

healthy communities

FALLON COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN'S QUARTERLY HEALTH GUIDE



inside:

fchp recipes for a
healthier lifestyle

4

surviving the family
road trip

8

drug safety takes a
front seat

13

ask our experts



Q: When I took my toddler to the pediatrician for his immunizations, the doctor asked if I've kept up with my shots, too—he said to ask my doctor about them. Do I need shots, and if so, which ones?

A: Most people know that kids need their shots—but adults need them, too! Diseases that are preventable with immunizations are a significant cause of illness—and even death—in adults. Immunizations protect you and the people around you by making it harder for you to catch and spread certain diseases.

Adults need immunizations for several reasons. You might have missed some shots when you were younger. And, the immunity provided by some shots, such as the tetanus and diphtheria (Td) vaccine, lessens over time—so every adult immunized with Td as a child needs a booster every 10 years.

Also, newer immunizations exist that perhaps weren't around during your childhood, such as the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine. The varicella vaccine and the measles mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine are especially important for women of childbearing age—they need these vaccines unless a blood test shows they're not needed. These vaccines cannot be given during pregnancy, so women need to see their doctor before planning to get pregnant.

In addition, there are immunizations that are used only in certain circumstances and not routinely in everyone. Professionals who are exposed to blood or other bodily fluids need to be immunized against hepatitis B. People traveling to Third World countries need immunizations against hepatitis A and typhoid. College students living in dorms need to be immunized against meningitis, and anyone interested in a veterinary career needs to be immunized against rabies.

Please note that these are general



guidelines. Each person's health and risk factors differ, so ask your doctor about which, if any, immunizations you might need.

The CDC updates its adult immunization recommendations each year. For more information, you can download the recommendations in PDF format at www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/adult-schedule.pdf.

—Jyoti Nagarkar, M.D., internal medicine, affiliated with Heywood Hospital ■

Q: I have pretty good vision, but have trouble seeing at night when I drive. What can I do?

A: In my experience, most people have problems driving at night due to the normal, age-related development called nuclear sclerosis. Nuclear sclerosis is a haze that develops in the central part (nucleus) of the eye's lens in all adults. As the condition

worsens, it's commonly referred to as a cataract.

When the pupil (that dark circle in the middle of the colored iris) gets bigger at night, the haze in the lens becomes more obvious to the driver. This is true especially when there is a glare source—such as headlights from oncoming traffic. The combination of a hazy lens and a glare source results in you being less sensitive to contrast—similar to driving into the sun with frost on the windshield. If night driving becomes hazardous, it may be time to consider surgery to remove the cataract.

Also, when your pupil dilates at night, there is a significant reduction in your depth of field—the zone in which objects are sharply in focus. This reduction intensifies any focusing problems (called refractive errors) you might have. These are farsightedness (hyperopia), nearsightedness (myopia) or irregular curvature of the eye surface (astigmatism).

However, on occasion, there are some serious medical problems that may result in decreased vision at night, such as retinitis pigmentosa or other retinal degenerative disorders.

I would suggest that anyone having trouble driving at night make an appointment with an eye care professional. Common refractive errors and the early stages of a cataract account for about 90% of night-vision problems. If you still have symptoms after the proper eyeglasses are prescribed and there is assurance that the symptoms are not due to an easily repaired cataract, then you should have a further evaluation done by an eye specialist, known as an ophthalmologist.

Also, if you have poor night vision, you may follow some of the tips found in the about.com article, *Safe Nighttime Driving*, found at <http://seniorhealth.about.com/od/stayingsafe/qt/nightdriving.htm>

—Paul Vinger, M.D., ophthalmologist affiliated with Emerson Hospital, Concord ■

do you have a health-related question?

Write to us at:
Fallon Community Health Plan
Ask Our Experts
Communications Department
10 Chestnut St., Worcester, MA 01608

fchp backs kids who commit to be fit

Exercise is down. Supersizing is up. It's no wonder that approximately one-third of U.S. children and adolescents (25 million total) are overweight or nearly overweight.

Common sense tells us, and research has proven, that overweight children have more health problems and also are far more likely to become unhealthy adults.

Fortunately, there is a lot we can do as parents to help reverse—or better yet, prevent—childhood obesity. We can start by becoming role models ourselves, as well as introducing healthy lifestyle changes for the whole family.

Fallon Community Health Plan is here to support you. Our *It Fits!* benefit reimburses families up to \$200 a year for a variety of kids' activities that include an aerobic and instructional component—like gymnastics, sports leagues and dance lessons. Details are available on our Web site, www.fchp.org.

Join us this summer—and beyond—in teaching and encouraging your child to develop healthy habits for eating and physical activity. You'll find some great tips on Healthwise® Knowledgebase—one of the nation's leading online health resources—which is found on our Web site's home page. Just type "childhood obesity" in its search engine.

And for a daily reminder, order our free Commit to Be Fit T-shirt for your child(ren)—it's a creative, glow-in-the-dark design! Just complete the coupon below.

