

# Be Well, Stay Well



## A Message from our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Kristin Russell

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island (Neighborhood) cares about your health and helping you live a healthy life. That’s why we have disease management programs and dedicated care managers to educate you about your health conditions, medications, and resources in your community.

It is important that you understand all you can about the chronic conditions you have and what you need to do to manage them. This newsletter will help you be the healthiest that you can be. Talk to your provider if you have any questions about your chronic condition.

### FOR MEMBERS LIVING WITH:



Asthma



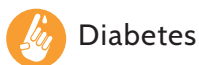
Heart Failure



COPD



Coronary Artery Disease



Diabetes



Depression

## Contact Us

### Neighborhood Member Services



**ACCESS/Rlte Care,**  
TRUST/Rhody Health Partners  
1-800-459-6019 (TTY 711)  
Mon-Fri 8A.M.–6P.M.

**Commercial Plans**  
1-855-321-9244 (TTY 711)  
Mon-Fri 8a.m.–6p.m.

**INTEGRITY/Medicare–Medicaid Plan**  
1-844-812-6896 (TTY 711)  
Mon-Fri 8a.m.–8p.m.;  
Sat 8a.m.–12p.m.

**Behavioral Health Services**  
1-401-443-5997 (TTY 711)



**Website:** [www.nhpri.org](http://www.nhpri.org)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

General Wellness..... p2

Preventive Screenings ..... p3

Chronic Disease Information ..... p4

Member Advisory Committee ..... p8







## Chronic Disease Information

Chronic conditions are health problems that last a long time and usually don't go away completely. People with chronic conditions often need to see a doctor regularly, make changes to their lifestyle, and take medicines to stay healthy. It's important to manage these conditions well to feel better and avoid problems.

### Obesity

Weight higher than that considered healthy for a given height is described as overweight or obese. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a screening tool for overweight and obesity.

Like most chronic conditions, obesity can also be caused by genetics. This means that some

people are more likely to become obese because of their family history. But, creating healthy habits can still lower your chance of becoming obese. Ask your provider about how to test for obesity, and what you can do to avoid it.

If your BMI is 30.0 or higher, it falls within the obesity range. Some ways you can stop obesity include:



Eating healthy foods



Exercising, like walking or biking



Getting enough sleep



Managing your stress



Getting annual check-ups



### Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that happens because of a problem in the way the body regulates and uses sugar as a fuel. This long-term condition results in too much sugar circulating in the blood. Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to blindness, limb amputation, kidney failure, and vascular and heart disease.

There are things that your provider does to manage your diabetes. Your provider will check your:

- Weight
- Blood pressure
- Your feet for circulation, nerve damage and skin problems
- A1C level (this measures your blood sugar average over the last few months)
- Cholesterol level
- Kidney function

There are also things you can do to manage your diabetes, like:

- Check your blood sugar as often as your provider tells you to
- Take your medication exactly as prescribed
- Eat a healthy diabetic diet
- Be physically active
- Keep a healthy weight
- Have regular check-ups with your provider

Talk with your provider about the best ways for you to manage your diabetes.

### Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) is a condition that is caused by plaque buildup in the wall of the arteries that supply blood to the heart (called coronary arteries) raising your risk for a heart attack and other heart problems. Over time, CAD can weaken the heart muscle. This leads to heart failure where the heart cannot pump blood the way it should. CAD cannot be cured, but there are many ways to stop it from worsening, like:

- Eating healthy foods (lower sodium and fat)
- Exercising
- Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight
- Quitting smoking
- Taking medications for your CAD exactly as prescribed by your provider







## Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)



COPD is a condition caused by damage to the airways, or parts of the lungs, that blocks airflow and makes it hard to breathe. COPD can cause coughing that produces large amounts of a slimy substance called mucus.

### It can also cause:

- Breathing problems
- Shortness of breath while doing everyday activities
- Chest tightness
- Wheezing

Because COPD is a progressive disease, its symptoms often develop slowly but worsen over time and can limit your ability to do routine activities. Serious COPD may prevent you from doing even basic activities such as walking, cooking, or taking care of yourself.

