



## IN THIS ISSUE

2

Peace of Mind with  
Advance Directives

Leading a Healthy Life with  
Diabetes Education

3

Safely Throw Out  
Unwanted Drugs

Be on the Lookout for Two  
Important Member Surveys

## Welcome Summer Safely!

Summer 2021 is finally here! After 18 months, COVID-19 restrictions are being lifted and life is starting to return to normal.

### Basic tips to stay safe while having fun this summer.

- Drink water throughout the day to avoid dehydration.
- Don't stay outside for too long, especially between 10 am and 2 pm.
- Use sunscreen to protect your skin. Wear a hat or cap to shield your head and face from the sun.
- Stay cool by visiting air-conditioned spaces. When you're home, turn on a fan or air conditioner and close curtains and shades to stay cool.

### Know the danger signs of heat-related conditions.

- **Dehydration:** weakness, headache, dizziness, confusion.
- **Heat exhaustion:** heavy sweating, muscle cramps, tiredness, cold or clammy skin.

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Our best protection against COVID-19 and the seasonal flu is to get vaccinated.

If you already have, good for you!  
If not, we encourage you to get your COVID-19 vaccine now and your flu shot in the fall.

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- **Heat Stroke:** temperature of 103 or higher; red, hot, dry skin; headache; confusion; vomiting.

If you think you're suffering from any of these, move to a shady or air-conditioned place, drink water, and rest. If you don't feel better soon after getting out of the sun, call 911.

Source: [cdc.gov/nceh/features/extremeheat](https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/features/extremeheat)



## Peace of Mind with Advance Directives

Over the last year and a half, if we've learned anything, it's that we need to be prepared for the unexpected. Importantly, Advance Directives can make sure you get the medical care you want if you are unable to speak for yourself. Having a calm and thoughtful conversation with the people you trust, including your [health care agent](#), the person you name to speak for you, takes away confusion about how you want to receive care.

### Ensure that your wishes are clear by completing these Advance Directives:

[Health Care Proxy](#), which names your health care agent.

[Living Will](#), where you write down the details of how you want your care handled.

It's a good idea to give copies of your Advance Directives to your health care agent, doctors and people close to you. Keep extra copies with other important papers in your home and make sure to let people know where they are.

Having this kind of conversation can be difficult. But, in the end, doing so will give you and those who care about you peace of mind.

## You have a Voice – CHOICE Total Member Advisory Committee (MAC)

The CHOICE Total MAC is a great way for you to meet other members and CHOICE staff from our Quality, Care Management and Care Team departments. You'll hear plan updates and info about any new plan benefits. We'll encourage you to share your experiences with our plan, how satisfied you are with the doctors in our network and how well it fits your needs.

Why is it important? We want to hear from you because we value your feedback. This is your opportunity to let us know how we're doing, so we can give you better care. Call the Total Care Team at 1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711), 8 am – 8 pm for 7 days a week, for more information. Or, go to the Events page of our website ([vnsnychoice.org/events](https://vnsnychoice.org/events)) to check for upcoming MAC meetings.

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## Leading a Healthy Life with Diabetes Education

Knowledge is power! That's where Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) classes can help. Supported by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, they're offered to people who have Type 1 or 2 diabetes. CHOICE Total covers them.

### By participating in DSME you can:

- Improve your hemoglobin A1C (3-month average blood sugar)
- Reduce or even help avoid complications
- Learn better lifestyle habits, like getting regular exercise and eating a balanced diet
- Learn coping practices to lower diabetes-related stress, depression and burnout

DSME is taught by healthcare professionals and can be up to 10 sessions with at least 2 of those sessions being one-on-one between you and a trainer. Please see the enclosed class schedule for more information.

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# Safely Throw Out Unwanted Drugs



Do you have prescription and over-the-counter drugs and supplements that you don't take anymore or that are expired? An easy and safe way to throw them out is at your local pharmacy's drop-off box. If your pharmacy doesn't have one, ask your pharmacist where the nearest one is.

For a list of drop-off sites near you, go to the Department of Justice, Diversion Control Division at [deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch](http://deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch).

## Safely Throwing Away Medicines in Your Trash

Done carefully, you can throw out prescription and over-the-counter drugs with your trash, though it does take some extra steps.

Follow these steps for pills, liquids and creams:

1. Remove the medication from its packaging. Scratch out all your personal information from the label to protect your identity and privacy.
2. Mix the medicine with water and then add salt, dirt, cat litter or coffee grounds. Don't crush tablets or capsules.
3. Place in a sealed bag, box or plastic tub.
4. Put the drugs in the trash close to the day that your garbage is picked up.

## Disposing of Patches and Inhalers

For information on how to safely get rid of patches and inhalers at home, visit [fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/where-and-how-dispose-unused-medicines](http://fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/where-and-how-dispose-unused-medicines).

Taking time to safely get rid of unwanted drugs and keeping only those that you currently take, protects you and others who may have access to your home. If you have questions about your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

## Be on the Lookout for Two Important Member Surveys

1. You may be asked to complete (by telephone until December) the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Provider & Systems (CG CAHPS) Interim Survey. The CG CAHPS survey asks how happy you are with services from your provider.
2. You may get a survey by mail, between July and November from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services called the Medicare Health Outcomes Survey (HOS) — which asks about your mental and physical health in the last two years.

And remember, the HOS survey is anonymous and will not impact your benefits in any way.

