



**CHOICE**  
Health Plans

# Member News

VNSNY CHOICE Total (HMO D-SNP) Member Newsletter

Summer 2022



## Move Your Body

Moving your body, at any age, even if you have physical challenges, can help you be healthier.

### What's good for the body is also good for the mind.

Regular exercise can:

- Help you stay at a healthy weight
- Improve heart disease and diabetes
- Protect against stress, depression and promote healthy sleep
- Increase balance and reduce your risk for falls

### How much exercise do you need?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults 65 and older need:

- At least 30 minutes a day, five days a week of activity such as brisk walking.
- At least two days a week of activities that strengthen muscles like lifting weights (8–12 repetitions).
- Activities to improve balance, three days a week, such as marching in place (8–12 repetitions).

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**The Alzheimer's Research & Prevention Foundation reports that regular exercise can reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or dementia by nearly 50%.**

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### What exercises are best for you?

- Chair exercises – try stretching, simple leg lifts and arm bends.
- Lifting light weights – (soup cans/water bottles).
- Walking.

Check our Events page for virtual Chair Exercises, and Tai Chi classes– [vnsnychoice.org/events](https://vnsnychoice.org/events)

Exercise can help you stay active longer.

Talk to your doctor before starting to exercise.

Start slowly, listen to your body and take breaks when needed.

## VNSNY is Now VNS Health!



The name of the organization your health plan belongs to recently changed from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York to **VNS Health**.

In the coming months, VNSNY CHOICE and our health plans will also change their names to include VNS Health. The name of your health plan will be **VNS Health Total (HMO D-SNP)**.

### **Why are we changing our name?**

We want people to know that we belong to an organization with different parts, including your health plan, all focused on health. That's why we are bringing all those services together to include one phrase: **VNS Health**.

Remember, our name may be different, but we still have the same commitment to helping you stay healthy in your home and community. If you have any questions about these changes, please call us at 1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711).

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## Look to Your Care Team for Support

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Your Total Care Team can help make your quality of life better in ways that you might not have thought of. We can connect you to food pantries, home delivered meals and housing. Paying attention to your emotional health is just as important. We can link you to adult day centers where you can socialize with others and with compassionate therapists who can help your emotional health.

So, whether you are dealing with aches and pains in the body or worries about managing daily stresses, we want you to know that we are here to help.

Talk to your Care Team about what is right for you.

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### Leave the Hospital with a Plan!

Before you are discharged from the hospital, get a written discharge plan and go over it with the hospital staff. The plan should include the following points:

- ✓ The name and number of the person to call if you have questions or concerns after discharge.
- ✓ A list of your medications, especially those to manage pain, and any new ones.
- ✓ Schedule a follow-up with your doctor within seven days of discharge.

*If you follow this checklist, you're less likely to have to return to the hospital.*

### Continuing Your Recovery with Enhanced Services

All Total members receive help when they are discharged to ensure that they recover well at home. But sometimes, extra help is needed after discharge. If you have a number of chronic conditions and are on several medications, your Care Team will let you know if you're eligible for **Enhanced Services**.

**Enhanced Services** offer personalized care in your home, starting with an assessment by a visiting nurse. Follow-up visits may include medication reviews and home visits by a nurse practitioner. As you recover, **Enhanced Services** can help you avoid having to go back to the ER or hospital. We are committed to helping you stay healthy in your own home!

Please call your Care Team if you have any questions.

# Early Detection is Key in Breast Cancer Screening

Getting a mammogram to screen for breast cancer is an important part of staying healthy. And, you can earn rewards with the Healthy CHOICE Healthy You rewards program.



## Important to know

- About 287,850 new cases of invasive breast cancer (cancer that has spread to surrounding tissue) will be diagnosed in 2022.
- Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women in the United States, (skin cancers are #1). This means women have a 1 in 8 chance of developing breast cancer.
- Black women are more likely to die from breast cancer than any other race or ethnic group.

## Guidelines for women – when to get a mammogram

- Age 55+ – get a mammogram every two years or continue screening annually if you choose to.
- Age 75+ – talk to your provider about what is best.
- You should continue screening as long as your overall health is good.

If you have a history of breast cancer, discuss with your provider how often you should be screened.

## Lower your risk of getting breast cancer by:

- Staying at a healthy weight – Obesity is linked with a higher risk of breast cancer after menopause.
- Exercising 30 minutes a day on most days.
- Avoiding alcohol which increases the risk of breast cancer, even in small amounts.

Mammograms can find breast cancer early, when treatment can be easier and more successful.

If you have not done so already, talk to your provider about making your mammography appointment.

[cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/](https://cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/)

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VNSNY CHOICE Health Plans complies with Federal civil rights laws. VNSNY CHOICE Health Plans does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

ATENCION: si habla español, tiene a su disposicion servicios gratuitos de asistencia linguistica. Llame al 1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711).

