



Member
Newsletter

Summer 2026



In This Issue

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) Program 2

It's your shot, don't miss it! 4

Best practices for communicating with your doctor 5

Free Nurse Advice Line 5

Free language assistance services are available for members 6

Advance Care Planning: Making your wishes known 6

What is utilization management? 7

How to request a second opinion 8

Not every bug needs a drug! 9

Notice of Privacy Practices 10



Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) Program

Helping your child stay healthy with MedStar Family Choice

Your child's health is important at every stage of growth and development. That's why MedStar Family Choice encourages families to take advantage of the EPSDT program - Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment services.

EPSDT helps children and teens receive regular checkups, screenings, immunizations, and preventive care from birth through age 20. These visits help identify health concerns early and ensure your child is growing and developing properly.

EPSDT services may include:

- Well-child visits
- Physical exams
- Developmental screenings
- Vision and hearing checks
- Lead screenings
- Immunizations/vaccines
- Health education and preventive care

Keeping up with routine visits can help prevent sickness, support healthy development, and improve long-term health outcomes.

Summer & back-to-school outreach

Throughout the summer and back-to-school season, MedStar Family Choice will share important health reminders and resources through:

- CareMessage text communications
- Community events and wellness activities
- Outreach and education provided in partnership with our Community Relations team

These efforts are designed to help families prepare for the school year, stay up to date with checkups and vaccines, and connect with valuable community resources.

Need help scheduling an appointment?

The MedStar Family Choice Outreach team is here to help members:

- Schedule appointments
- Find a provider
- Learn about transportation assistance
- Get information about available member rewards and wellness programs

Contact Member Services or speak with your child's healthcare provider to learn more about EPSDT services available to your family.



It's your shot, don't miss it!

The flu spreads every year from fall to early spring. It can make you feel very sick very fast. Getting your flu shot (vaccine) along with your COVID-19 booster is the best way to stay healthy and protect the people around you.

The flu virus changes every year, so you need a new shot every season. Getting your shot is easy! Go to your doctor, a health clinic, urgent care, or a nearby pharmacy. As a MedStar Family Choice member, your flu shot is free! Need help? Call Member Services at **888-404-3549**.

Who is at highest risk of getting the flu?

- Pregnant women
- People with diabetes, asthma, or heart disease
- Children under 5, adults 65 and older

What if I'm allergic or sick?

Most people 6 months and older can get a flu shot. Most people with egg allergies can safely receive a flu vaccine. But talk to your doctor if you:

- Are moderately or severely ill (you should usually wait until you feel better before getting vaccinated)
- Have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous flu vaccine or one of its components

Did You Know?

- Flu symptoms don't show up right away; it usually takes about two days from the time someone catches the flu before symptoms start to show.
- You can give the flu to someone else before you even feel sick and for up to seven days after.
- Even if you get vaccinated, you can still catch a cold or another virus.

If you cannot reach your doctor, call the Nurse Advice Line at **855-210-6204** or visit [MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com/Maryland-Member/Benefits/eVisit](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com/Maryland-Member/Benefits/eVisit) to talk to a doctor online.



Best practices for communicating with your doctor

You play a very important part in your care when visiting your doctor. Here are some things that can help make your visit even better for you and your doctor:

- Have your questions already written down before your visit.
 - Listen carefully to the advice your doctor is giving you.
 - Make sure you follow the doctor's instructions. Please get the labs or other tests that your doctor asks you to get.
 - Make certain that your blood pressure is taken at every doctor's visit, regardless of whether it is with your primary care doctor or a specialist.
 - If you have had a hospital admission or an emergency room visit, tell your doctor. All doctors involved in your care need to know this information.
 - Your primary care doctor should receive a copy of your hospital stay discharge summary. This document provides detailed information on your care in the hospital. It is very important that you schedule a follow-up visit with your doctor regarding any inpatient hospital stay.
 - Ask your primary care doctor if he or she has received a copy of the discharge summary. If not, suggest that your primary care doctor request a copy from the hospital, as it is very important in managing your healthcare.
-

