might feel. I help her focus on the good things that will happen after that—a lollipop or a sticker, and plenty of hugs."

Bring distractions. "A favorite snack, toy, or book can distract my 3-year-old if he gets whiney, and the medical staff is great too. At our last visit, the doctor pretended to put the otoscope in his own ear, then my ear, then my son's ear several times before actually checking Dex's ears. That put Dex at ease."

Master your own feelings. Your kids take their cues from you, and if you're calm, chances are they will be too. "Project confidence, not fear. Ask plenty of questions and help your child see the doctor as a resource for help and information, and a friend."

End the outing on a high note. Promise something fun after the visit, and follow through. A stop at a playground, or a play date with a friend, will reinforce the idea that being brave has its pay-offs.

of an outlier," extra visits can be scheduled to take a deeper dive into the issue.

Dr. Dunn recommends that parents read up on each stage of development ahead of time so they know what to expect and can notice any problems early.

"I'd like to think that I can see a child in my office for 20 minutes and immediately tell that something is wrong, but far more often things are caught because a parent says 'I read that a, b, c, d, and e should be going on and they aren't.'"

Bringing a list of questions and concerns to office visits is a great way to make the best use of a visit.

"Beyond vaccinations, preventive care for young children is a lot about parents staying involved in their child's life, helping them learn how to interact with other people, and gradually preparing them to handle life's experiences on their own."

Resources: Go to ghc.org and search "well child" and "health and wellness child." Also, the American Academy of Pediatrics' book, *Caring for your Baby and Young Child*; www.aap.org; and www.healthychildren.org.

13-17 yrs.

"Teens are fun to work with because they're beginning the transition from child to adult. They're learning to make their way through life, and they need a trusted adult to provide solid health care information."

— DR. FRANKLIN WOOD

When kids turn 13 it's recommended that they start seeing a doctor on their own at annual well-child visits, says Franklin Wood, MD, a board-certified adolescent medicine physician. But don't worry—as a parent you won't be totally left out. You're welcome to share your concerns and questions with your teen's doctor at the start or end of the visit, or in writing before the visit.

"Solo visits give teens a chance to talk confidentially to someone besides a parent, and begin taking responsibility for their own health care," says Dr. Wood.

But confidentiality only goes so far, he says. "My mantra is 'everything we talk about in this room stays in this room, unless you share something that could potentially harm yourself or someone else.' That's often a relief for kids. It gives them permission to reveal something they may even want their parents to know about."

For most teens, care focuses more on psychosocial issues than physical ones: home life, progress in school, peer-related activities, drugs, sexuality, suicide/depression, and safety.

"The top causes of concern in this age group are accidents, suicide, and homicide," says Dr. Wood. "We look for how connected the teen is to their family, their community, and society. Are they staying active, choosing healthy



Parental access offers added convenience

If your child is 12 years or younger and you both receive primary care at a Group Health Medical Centers clinic, you can request parental access to view their online medical record, email their doctor, schedule appointments for them, and more. (Parental access expires once your child reaches age 13.) For details go to ghc.org and search "parental access."

PHOTO: © TIMOTHY AGUIERO PHOTOGRAPHY



Looking out for your emotional well-being

Caring for "the whole you" at Group Health Medical Centers includes identifying and treating any problems you may have with depression, anxiety, or substance abuse, says Larry Marx, MD, medical director of Behavioral Health Support Services.

"Our goal is to have a behavioral health specialist on staff at each clinic, ready to meet with you right away if needed to offer treatment options and resources. There are common problems that can often be easily handled in the primary care setting."

activities, and steering clear of risky behaviors? I don't worry about the kids who are establishing healthy connections, but I worry a lot about the ones who aren't."

For kids who need extra attention, Dr. Wood is grateful that The Adolescent Center where he practices in Olympia has longer office visits for teens.

"Our expanded visits give us a better chance of helping kids negotiate the challenges of becoming adults." Group Health has six Adolescent Centers in the Puget Sound area.

Resources: Go to ghc.org and search "well-child visits," "teen health," "teen resources," and "adolescent center." Also, MedlinePlus.gov (search "teen health") and KidsHealth.org.