Have a healthy summer!

Sincerely,



Eric H. Schultz
President and CEO
Fallon Community Health Plan



our family is committing to be fit.

Please send me the free T-shirt(s) for my child(ren)!

Return this completed coupon to: *Healthy Communities*, Fallon Community Health Plan, 10 Chestnut St., Worcester, MA 01608. Please allow up to three weeks for delivery. Sorry, there is a limit of two per request.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Youth size/quantity ____ small ____ medium ____ large
(Adult) ____ large ____ extra large

Fallon Community Health Plan's quarterly health guide for members is produced by the health plan's Communications Department. The content of this magazine has been reviewed by our physicians and administrators. This publication does not advance any particular medical treatment, nor does it endorse the management of medical problems without the advice and care of health care professionals. We are not responsible for the content of Web sites referenced in this publication. Please note that some of the articles included in this magazine may describe services and/or procedures that are not covered benefits. Also, benefits described may vary by employer and plan.

For clarification of your covered benefits, please contact Fallon Community Health Plan's Customer Service Department at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), or contactcustomerservice@fchp.org.

Publisher: Robert Nolan **Managing Editor:** Lorraine P. Bachand **Creative Director:** Craig Roscoe **Designer:** Pam Spielberg **Writers/Editors:** Lorraine P. Bachand, Tom Bedell, Jeff DeAlmo, Lauren DiBenedetto, Katie Frantz **Copy Editor:** Jeff DeAlmo **Traffic and Production Coordinator:** Melissa Cordial **Cover photograph:** Patrick J. O'Connor Copyright 2006

Visit our Web site at www.fchp.org.

ask our experts

Learn what to do about night vision problems. Follow up on adult immunizations you might need.

2

feature

FCHP's recipes for a healthier lifestyle

4

kid stuff

Keep kids safe around the pool and keep yourself sane on the family road trip.

8

fchp update

Read about FCHP tools and programs for personal wellness, high-risk pregnancies, quitting smoking, managing medications and comparing hospitals.

9

health, fitness and you!

Find out more about drug safety measures, basic diabetes care and the benefits of citrus.

12

seniority

Get the scoop on a good night's sleep, emergency care worldwide, our value plan and more.

14





Fallon Community Health Plan
presents its favorite recipes for a
healthier lifestyle.

what you should know before you start cooking

The availability of benefits, programs and services described in these "recipes" vary by product, plan design and employer. For specific details regarding your FCHP plan, benefits and features, please contact your employer or refer to your *Summary of Benefits* or your FCHP *Member Handbook/Evidence of Coverage*. You also may visit our Web site at www.fchp.org or contact Customer Service at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., or via e-mail at contactcustomerservice@fchp.org.

welcome home soufflé

a favorite with parents preparing for a newborn or adoption

- 90-day supply of prenatal vitamins
- 1 expert childcare book
- \$40 reimbursement for childbirth classes
- 1 free convertible car seat
- 1 cup of information on postpartum care and immunizations
- a dash of discounts for e-Invite baby announcements

Prepare nursery. Combine prenatal vitamins with a daily dose from the book *Caring For Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*. Dip into your \$40 reimbursement for childbirth classes. Bake for nine months. Remove from oven. Garnish with installation of free car seat and discounts on baby announcements. Add postpartum care information—and be well! For a tasty topping, you'll be eligible to win a \$100 American Express® Gift Cheque!

Compliments of FCHP's Oh Baby!



To our members, we say, "Bon appétit!"

fitness delight

an economy dish every family will love

- 1 fitness center membership
- 1 pinch of support from Weight Watchers®
- 3 tablespoons of aerobics, Pilates and yoga classes
- 1 ounce of sports programs or lessons

For a healthy lifestyle, combine your favorite ingredients from the list above. Join your local fitness center or Weight Watchers®, take aerobics, Pilates and yoga classes. Add in Little League and ballet lessons for the kids. For extra zest, include our secret ingredient: discounts at participating fitness centers. Knead it all together for a family reimbursement of up to \$200—and a fun and active life.

Compliments of FCHP's It Fits!

Weight Watchers® is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers International, Inc.

carefree bread

this recipe is easy and affordable

- 1 annual physical with your primary care physician
- 1 routine visit with your gynecologist
- 1 annual well-child visit with your child's pediatrician
- \$0 copayments

To promote health, blend above ingredients and knead with \$0 copayments. Let rise and repeat annually for good preventive health practices. Every family member will love it.

Compliments of FCHP's wellness-is-free benefit

continued on page 6

prescription medley

the perfect dish for home or wherever you travel

- 1,000s of retail pharmacies nationwide
- 1 online prescription drug formulary
- 3 tiers
- 1 mail-order discount option

Fill your medicine bowl with the medications you need from FCHP's nationwide pharmacy network (includes CVS, Brooks, Walgreens, Target, Kmart, Wal-Mart, Shaw's and Stop & Shop). Cover and sauté with a three-tier prescription drug formulary that carefully weighs medication safety, effectiveness and cost. For extra spice, fold in a three-month supply of Tier-1 and Tier-2 prescription drugs by mail order for the cost of only two monthly copayments.