## Asthma



Asthma is a disease that affects your lungs. It causes repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early morning coughing. Asthma can be controlled by taking medicine and avoiding the triggers that can cause an attack. You must also remove the triggers in your environment that can make your asthma worse. When you and your provider work together to treat your asthma, this helps keep it under control.

### Make an Asthma Action Plan

Make sure you complete an asthma action plan with your provider. This is a written plan that you develop with your provider. This plan helps to reduce or prevent flare-ups or asthma attacks. It also helps you to know what to do if this happens.

### The best ways to keep your asthma under control are:

- Complete an asthma action plan with your provider
- Take your medicine exactly as your provider tells you
- Take your long-term control medicine even when you do not have symptoms
- Avoid triggers. Some of the most common, triggers are tobacco smoke, dust mites, outdoor pollution, cockroach allergen, pets, mold, smoke from burning wood or grass and infections like flu.
- See your provider as often as they recommend



## Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)



Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is caused by diabetes, affecting around 1/3 of adults with diabetes. You can have CKD without symptoms, which can lead to other health problems like heart disease and kidney failure.

Regular testing (blood and urine lab tests) is vital for early detection, especially for people with diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, or a family history of kidney issues.

### Some ways you can stop CKD from forming include:

- Managing underlying conditions
- Eating healthy foods
- Exercising
- Staying at a healthy weight
- Getting enough sleep
- Quitting smoking
- Drinking less or no alcohol
- Managing stress

## Depression



Everyone feels sad sometimes in life, but depression is different. Depression is more than just feeling down or having a bad day. When a sad mood lasts for a long time and interferes with your normal, everyday life, you may be depressed.

If you or someone you care about is having a mental health crisis, please dial 988. You can call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—even on holidays. Anyone can call 9-8-8 to reach a trained crisis counselor and get help. They can also work with you to make a plan, so you can keep feeling better.







## Member Advisory Committee

Join a Neighborhood Member Advisory Committee and Make a Difference

Neighborhood is looking for members to join our Member Advisory Committees (MAC). If you are an INTEGRITY (Medicare-Medicaid Plan), TRUST or ACCESS (Medicaid) member, we would love to have you join one of our MACs. Neighborhood has two committees, INTEGRITY MAC and Medicaid MAC.

At these meetings, members are able to:

- Share your opinions
- Tell us about your experiences with Neighborhood
- Let us know what we can do better

We have an active group of members who meet four times per year for an hour and a half. Neighborhood values diversity and we do our best to have our MAC groups reflect our members and the communities we serve.

If you would like to be part of an active group that comes together to make a difference, please let us know. Committee members will receive a stipend (payment) for their participation. If you have questions or would like to join a committee, please contact our Member Advocate, Rosemary O'Brien at 401-459-6637 or [robrien@nhpri.org](mailto:robrien@nhpri.org).



### RESOURCES

#### Neighborhood has a Nurse Advice Line

The Nurse Advice Line is available to all Neighborhood members. Nurses are available to talk to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The nurse can help you with:

- Deciding where to go for care like your provider's office, urgent care, or the emergency room
- Questions about your health concerns or medications
- If you would like to talk to a nurse, you can call the Neighborhood Nurse Advice Line at 1-844 617-0563 (TTY 711). The Nurse Advice Line is not an emergency service. Call 911 if you think you are having an emergency

#### Neighborhood's Member Advocate Is Here to Help

Neighborhood has a Member Advocate to help our members. Here are some of the things our Member Advocate may be able to help with:

- If you lost your insurance. Especially if you are getting treatment for a serious medical problem or need your medication.
- Hearing your concerns and experiences when trying to get health care services.
- Making sure you get the services you need.
- Neighborhood's appeals process.

For more information call 1-401-459-6637 (TTY 711).