We thank you for being a member of CHOICE Total. If you have any questions call 1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711), 8 am – 8 pm 7 days a week, to speak to a member of your Care Team.



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.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. 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)。

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**CHOICE**  
Health Plans

VNSNY CHOICE

220 East 42nd Street, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10017

[vnsnychoice.org](http://vnsnychoice.org)

**CHOICE Total 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).



**CHOICE**  
Health Plans



**Asian-Inspired  
Stir-Fry Veggies**  
(4 servings)

*This vegetable stir-fry comes together in no time and is diabetes and heart friendly! Turn it into a complete meal by adding brown rice and chicken.*

**Ingredients**

- ¼ cup low sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey or maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons corn starch
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger or ½ tsp powder
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper and a pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon olive, coconut or vegetable oil
- 1 small red onion cut into wedges
- 3 carrots cut into rounds
- ½ pound snap peas
- 1 cup each bell peppers and broccoli crowns

**Instructions**

- Combine the soy sauce, honey, cornstarch, ginger, garlic and red pepper flakes blend and set aside.
- Warm the oil over medium heat. Add veggies and salt to oil and cook until veggies are softened, about 4 to 5 minutes.
- Add the prepared sauce and cook, while stirring until the sauce has thickened. **Enjoy!**

**Inside...** *Safely Throw Out Unwanted Drugs*

# Diabetes Self-Management Education Programs

Through Diabetes Education you can live a healthy life!  
(in-person, virtually (Zoom) and by telephone)



Name	Location	Contact Number	Requirements	Duration
Mount Sinai St. Luke's/Roosevelt Diabetes Center	Virtual	212-523-8672	RSVP for Zoom Session. Call contact number to RSVP.	Monthly Classes
Montefiore New Rochelle Hospital	Virtual	914-365-4059	Referral from PCP; Diabetes Educator can facilitate.	Classes are offered on an individual basis; this is a 1-on-1 DSME session.
Wyckoff Heights Medical Center	Televisits and phone visits	718-963-6478	Referral from PCP with Diabetes as well as HA1c and lipids lab results. Ask PCP for info.	Classes are offered on an individual basis; this is a 1-on-1 DSME session or Nutrition Counseling.
Kings County Hospital Center	In person socially distanced classes (2-3 people per session) 451 Clarkson Ave., Diabetes Resource Center, B9, Brooklyn, NY 11203	718-613-8120	Referral from PCP with Diabetes diagnosis and HA1c and lipids lab results.	Appointment only. Please call contact number to start sessions.
Martin Luther King (MLK) Bronx Care Diabetes Center of Excellence	Virtual	dwasheim@bronxcare.org	Referral from PCP with Diabetes diagnosis	Classes are offered on an individual basis; this is a 1-on-1 DSME session or Nutrition Counseling
Fleischer Institute for Diabetes and Metabolism, Montefiore Medical Center	Virtual	347-498-2445	Referral from PCP with Diabetes Type 2 diagnosis	Every Tuesday (10 am–11 am) and Wednesday evening (5:30 pm–6:30 pm) for 5 weeks.
South Nassau Communities Hospital Diabetes Education Center– Mount Sinai	Virtual	516-497-7500	Referral from PCP with Diabetes Type 1 or Type 2 diagnosis	Weekly specialty classes every Wednesday at 6 pm, 1-on-1 DSME and Nutrition sessions are also available

# Earn rewards for taking care of your health!



As a member of VNSNY CHOICE Total (HMO D-SNP), you are automatically enrolled in the **Healthy CHOICE Healthy You** Rewards Program. You can earn a \$25 reward for each health activity you complete. See the list below for qualifying health activities.

## Check your mail

If you completed any of the activities below between **January 1 through March 31, 2021**, check your mail. The first rewards cards for the year were sent out in June. Hold onto your rewards card! Up to three times a year, we will reload the card with the reward dollar amounts you earn for completing more health activities.

In August, we will send you a report listing the activities you have already completed and the ones you are eligible to complete through the end of the year. If you have any questions about your balance or your eligible health activities, call us at **1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)**, 8 am – 8 pm, 7 days a week.

	Health Activity	Eligibility Criteria	Value	Amount
	Mammogram	Females ages 50-74, as medically necessary.	\$25	Once per year
	Colon Cancer Screening	Adults ages 50-75, as medically necessary.	\$25	Once per year
	Statin Treatment for Cardiovascular Disease	Males ages 21-75, and females ages 40-75, as medically necessary.	\$25	Once per year
	Hemoglobin A1c for Diabetes	Adults ages 18-75, as medically necessary. Reward will be based on the final reading of the year.	\$25	Once per year
	Retinal Eye Exam for Diabetes	Adults ages 18-75, as medically necessary.	\$25	Once per year
	Blood Pressure Reading for Hypertension	Adults ages 18-85, as medically necessary. Reward will be based on the final reading of the year.	\$25	Once per year
	Flu Shot	All members are eligible.	\$25	Once per year
	Annual Wellness Visit	All members are eligible.	\$25	Once per year

## For more information on the timing of future rewards, visit [vnsnychoice.org/rewards](https://vnsnychoice.org/rewards).

You must be an active member of the plan to receive rewards. To be rewarded, activities must be completed within the calendar year (January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021). Additional eligibility exclusions may apply. The gift card cannot be used for gambling, or to purchase alcohol, firearms, or tobacco, and cannot be converted to cash.