Compliments of FCHP's nationwide prescription coverage

Our favorite recipe calls for excellent customer service—and that's just what we'll give you, every day. If you have a question, a concern or an idea, we're here to help. Call us Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677).

A good cook has ingredients in reserve. Through FCHP's *Peace of Mind Program*SM, you can fold in a second opinion—and specialty care if needed—at five renowned Boston medical centers.

dental delights

an appetizer that will bring smiles to your table

- 1 dental exam every six months
- 1 cup of coverage for general dentist services
- A dash of discounts for specialist services

Use first ingredient by making an appointment with a participating dentist for a dental cleaning and routine X-rays. If overly tender, toss in extra services (such as minor fillings or root canals) performed by a general dentist at various copayments and discounts. If needed, garnish with discounts for services performed by periodontists, endodontists or other specialists. Serves your entire family.

Compliments of FCHP's dental benefits and discounts for the entire family

day or night, whip up just what your family needs

24/7 chiffon

- 1 touch of personal guidance, education and support
- 1 cup full of information to help you make healthy decisions
- Many educational materials on specific conditions
- 1 heaping of help to find additional online health information

This recipe is easy to do at midday or midnight. Gather your questions, and call Nurse Connect at 800-609-6175 (TDD/TTY: 800-848-0160). Stir together registered nurses and other health care professionals who can respond to medical questions and serve as health coaches. For icing on the chiffon cake, log on to Nurse Connect's Dialog CenterSM through My FCHP on www.fchp.org, and you'll find additional health resources. Relax—there's plenty to go around.

Compliments of FCHP's Nurse Connect

Traveling to Italy for the perfect pasta ingredient or to Japan for the latest sushi technique? No matter where your tasty travels take you, FCHP has got you covered for worldwide emergency medical care.

natural yum-yums

the perfect complement to your main meal

1 full network of credentialed chiropractors, acupuncturists and massage therapists
2,400+ health and wellness products

For a delicious alternative, choose one of the providers above from the American Specialty Health Networks, Inc. (see www.fchp.org). Make an appointment, and dissolve with reduced prices. Whip in a blend of discounted health and wellness products from the ASHN-affiliated Web site, www.healthyroads.com. Add a dash of Healthyroads' interactive products and complementary health information. Roll into a new way of obtaining complementary health care!

Compliments of FCHP's Naturally Well

Imagine receiving cooking advice from a famous chef! With Healthwise® Knowledgebase, you won't find cooking tips, but you'll have access to over 3,400 health topics and action steps written by experts. Visit www.fchp.org and click on the Healthwise Knowledgebase link.

you'll turn to this recipe often!

1 health and lifestyle questionnaire
1 overall wellness profile
3 specific scores
20 lucky winners

To prepare, visit www.fchp.org. Log on to My FCHP and click on the "Personal wellness profile" link. Marinate questions; answers will bubble to the top. Be sure to cover family history, fitness and eating habits. Simmer until you get your overall wellness score, plus scores for emotional health, nutrition and fitness. Get suggestions and information you need for better lifestyle flavor. You might even be one of 20 lucky members to win a \$25 Wal-Mart® gift card. But, with this recipe, everyone's a winner!

Compliments of FCHP's Personal Wellness Profile™

be-well casserole

Have trouble reading your favorite cookbook? Get your annual eye exam from our optometry providers (you're covered). Or try FCHP's eyewear discount program for frames and lenses, sunglasses and contact lenses when bought at a contracted provider.

kick-the-habit stew

all the basics blended just right for success

Choice of free group meetings or telephone counseling
\$10 nicotine replacement patches
A heap of support

Decide to quit smoking. Go shopping and find one of the most successful quit-smoking programs in the nation. (Hint: It's FCHP's Quit to Win program.) Combine free group meetings at various locations (or individual telephone consultations) with \$10 nicotine replacement patches. Toss in the heap of support and simmer with willpower. Treat yourself to a stop-smoking plan that's right for you.

Compliments of Quit to Win, FCHP's tobacco treatment program

If you get a bill, don't boil over. Check to see if it's for a copayment or deductible you already paid. If so, contact your doctor. Is the bill for a covered service? (See your FCHP Member Handbook/Evidence of Coverage for details.) Then it could be an error on your doctor's part or ours. Call us for help: FCHP Customer Service, 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

kid stuff



keeping kids safe in the pool

Staying cool during these dog days of summer probably means a trip to the pool for you and your family. Whether you're swimming in your backyard, at a neighbor's house or at a pool in town, it's important to take extra precautions to keep your children safe.