注意：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 1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)。



**CHOICE**<sup>SM</sup>  
Health Plans

VNSNY CHOICE

220 East 42nd Street, 3rd Floor  
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[vnsnychoice.org](http://vnsnychoice.org)

**CHOICE Care Team**

1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)  
8 am – 8 pm, 7 days a week

**TRANSPORTATION REMINDER**

To schedule transportation, call 1-877-718-4219 (TTY: 711)  
at least 48 hours in advance 8 am – 8 pm, Monday – Friday.

**If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us.**

VNSNY CHOICE is committed to finding and stopping fraud, waste or abuse in our health care plans.

**Anonymous Reporting**

VNSNY CHOICE Compliance Hotline: **1-888-634-1558**.  
File an online report at: [vnsny.ethicspoint.com](http://vnsny.ethicspoint.com).  
Learn more at: [vnsnychoice.org/compliance-program](http://vnsnychoice.org/compliance-program).



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**Best Berry Smoothie**



*Use delicious healthy fruits, high protein yogurt, calcium-rich milk and a touch of honey to make a refreshing summer treat. Makes one-two servings.*

**Ingredients**

- 2 cups frozen mixed berries
- 1 cup Greek strawberry flavored yogurt
- 1 banana, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup milk (use your favorite milk – soy, almond, coconut, etc.)
- 1 teaspoon honey

**Directions**

Put all the ingredients in a blender, cover and blend until smooth. Pour into glasses and enjoy.

**Inside...** *Early Detection is Key in Breast Cancer Screening*

# Important Exams and Vaccines for Your Health

Regular screenings and the pneumonia vaccine are key to staying healthy. This chart provides general guidelines for some of the screenings and vaccines you may need. Speak to your doctor about what is right for you.



Exam or Vaccine	Screening Details/How Often	Why?
 <b>Dental</b>	<p><b>Twice a year</b>, see a dentist for an oral exam and cleaning.</p> <p>Practice good oral care at home including daily brushing and flossing.</p>	<p>Good oral hygiene is important to overall health.</p> <p>Early symptoms of diabetes and heart disease can start as a mouth lesion or gum infection.</p>
 <b>Vision</b>	<p><b>Every year</b>, get a comprehensive eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist (eye doctor).</p>	<p>Regular eye exams can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show the need for glasses</li> <li>• Uncover conditions like glaucoma, that if left untreated could impair vision or even cause blindness.</li> </ul> <p>Good vision protects you from falling, allowing you to stay active and independent.</p>
 <b>Hearing</b>	<p>The New York State Department of Health recommends screening by an audiologist once per decade and <b>every 2 years</b> after age 50.</p>	<p>Hearing loss makes it hard to have conversations, hear doorbells and alarms and can cause you to feel self-conscious and depressed.</p>
 <b>Pneumococcal Vaccines (pneumonia vaccine)</b>	<p>Adults 65 and older: Two pneumococcal shots (PCV13 and PPSV23) to protect against diseases like pneumonia, ear and sinus infections.</p> <p>Prevent pneumococcal disease by getting vaccinated, eating well, exercising and staying tobacco-free.</p>	<p>Pneumococcal disease:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a bacterial infection that can affect your lungs, blood and brain.</li> <li>• Is especially dangerous for you if you have lung, heart disease or diabetes.</li> <li>• Can be spread to others when they cough or sneeze.</li> </ul>

# Keeping Your Teeth Healthy with Regular Home and In-Office Care



You can keep your teeth healthy with daily home care and regular visits to the dentist. And, preventive and routine care are covered benefits under your health plan.

## Your dentist visit may include (every six months):

- Regular oral exams
- Teeth cleaning
- Routine X-rays

Outside of the dentist's office, **you** play a big role in keeping your teeth healthy.

## Here are some basics of good oral health:

- Brush your teeth in the morning and before bedtime—using a soft bristled brush and a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily.
- Be careful when chewing hard foods that could damage or chip teeth.
- Avoid tobacco products, as they can lead to cancer and other dental problems.
- If you have diabetes, work to manage your condition to keep your gums healthy.

Don't overlook your dental health, which is still the nation's most unmet health care issue. If you haven't been to the dentist this year, schedule your appointment now. If you need help finding a dentist, call Healthplex Dental Member Services at 1-800-468-9868 (TTY: 1-800-662-1220), Monday – Friday, 8 am – 6 pm.

## Are you using your FLEX Card Benefit?

As a Total member, you get a FLEX debit card to help pay for certain items above what is covered under your health plan for Dental, Hearing or Vision.

For example, if you need contacts, lenses or frames that cost more than what your plan covers, you can use your FLEX benefit card.

We sent you a letter with your card in 2022. This is what the envelope and card look like.

Use your FLEX benefit by 12/31/22 because there are no roll-overs.

To learn more about this benefit, visit [www.vnsnychoice.org/flex-card](http://www.vnsnychoice.org/flex-card) or call us at 1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)