18-29 yrs.

"It's rewarding to talk to my patients about getting more physically active or managing their weight and hear later that they actually made some healthy improvements. Changes made early on can have payoffs for a lifetime."

— DR. TRAVIS ABBOTT

Young adults who establish healthy habits at this time of life may have very few health problems during their 20s, 30s, and even 40s, according to Travis Abbott, MD, a family physician at Capitol Hill Campus in Seattle.

"They're usually pretty immune to things like cancer and heart disease. Instead, they may be prone to accidents involving driving and substance abuse, and unsafe sex that can lead to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Smart lifestyle choices are the key here," he says.

"We recommend that adults at every age fill out an online Health Profile every year," he says. "It's a questionnaire that asks about your medical history and lifestyle routines, and gives you an instant report on your health status, your risk for certain diseases, and suggestions for improving your health. If you get care at a Group Health Medical Centers clinic, your report is included in your medical record, and it helps your health care team zero in on any areas that may need attention."

Resources: Go to ghc.org and search "well-care visits" and "young-adult health." Also Dr. Mike Evans' YouTube videos (youtube.com/docmikeevans).

30-64 yrs.

“People are realizing that they can successfully make changes, like losing weight or quitting smoking, if they set their mind to it. They take on something and they do it. It’s really exciting.”

—DR. DEBRA GORE

Some health recommendations follow us from decade to decade: exercise, eat healthy, keep your weight under control, and don’t smoke. Debra Gore, MD, a family physician at Riverfront Medical Center in Spokane, adds a few more to the list.

“Wear sunscreen that protects you from ultraviolet (UV) rays, watch for skin lesions that are changing or looking funny, and see your doctor if anything looks suspicious,” she says.

It also helps to know your family’s medical history as you get older, says Dr. Gore. “Is there a history of colon cancer,

cardiovascular disease, or mental health issues?” It doesn’t mean you’re going to get any of those things, but it’s good to be aware that you might, and it may influence when your doctor starts recommending preventive screenings.

As a Group Health member, you’ll get a preventive care letter every year around your birthday, reminding you about any tests you may be due for based on your age. You may also get reminder phone calls, or an online reminder.

Even if you’re not due for any screenings, tests, or immunizations, it’s valuable to come in for periodic well-care visits. “Most people don’t think to schedule an appointment because they’re having trouble sleeping, or feeling anxious or depressed, or losing their libido,” says Dr. Gore. “They think it’s just part of getting older, but it’s often not, and there are things we can do to help.”

Dr. Gore says she usually starts asking patients if they’ve thought about a will and advance directives around age 50,

but it’s never too early to start planning for “what if?” “Nobody likes to think about having an accident or a serious illness, but it can happen to any of us, at any age.”

Resources: Go to ghc.org and search “well-care visits,” “videos and tools,” “choosing wisely,” and “advance directives.”

65+ yrs.

“If you’re 75 or 80 or 85, quality of life is the most important thing. Eat that piece of cake and enjoy it. Take that trip. And let’s talk about how we can simplify your medications.”—DR. KARIN MADWED

Exercising. Maintaining or developing social connections. Planning for the future. And having a good system for taking your medications as directed.

Those are the most important preventive care steps to take during this stage of life, says Karin Madwed, MD, a family physician at Northgate Medical Center.

Physical activity can help you manage health conditions like diabetes and heart disease, increase your energy level, and improve your mood. Taking classes, joining a group that shares your interests, or volunteering are great ways to stay involved and engaged in life.

“I recommend that people consider moving to a senior living situation earlier rather than later, especially if they aren’t very social on their own,” says Dr. Madwed. “It usually takes a period of adjustment, but most people come to really like having group meals and activities, transportation to medical appointments and shopping, and the ability to step up to assisted living services if needed.”

Dr. Madwed helps her patients reassess goals and medications as they get older. A supplement that’s preventing heart disease, for example, may not be as important at age 85 as it once was. And maybe there are medications that were prescribed during a hospital stay and were never discontinued.

At the very least, Dr. Madwed tries to help her patients modify their medications so they’re just taking them once or twice a day whenever possible. She recommends that everyone use pill boxes divided into days, and times of day if needed.