- Adults should always supervise children when they're in the pool. It's important that one person give the kids full attention—no eating, drinking, talking on the phone or other distractions.
- Make sure the kids using the pool know how to swim. Check out the American Red Cross or your local Y for information about swimming lessons. (And, as an FCHP member, you're eligible to be reimbursed up to \$200 per family for swimming lessons through FCHP's *It Fits!* program. Call Customer Service for details.*)
- Keep a phone with you at the pool, just in case you need to call emergency personnel.
- Make sure all children under the age of 3 are wearing a personal flotation device that's been approved by the U.S. Coast Guard, such as a life jacket. Check the device for a label that indicates USCG approval.
- If you have a backyard pool, it should be completely surrounded by a fence that's secured with a lock. Don't rely on a pool cover to keep children out! Also, all ladders should be taken out of above-ground pools when not in use.
- If your kids are swimming at a friend's or relative's house, make sure they



know the pool rules, such as no jumping or diving. If the pool owners do not commonly have children in their pool, it's a good idea to request that all chemicals and cleaning supplies be put away and out of a child's reach.

Swimming is a great way to cool down—and burn calories. By taking a few precautions, you can ensure that you and your family have a safe summer swim!

** Benefits may vary by employer. For more information, visit www.fchp.org.* ■

road trip survival

Taking a road trip with the kids is an exciting adventure! Whether your travels take you to the beach or the mountains, a little planning can go a long way to making your road trip a safe—and happy—one for the entire family!

- Bring plenty of healthy snacks and drinks. Whole-grain cereal, pretzels, raisins, animal crackers, bottled water and juice boxes are good for traveling. For easy cleanup, bring along disposable wipes.

- Just in case you or your children experience motion sickness, some experts suggest lemon drops, lemon cookies or peppermints. Salt-covered foods, like crackers and pretzels, may take the nausea away.
- Pack a first-aid kit that includes a thermometer, bandages, non-aspirin pain reliever, insect repellent and antibiotic ointment. And don't forget the bug spray and sunscreen!
- Plan frequent stops, but not just for bathroom breaks! Bring along a ball, jump rope or a Frisbee® so the kids can burn off their energy at rest stops.
- If you've got a toddler, consider purchasing a portable potty, and bring along toilet paper.
- Books on tape, sing-along CDs, Magna Doodle® boards and even a portable DVD player can help save your sanity during longer road trips.
- Take along a map of the United States and ask your kids to keep an eye out for different license plates. When they spot a plate, have them find the state on the map. This not only keeps them busy, but also provides a little lesson in geography.
- During the ride back home, encourage your kids to create a journal about their vacation using crayons, markers and a photo or two. They'll not only stay busy, but they'll also create a masterpiece of memories that will last forever.

Be sure to take your Fallon Community Health Plan member ID card along with you. Now take a deep breath, relax—and have fun! ■

fchp update



our community outreach

At Fallon Community Health Plan, our mission is *making our communities healthy*. That's why we promote a variety of activities and programs for caring, sharing and helping one another.

- If you live in the Worcester region, we hope you'll join us for our annual *Movies in the Park* series at Institute Park on three Saturdays in August. Movies begin at dusk. This year, we'll be featuring:
 - August 5: *Star Wars III: Revenge of the Sith*
 - August 12: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
 - August 19: *Madagascar*
- All of Central Mass. is talking about the Can-Am League's 2005 champion Worcester Tornadoes! The team is a great community "event" and, as a community health plan, FCHP is proud to be a major sponsor. Look for the FCHP banner along the first-base line as you enjoy the games at Hanover Insurance Park at Fitton Field on the campus of Holy Cross College.
- FCHP was again the presenting sponsor of Worcester's Independence Day Celebration at Cristoforo Colombo Park. We hope many of our members took part in the fun activities, enjoyed the music of the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra and were awed by a spectacular fireworks display. It was a special summer party. ■



take a personal look at your health

Looking for an overall picture of your current health and wellness? Well, you've come to the right place!

Fallon Community Health Plan now offers our members a Personal Wellness

Profile™. The profile is a questionnaire that evaluates your overall health picture by considering your family history, fitness and eating habits, emotional health and other health factors. It takes only about 20 minutes to complete.

And, as an added bonus, all members who complete a Personal Wellness Profile will be automatically entered into a quarterly drawing for a \$25 Wal-Mart® gift card*. Twenty lucky members will win.

it's all about you!

Once you've completed your Personal Wellness Profile, you'll receive a report that includes an overall wellness score, and separate scores in the areas of emotional health, nutrition and fitness. You'll even find out if you're at risk for any health problems and receive suggestions and information you need to improve your health and lifestyle. After you have this baseline score, you can retake the

continued

new program offers help with medication management

Your health is important to us at Fallon Community Health Plan, which is why we're introducing a new medication therapy management program, in collaboration with Medicare. This program is designed to help Fallon Senior Plan™ members who are taking multiple prescription medications to maintain good health.

FCHP's program is for Fallon Senior Plan members who are managing at least 10 prescriptions, have three or more chronic conditions* and are spending more than \$4,000 on prescriptions each year. We have contacted Fallon Senior Plan members who are eligible. The program is free and voluntary.