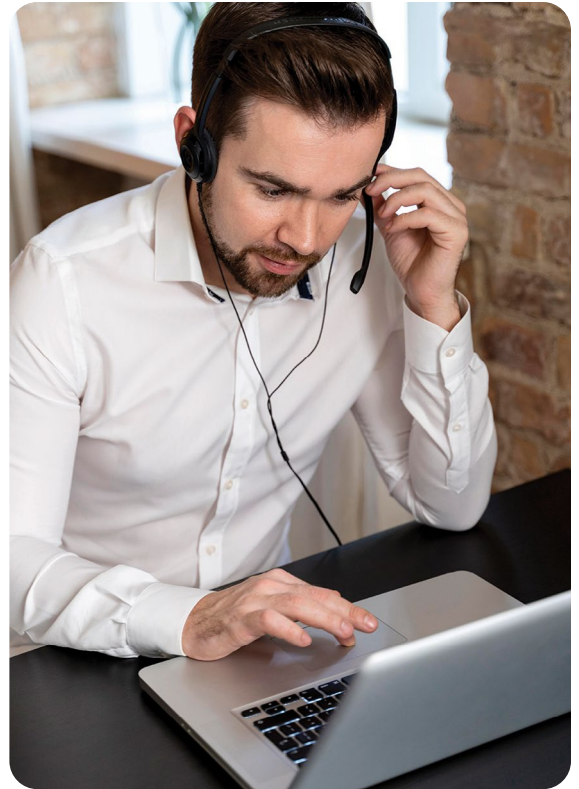


Free Nurse Advice Line

Feeling sick or need medical advice? A registered nurse is just a phone call away. The Nurse Advice Line at **855-210-6204** is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call and talk to a registered nurse to help you figure out what to do or where to go based on your symptoms. The nurse can provide you with nearby urgent care locations if needed. Emergency Care is for when you need care right away for a serious, sudden injury, or illness. Therefore, Urgent Care or your primary care physician can assist you with your needs.

Free language assistance services are available for members

If you know a MedStar Family Choice member who does not speak English, or doesn't speak it well, we can provide assistance. We have interpreters to help members when visiting their doctors. We can also provide translation services for members who need help with written information sent to them by MedStar Family Choice. If you or someone you know is deaf or has trouble hearing, a TTY line is available at 711. You can also contact Maryland Department of Health at **877-463-3464** for language assistance.



Advance Care Planning: Making your wishes known

Our goal is to ensure every member's medical wishes are documented and honored by their health care team. This includes their preferred decision makers. Advance care planning helps ensure the health care you receive is what you want.

- Planning now allows your health care team to understand your wishes so they can guide care if you are ever unable to speak.
- Talking with your healthcare team and the people close to you can clarify your preferences. It can also reduce stress and uncertainty for your loved ones.

You don't have to do this alone. We are here to support you. If you would like help getting started or updating your documents, please contact your care team at **410-933-2200** (select option 1, then 3). To learn more, visit [MedStarHealth.org/Services/Advance-Care-Planning](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Services/Advance-Care-Planning).



What is utilization management?

To ensure members get needed medical treatment, MedStar Family Choice follows a basic review process called utilization management. A member's doctor sends a request for services to MedStar Family Choice, usually by phone or fax. Our experienced clinical associates review all requests.

MedStar Family Choice decisions are based on national criteria, such as InterQual and Medicaid guidelines. Member needs that fall outside of standard criteria are reviewed by our physicians to see if they are medically necessary. MedStar Family Choice approves or denies services based upon whether the service is medically needed and a covered benefit. We do not financially reward our providers, associates, or anyone contracted with MedStar Family Choice for denying services. In addition, we do not financially reward anyone involved in the decision process in such a way that would encourage less use of services.

MedStar Family Choice requires up to two business days to process a complete request for services, excluding medications. Requests are considered complete when the doctor sends the necessary medical information. The final decision cannot take longer than 7 calendar days, whether or not all clinical information has been received.