“I don’t care how young or old you are. It’s hard to remember whether you’ve taken your pills or not. All of us need a tracking system.”

Resources: Go to ghc.org and search “well-care visits,” “videos and tools,” “choosing wisely,” “healthy aging,” “living well,” “fitness,” and “advance directives.”

From couch potato to health buff via Living Well workshop

Harry Manaka was diagnosed with diabetes in 2005, but he didn’t do much to manage his condition for years. “I was a big couch potato and I ate whatever was put in front of me,” he recalls. Always heavy, he continued to gain weight, finally reaching 235 pounds.

It wasn’t until 2012, when his HbA1c (blood sugar level) tested double what’s normal and his doctor recommended he start taking insulin, that Manaka had to admit that some changes were needed.

That’s when he discovered Group Health’s Living Well programs. He signed up for a Living Well with Diabetes workshop at a Group Health Medical Centers clinic, and he credits the support he got there with helping him start making healthier choices. “Everyone in the group is very encouraging,” he says.

Manaka began keeping an eye on his carbs and calories, and walking every day. He and his wife joined a gym through SilverSneakers®, and began working out.

Today, Manaka’s A1c is in the normal range, his weight is down to a healthy 180 pounds, and he doesn’t need insulin.

“I know I’m just one bowl of pasta away from my blood sugar spiking,” he says. “You have to be vigilant about what you eat and how much exercise you get—but it’s something you just gradually ease yourself into.”

Resources: Go to ghc.org and search “Living Well workshops.”



Watch Harry’s video:
blog.ghc.org/this-is-healthy

Hectic 21st century life, meet handy 21st century care Yes, you need periodic office visits with your personal physician. But in between those visits, a variety of other care options are available to fit your busy, on-the-go schedule.



2 a.m. —Baby’s been coughing for hours. Is it croup? Time to call the **Consulting Nurse, 24/7.**

Call 206-901-2244 or 1-800-297-6877.



7:30 a.m. —On the bus to work, order a prescription refill on the **mobile app.**

A variety of convenient services are available via smartphone. For info: ghc.org and search “mobile app.”



3 p.m. —Oh no, another sinus infection. Contact **CareNow** online.

Online diagnosis, treatment recommendations, and prescriptions if needed for minor medical conditions. For info: grouphealthcarenow.com.



5:30 p.m. —That rash is still itching. Drop into a **CareClinic** to get it checked out.

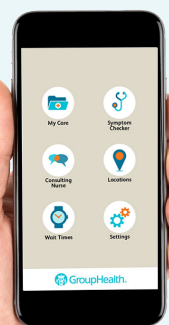


Walk-in care for minor medical needs. Available at 10 Bartell Drugs locations in the Puget Sound region. For info: care-clinic.org.



8 p.m. —Playing softball and something in your ankle snaps. Head for **Urgent Care.**

Care for illnesses or injuries that require prompt attention but aren’t life threatening. For info: ghc.org and search “urgent care.”





Hippos and penguins and bears, *oh my!*

Walking on the wild side is just one of our fitness options

“FROM THE RED PANDA with its glorious burnt sienna colored coat to the sleek tigers slinking back and forth through the bamboo, the animals at the zoo are a never-ending source of joy and entertainment,” says Karen Volpe, 62, who’s been participating in the Group Health–sponsored Woodland Park Zoo Walkers program in Seattle for more than a decade.

Volpe also enjoys the exercise and social aspects of the program. “I have multiple chronic conditions, and exercising and staying fit keep me energized and grounded. My fellow walkers, some of whom are in their 90s, inspire me and help me stay motivated to take care of my body.”

Zoo Walkers and Walk & Talk, a program offered at several Group Health Medical Centers clinics in the Puget Sound area, are fitness options available to Group Health members—and open to the public. Whether you’re just getting started walking, or are training for your first walking event, the free Walk & Talk program is a chance to enjoy company and conversation while setting your own distance and pace.

Choose classes or solo exercising. SilverSneakers® and Enhance®Fitness, which are available to our Medicare Advantage HMO members, are other popular fitness options. SilverSneakers classes are held at private fitness clubs—including Curves fitness clubs for women—where seniors can use all the club amenities, and at select YMCAs. EnhanceFitness classes are held at participating senior centers and community centers.