An FCHP pharmacist, working with the member's doctor, provides education, monitoring and support for the members in the program. Overall, our goal is to be an extra layer of protection for our participants—to make sure they're getting and taking the types of medication that are right for them.

For more information, call Customer Service at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

* Chronic conditions identified for this program are COPD, depression, diabetes, osteoporosis, hyperlipidemia (high cholesterol) and hypertension (high blood pressure). ■

personal look at health

continued from page 9

Personal Wellness Profile next year to track your wellness score progress!

You can rest assured that all information you submit while completing your profile will be secure and confidential—unless you choose the option to have your identifiable information released.

so, how do you get started?

First, go to the FCHP home page at www.fchp.org. Click on “Members,” and you’ll be brought to the My FCHP page. If you’ve already registered with My FCHP, just log in. If you haven’t registered yet, now’s the time for you to do so! Once you’ve successfully logged in to My FCHP, click on “Personal wellness profile,” and you’ll be brought to the Personal Wellness Profile home page.

So what are you waiting for? Take the first step toward a healthier lifestyle today!

** FCHP employees and Fallon Senior Plan™ members (due to government regulations) are not eligible for the drawing. ■*

more for our members at www.fchp.org

Have you visited our Web site lately? Fallon Community Health Plan recently introduced a new member section, called **My FCHP**, which allows our members to interact with us more easily and access important health information. And it ensures that all your

link to information about your care

What should you do in an emergency? Does utilization review improve your care? How do you find an interpreter? What are your rights and responsibilities as an FCHP member? For answers to these questions and additional information related to your care, please go to our Web site: www.fchp.org/Members/Healthtools. You also can request this information by calling our Customer Service Department at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

You also can get an overview of our **Quality Services Program** on our Web site at www.fchp.org/_about/Qualitystandards.htm. This program is a comprehensive approach that Fallon Community Health Plan takes to ensure the quality and safety of clinical care and the quality of service provided to our members. You also may call our Quality and Health Services Department at 508-368-9101 for this information. ■

new hospital comparison tool added to www.fchp.org

This spring, we enhanced our Web site by adding a hospital comparison tool. This new decision-support tool is appropriately called the Compare Hospitals Tool. It allows FCHP members who are logged in to My FCHP to create a confidential and independent comparison of hospitals by procedure or diagnosis within a specific geographic area.

how it works

This Web site lets you compare hospital quality and cost for more than 150 procedures at 100+ hospitals in a side-by-side comparison format. This tool also incorporates FCHP’s network information so that you can see, at a glance, whether a specific hospital is in your network. The information presented on this site is public data, gathered from state and federal governments and agencies.

what’s measured

The hospitals are compared based on five measures, which you can list in order of importance to you: number of patients treated, mortality (death) rates, complication rates, length of stay and costs. You can use this information to make important decisions about the care you may need to receive.

Visitors to the “Members” section of www.fchp.org already had access to some public sites that offer hospital quality measures and information. The new Compare Hospitals Tool is a more comprehensive option. ■

personal information is secure. Here’s a glimpse at the site’s many features:

interact with us

- Find a physician
- Change your primary care provider
- Request new ID card
- Change account address and phone number
- Request brochures and materials
- Request Weight Watchers® coupons
- Member Q&A

my health tools

- Personal Wellness Profile™ (see article in this section)
- Nurse Connect (24/7 access to nurses and other health professionals)
- Healthwise® Knowledgebase (in-depth medical content plus prescription drug fact sheets)
- Hospital comparison tools
- Kids and family health resources (interactive sites to teach your kids how to be fit, eat well and be healthy)
- Other resources, like back issues of *Healthy Communities* magazine and details about your member rights and responsibilities

benefits overviews

- Member discounts
- General benefits overview
- Online drug formulary
- Wellness programs

We’re not finished yet. Stay tuned!

Weight Watchers® is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers International, Inc. ■

quit to win—successfully

We've all heard the statistics. Lung cancer, predominantly caused by smoking, is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States for both men and women. And according to all estimates, smoking-related medical costs are in the billions.

Even nonsmokers have a sense of how addictive smoking is and how difficult it is to quit. That's why Fallon Community Health Plan offers a tobacco treatment program, called **Quit to Win**, to help our members develop a stop-smoking plan that's right for them and give them the tools they need to succeed.

We are thrilled to report that participants in **Quit to Win** have achieved a one-year abstinence rate of **32%**. That's more than double the rate that the National Cancer Institute considers "successful," and is among the highest in the nation. In addition, we've increased our new participation by 45%, and ongoing attendance in the program is very high. We can see the value of this program in action and are proud to be a part of its success.

Group sessions are free (you don't have to be an FCHP member to join us), and members can buy nicotine patches at a greatly discounted rate. Phone counseling is an option for those FCHP members who cannot attend our group sessions. We have several locations. Regrettably, we no longer offer sessions at Fallon Clinic on May Street in Worcester. However, we are pleased to have added the **Milford Regional Medical Center** as another meeting site. Meetings there began June 1.