MedStar Family Choice will make a decision and provide notification on all medication requests within 24 hours of the request. A valid decision is either an approval, a denial, or a request for additional information to make a decision. If the decision is to request additional information, MedStar Family Choice will allow the requesting provider up to 14 calendar days to submit information to make a decision to either approve or deny the request. This 14-calendar-day timeframe extends the original 24-hour decision timeframe (not to exceed a total of 15 calendar days) from the original request of the medication. If MedStar Family Choice denies the request, the provider and the member will receive a copy of the denial. The letter will list instructions on how to appeal the decision. Members may also contact the HealthChoice Help Line at **800-284-4510**.

How to request a second opinion

As a MedStar Family Choice member, you have the right to a second medical opinion if you feel you need one. If you would like a second medical opinion, your primary care provider (PCP) can refer you to a different in-network provider. If an in-network provider is not available to offer a second opinion, an out-of-network provider can be requested.

Your PCP will work with you, as well as the MedStar Family Choice Utilization Management (UM) department, when a second opinion must be scheduled with an out-of-network provider. A referral from your PCP, along with a prior authorization from the UM department, is required before your appointment with the out-of-network provider. Your PCP can obtain prior authorization. If you have questions regarding obtaining a second medical opinion, please talk to your PCP or call Member Services at **888-404-3549**.



Not every bug needs a drug!

Have you ever felt sick and thought you needed an antibiotic? You are not alone, but here is something important to know; antibiotics do not work on every illness. Knowing when to use them can keep you healthier in the long run.

What are antibiotics?

Antibiotics are medicines that fight infections caused by bacteria. Things like strep throat, urinary tract infections, and some ear infections are caused by bacteria. Antibiotics work great for those!

Do antibiotics work for colds and flu?

The flu, the common cold, most coughs, and sore throats are caused by viruses. Antibiotics cannot fight viruses. Taking them when you do not need them will not help and can cause harm over time.

Why does it matter?

When antibiotics are used too much, they stop working as well. This is called antibiotic resistance. It means that when you really need an antibiotic, it may not work as well for you. That is a big problem!

What should I do instead?

- Talk to your health care provider.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Call your doctor if you are not feeling better after a few days.

Not sure if you need an antibiotic? Call the Nurse Advice Line any time at **855-210-6204** or visit [MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com/Maryland-Member/Benefits/eVisit](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com/Maryland-Member/Benefits/eVisit) to talk to a doctor online.



Notice of Privacy Practices

MedStar Family Choice recognizes the importance of keeping your health information private. MedStar Family Choice maintains a Notice of Privacy Practices (Notice). This important document in part describes how we may use and disclose your medical information, how you can access this information, and how to report a complaint if you feel your privacy has been violated.

Our Notice was recently updated. The revised Notice adds a new section. It is called “Substance Use Disorder Patient Records”. This explains how these records may be used or disclosed. It also outlines patients’ rights with health information. It provides more guidance on how to file complaints.

A copy of our revised Notice is available online at [MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com/Privacy Practices](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com/PrivacyPractices). If you have any questions related to protecting your health information or would like to request a copy of the Notice, contact Member Services at **888-404-3549**.





MedStar Family Choice and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) comply with applicable Federal civil rights laws and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, and/or disability, in its health programs and activities.

English

If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call: **888-404-3549 (TTY: 711)**.

Español/Spanish

Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al: **888-404-3549 (TTY: 711)**.

中文/Chinese

如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 **888-404-3549 (TTY: 711)**。



MedStar Family
Choice

10980 Grantchester Way, 5th Fl.
Columbia, MD 21044

Member Newsletter Summer 2026

The Member Newsletter is a publication of MedStar Family Choice Maryland. For more information on your plan or anything in this newsletter, please visit [MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com) or call Member Services at **888-404-3549**.

Nadine Coy, Vice President and Executive Director, MedStar Family Choice MD

Manish Oza, MD, Senior Medical Director, MedStar Family Choice MD

Lisa McDonough, Manager, Member Experience and Internal Communications, MedStar Family Choice



MedStar Family
Choice

10980 Grantchester Way, 5th Fl.
Columbia, MD 21044
800-905-1722
[MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceMD.com)