Linda Gainer, age 67, uses her Curves membership to exercise on her own schedule with the club’s fitness equipment. “I can come and go whenever I want, I get a good workout, and I’ve made some new friends there,” she says.

EnhanceFitness classes are the way Mike Warren, 73, gets moving. “Exercising with the group two or three times a week helps keep my diabetes under control and my weight from increasing, and the group’s enthusiasm, friendliness, and support motivate me to go to class even when I don’t feel like it.”

“**My fellow walkers, some of whom are in their 90s, inspire me and help me stay motivated to take care of my body.**”

– Karen Volpe, member

“I attend EnhanceFitness classes two or three times a week and I thoroughly enjoy the exercise, the people, and the camaraderie,” says 81-year-old Susan Casey. “I feel better after I exercise, and it keeps me healthier and better able to do the other things I enjoy, like walking, and lots of gardening.”

For more information about any of these programs, go to ghc.org and search “zoo walkers,” “fitness,” and “walk and talk.” Or call or email the Resource Line, 1-800-992-2279, resource.l@ghc.org.
– Ginny Smith

PHOTO © TIMOTHY AGUIERO PHOTOGRAPHY

Yummy, healthy homemade soup

Raise your spoons to a classic cold weather elixir

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND a lot of money, or add a lot of sodium or fat, to create hearty soups that pour health into your diet and chase off the chill.

Make your own broth. Broth is the healthiest soup base and can be made with a few simple ingredients—water, onion, celery, carrots, and meat bones. Or make vegetable stock by swapping the bones for parsnips, turnips, and mushrooms. If you’re short on time, use a low-sodium broth from the store.

If your recipe calls for cream, just use a few tablespoons. Or purée a skinned, cooked potato and stir that into the soup to thicken it.

Watch the fat content in meat. Choose lean cuts of meat or poultry. Brown meat, pat it dry, and drain excess fat from the pan.

Add high-fiber and in-season veggies. Beans, peas, and lentils are always good for fiber. And don’t forget seasonal vegetables like kale and cauliflower. If you’re using canned veggies, rinse them well to remove added sodium.

Add good carbs, but go easy on them. Brown rice, wild rice, barley, and small-sized whole grain pasta are all smart choices.

Use fresh herbs to get big flavor. Add fresh herbs to the pot toward the end of the cooking time to preserve the most flavor, or use them as a garnish. For dried herbs, warm them in a pan to release their oils and bump up their flavor power.

Step into fall with our Minestrone Soup, and check out other tasty and good-for-you recipes at blog.ghc.org (click on “food and fitness”). –Teddy Roberts

Minestrone Soup

Serves 6–8

- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2–3 medium carrots, diced
- 1 rib celery, diced
- 1 12 oz. can crushed tomatoes
- ½ pound green beans, trimmed and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (about 1½ cups)
- 2 quarts of water or vegetable broth
- 1 1-inch piece parmesan rind (optional)
- 1½ cups dry whole-grain penne (brown rice if gluten-free, whole wheat otherwise), cooked according to package instructions, drained and rinsed with cold water
- 1 12 oz. can cannellini or kidney beans, drained
- ½ cup fresh basil, chopped, for garnish
- Grated parmesan to garnish (optional)

Sauté onions and garlic together with the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. When softened (after about 3 minutes), add celery and carrots and continue cooking for another 5 minutes until vegetables start to soften. Add tomatoes and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, for 5–8 minutes. Add green beans, water or vegetable broth, and parmesan rind. Bring to a simmer, cover, reduce heat to low, and continue to cook for 30 minutes. Add drained beans and cooked pasta, and continue to

cook at a gentle simmer for about 5 more minutes until warm. Remove parmesan rind (if used), taste the soup, and add salt and pepper as needed. Garnish with fresh basil and grated parmesan.

Note: For a variation on the recipe, use 1 lb. kale or chard—large stems removed and thinly sliced crosswise (julienned)—instead of the green beans.

–Recipe courtesy of Julija Gelazis