To find out more, call our *Quit to Win* program at 508-368-9540 or 888-807-2908, option 2, or visit our Web site at www.fchp.org/Members/Wellness/Tobacco.htm. ■

step back in time this summer

The Higgins Armory Museum in Worcester is a popular family destination—and this season, there are more reasons than ever to visit it. Fallon Community Health Plan is proud to sponsor *Summer Fun at the Higgins*—a chance not only to learn about the medieval world, but to enter it, too! And, as an FCHP member, you receive \$2 off adult admission by showing your FCHP member ID card!

The Higgins Armory Museum is the only museum in the Western Hemisphere dedicated to studying and displaying arms and armor. Now through August 25, you can witness a live arms and armor presentation—and may even be chosen to wear the armor yourself!

Summer Fun at the Higgins also includes a themed show where you'll encounter Romans, Gothic knights and other characters. Leave time for the hands-on Quest Gallery, a "grand" game of chess and a brass rubbing. And consider the drop-in art workshops where, for a small fee, you can make a shield or pennant to take home.

No pre-registration is required to participate. Most activities occur every Tuesday through Friday with regular museum admission (\$8 for adults; \$7 for children ages 6 to 16 and seniors age 60 and over.) Remember, you receive \$2 off adult admission as an FCHP member.

For more information about events and times for *Summer Fun at the Higgins*, visit www.higgins.org. ■

fchp support for high-risk pregnancies

Fallon Community Health Plan has introduced a new obstetrical program, *Special Deliveries*, that offers support to pregnant women at risk for complications—including premature delivery. The practical and emotional costs of premature delivery are immense. Our goal is to help these mothers and their babies have the healthiest pregnancy possible and to help mothers deliver closer to full term. We're encouraging our providers to refer appropriate FCHP members to the program.

Special Deliveries provides case management support throughout the pregnancy. We also offer education, home health services and identification of community resources to support or supplement care.

Between 1993 and 2003, the rate of infants born prematurely in Massachusetts increased more than 37%. These infants are at risk for lifelong problems, not to mention that an infant born at 35 weeks incurs expenses that are greater than 10 times that of an infant born at 38 weeks.

Special Deliveries is provided at no additional cost to our members. With this program, we believe that we can help mothers and their obstetricians address special health care needs and make a difference through healthier pregnancy outcomes. ■

health, fitness and you!



blood tests reveal secrets

It seems that you're asked to give a blood sample for a "blood test" just about every time you see a doctor. What exactly is being tested?

Actually, there are quite a variety of blood tests that may be done in the laboratory—and new tests are being developed all the time.

Blood is made up of plasma, cells and other elements that reveal many secrets about our well-being. By testing your blood, the doctor can find out a lot of information about how well your body is working and how well you can fight diseases.

Individual tests, for example, may show that you have high cholesterol, a heart problem, too much glucose ("blood sugar") or Lyme disease. Your doctor may order a "complete blood count," which can determine if you have anemia, an infection or an irregular bleeding rate.

The results of your blood tests may be used by your doctor in many ways: to



pinpoint or support a diagnosis, monitor or determine your treatment, or to screen for undiagnosed conditions. Blood testing remains one of the best tools to help your doctor oversee your health.

For more information about laboratory tests and your health, go online to the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health at www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/laboratorytests.html. ■

staying healthy with diabetes

If you have diabetes—or someone you care about does—you know how important it is to be proactive about your health.

diabetes 101

Our body's main fuel is glucose, a simple sugar that is made from the food we eat. A hormone called insulin, which is made in the pancreas, is necessary for the body to be able to use and dispose of sugar properly. Insulin takes the sugar from the blood and directs it into the cells, where it can be used for energy.

Diabetes is the disease that occurs when a person either doesn't make enough insulin or can't properly use the insulin that the pancreas makes. As a result, glucose builds up in the blood instead of going into cells. Over time, serious complications can develop.

Good medical care is very important for people with diabetes to control their risk of cardiovascular disease and other complications, such as eye problems and kidney and nerve damage.

talk to your doctor about these tests

Every person with diabetes should get these four screening tests at least annually:

1. A1c test

This blood test tells how well a person's diabetes has been controlled over the past three months. An acceptable A1c number is considered to be 7% or less. (This test should be done at least twice a year.)

2. Cholesterol test

"Good" (HDL) cholesterol is typically lower than normal when a person has diabetes. If you have diabetes and also

fun fitness facts

Adding 10 pounds of muscle to our bodies can translate into burning an additional 350 to 500 calories each day! (This is good news, considering that a 2-ounce Snickers® candy bar has 273 calories!)

Drinking one 20-ounce regular soda each day can add 26 pounds a year! (Water has zero calories and is great for you!)

have high levels of “bad” (LDL) cholesterol in your blood, you are at much higher risk for cardiovascular disease.

3. Diabetic dilated eye examination

Diabetes is the leading cause of adult blindness. A person with diabetes can lower the risk by controlling his or her blood sugars and having routine eye exams so that problems may be found and treated early.

4. Urine test for microalbumin

This lab test tells if the kidneys have been damaged by diabetes. Although most people with diabetes do not develop kidney problems, some do. That’s why your doctor will closely watch for any changes in the urine or kidneys.

Remember, prevention is the best medicine!

—Joseph Cohen, M.D., FCHP Associate Medical Director, Quality and Disease Care Services ■

drug safety takes a front seat

Prescription and over-the-counter drug safety has been a hot topic lately—for consumers as well as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, who is responsible for reviewing and approving new drugs before they reach the market.

The news has been filled with warnings about medications. From the recalls on drugs like Vioxx® in 2004, to warnings for drugs like Celebrex®, Aleve®, Strattera® and Paxil®, to drug companies hiding negative results of clinical trials, it’s become a challenge for consumers to trust newer medications. Rest assured that Fallon Community Health Plan is doing its best to keep up-to-date on the safety of all of the drugs that we cover.

Before drugs go on the market, they are tested for safety and effectiveness by their manufacturers, and then reviewed and approved by the FDA. Drug approval is based on one premise: whether on not the benefits of the drug outweigh the risks.

save your orange peels

When you’re reaching for your favorite citrus fruit, think again before you throw away the peels!

Compounds called polymethoxylated flavones—found in peels of oranges, tangerines, grapefruits, lemons, limes and other citrus fruits—may have several health benefits. So, think about adding a tablespoon or two of zest to your favorite summer foods. For example:

- Grate a tablespoon of the peel from a washed citrus fruit and use it to flavor tea, salad and salad dressing, yogurt, soups and even oatmeal.
- Make a citrus rub for your favorite meat, seafood or chicken dish by grating a lemon peel. Then add garlic and pepper for extra flavor. ■

But the FDA realizes that the current testing and approval process still falls short of identifying all of the risks that a drug may have. Clinical trials only test approximately 2,000 to 4,000 people in a short time frame. Adverse effects (unfavorable side effects) are more likely to be spotted after hundreds of thousands of people and many years. Also, when medications are approved for one condition but prescribed for another, we may discover additional adverse reactions along with potentially positive outcomes. Currently, the FDA is working with the pharmaceutical companies and an independent reviewer to find ways to improve the process and minimize the risks.

Meanwhile, FCHP gives each new FDA-approved medication serious consideration before approving it for our list of covered medications. We do research and comparisons with other available drugs, and even talk with physicians and scientists involved in the original drug trial. We also look at whether generic drugs that have track records in treating a diagnosis effectively

are safer alternatives to medications that are new to the market.

Medications can save and improve the quality of our lives, but they shouldn’t be taken lightly. FCHP, in partnership with the FDA and your doctor, is doing everything possible to make sure the medications you take are safe and effective for your needs.

—Leslie Fish, Pharm.D., Senior Director of Pharmacy Services, Fallon Community Health Plan ■

seniority



pleasant dreams in later years

“Old people just don’t sleep well.”

How often have you heard that statement? Perhaps you believe it yourself. However, waking up tired each day is *not* a normal part of aging.

Well, it’s true that many older people don’t seem to get a good night’s sleep. In fact, according to the National Sleep Foundation, older adults often complain of insomnia, frequent or early waking, difficulty returning to sleep and daytime drowsiness.

Our sleep patterns do change as we age. Older adults often go to sleep earlier in the evening and wake up sooner the next morning. It takes longer for them to fall asleep, and they spend less time in the deeper stages of sleep. But these changes shouldn’t sentence you to nights of unfulfilling sleep for the rest of your life.



No matter how old you are, getting the proper amount of sleep is critical for your physical and mental well-being. Many factors can come into play that affect how well you sleep. Consider the possibilities. Often you can make little changes that will produce big results.

Also, seriously discuss with your doctor any concerns you may have about troubled sleep. Many sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea (a temporary cessation of breathing) and restless leg syndrome, can disrupt

sleep. So can a variety of medical conditions, such as cardiovascular, gastrointestinal or pulmonary diseases. If you have pain from any source, that could keep you awake. Some medications (including antidepressants, decongestants and antihypertensives) have stimulating effects that cause sleep disruption. These should all be explored with your doctor.

And, sometimes the problem is just poor sleep habits. Try to change your schedule by having a regular bedtime—learn good pre-sleep habits. Exercise regularly and stay away from caffeine, alcohol and large meals within a few hours of your bedtime.

Pleasant dreams! ■

save the date!

Fallon Senior Plan™ invites seniors and caregivers to attend our **Senior Spectacular Expo** on Tuesday, October 24, at the DCU Center in Worcester. There is no cost to attend the event, and it’s open to the public. Fallon Senior Plan and the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* will be presenting sponsors.

Enjoy a full day of entertainment, workshops, exhibits, health screenings and seminars. Many exhibitors will be on site to provide information on different products and services. Fallon Senior Plan sales representatives will be available with information and applications. Watch for details this fall. We hope you’ll be able to attend! ■

make an informed choice

If you or someone you know is about to become eligible for Medicare, Fallon Senior Plan™ is here! Consider attending one of our monthly informational sales presentations to learn more about our plan and Medicare coverage. Come and bring a friend!

To find a meeting location near you, visit our Web site at www.fchp.org, click on “Fallon Senior Plan,” and then click on “Sales sessions.” Or, to find a location or schedule an individual appointment session, call us at 1-888-377-1980 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■

emergency care worldwide for a carefree summer

Wherever you go this summer—a day trip to Maine or a vacation to Mexico—as a Fallon Senior Plan™ member, you can have the peace of mind that worldwide emergency care coverage provides. If you have an emergency medical condition while you're away, go to the nearest emergency room for care. If you need an ambulance, call the local emergency communications system (police or fire department, or 911).

An emergency medical condition is when you experience acute, severe symptoms that you feel could result in serious jeopardy to your health if not treated. If you use an emergency room, there is a \$50 copayment, which is waived if you are admitted to the hospital for the same condition within 72 hours.

You also are covered for urgently needed care at an urgent care center. This type of care is for minor emergencies such as cuts that require stitches, a sprained ankle or abdominal pain that doesn't pose an immediate threat. You are covered while you are away from the plan's service area, or if you are in the service area but the plan network providers are temporarily unavailable. For each urgently needed care visit, there is a copayment. Refer to your *Summary of Benefits* for details. ■

you're never too old for softball

Be on the lookout this summer for the Fallon Falcons, a team of more than 60 senior men and women, who have been playing in the Worcester County Senior Softball League for 12 years. Team members range in age from 60 to 90. They play Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Ralph Raymond Softball Field adjacent to Worcester State College as well as at other locations in the state. They also compete in the post-Labor Day New England Senior Softball Tournament on Cape Cod. Fallon Community Health Plan is proud to be the major sponsor of the Fallon Falcons.

introducing fallon senior plan value

Do you have family or friends who have Medicare and Medicaid?

Do they get help with paying for Medicare Part B?

We have a plan for them!

Fallon Senior Plan Value has:

- \$0 monthly plan premium
- Dental care
- Vision care
- Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage

And, their doctor will assist them in getting all of their health care.

For complete benefit information, suggest that your family or friends call us at 1-888-377-1980 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■

important information coming

Before long, we'll be enjoying the cooler temperatures and splendid colors of fall. That means it'll be open enrollment time for Fallon Senior Plan™. Open enrollment for 2007 begins on November 15, 2006. Please mark your calendars now, and watch for important information about your Fallon Senior Plan benefits that we'll be mailing you in October! ■

on our cover ...

Amy Corneliussen takes a break with her son Cadence (left) and daughter Rain as they all enjoy frozen pops, a favorite summer treat. They're looking forward to spending extra time this summer with their husband and father, Jason Dimen, a teacher in the Boxboro school system. The family has been with Fallon Community Health Plan for more than two years.

Amy and Jason plan to stay close to home this season, having made a trip to Europe last year for a family wedding. Brief trips to Cape Cod and New Hampshire will provide some adventure for everyone. Amy explains that 8 year-old Rain and 3 year-old Cadence have busy schedules during the school year and will enjoy having more unstructured days. And she and Jason will tackle some of the never-ending work around their home in West Boylston.



fchp adds key providers north and south of boston

On June 1, we announced a significant expansion of our FCHP Select Care network that will give our members who live or work in communities around Boston access to an additional 600 physicians.

FCHP has added three new physician groups and two hospitals to the Select Care network.

north of boston

- **Highland Healthcare Associates IPA** gives FCHP members inside Route 128 access to approximately 330 health care providers, including more than 100 primary care physicians. The IPA is affiliated with **Winchester Hospital**, a 200-bed acute care, community hospital already in our network.

south of boston

- **Bridgewater Goddard Park Medical Associates** is a multi-specialty and multi-site physician group practice in Plymouth County with approximately 80 providers—including 39 PCPs, 28 specialists, plus other providers.
- **Brockton PHO**, a strong physician-hospital organization that's also in Plymouth County, adds approximately 192 providers to our network—21 PCPs and 171 specialists.
- **Brockton Hospital**, in Brockton, is a 268-bed teaching hospital that offers virtually every medical specialty. It has a large emergency department and 26 adult primary care and specialty outpatient clinics.
- **Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center**, also in Brockton, is a full-service, acute care, Catholic hospital with 258 beds. The medical center recently scored in the top 7% of hospitals nationwide for patient satisfaction.

FCHP is currently working with the three physician group practices to credential their physicians. Additional information will be available to our members once the credentialing process is complete. ■

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CONCORD, NH
PERMIT NO. 1545