

# Member News

VNS Health Total (HMO D-SNP)



## Eat Fresh to Feel Better

Spring brings fresh fruits and vegetables that can improve your diet. Eating a mix of these colorful foods can make your meals more nutritious and help you feel healthier.

Fruits like strawberries, cherries, and lychees are tasty and full of vitamins. Vegetables such as asparagus, radishes, spinach, and peas are also full of nutrients your body needs.

Did you know? A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, prevent some types of cancer, and improve blood sugar levels—which helps control appetite.

Try adding leafy greens and colorful vegetables to your lunch (see recipe on the back page). Or, blend fruits like berries and bananas with spinach for a quick and healthy smoothie.

Source: *Harvard's Nutrition Source*

## Don't Miss Out on Important Plan Information

To give you the best service possible, we need to have your current mailing and email address and cell phone number. If your contact information has changed, please call us at **1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)**. Or you can update your information on your personalized online account at **[vnshealthplans.org/account](https://vnshealthplans.org/account)**.



## In This Issue – Spring 2025

- Keep Your Benefits Active
- Comfort Care When You Need It Most
- Choosing the Right Care: PCP, Urgent Care, ER

## Spring into Fitness

Want to boost your mood and have more energy? Let's get moving. Every little bit helps, even if you are busy, tired or haven't moved much. Here's how to get started:

**Start Small:** Begin with short, easy exercises. Try walking around your apartment or doing gentle stretches.

**Make It Fun:** Pick activities you enjoy. Dance to your favorite music or do chair exercises while watching TV. Having fun makes it easier to stick with it.

**Set Mini Goals:** Aim to be active for 10 minutes a day. Celebrate your progress, no matter how small.

**Pick a Partner:** Do an activity with a friend or join a group.

**Go Online:** As part of your plan, SilverSneakers offers group fitness classes at participating health club facilities, online classes, workout videos, and a mobile app. Activate your free account at [SilverSneakers.com](https://www.silversneakers.com) to get started.



**Stay Positive:** Think about how great you'll feel after some physical activity.

**Speak to your provider before starting any exercise.**

Source: *National Institute on Aging*

## Keep Your Benefits Active

To keep your VNS Health Total benefits, you must keep your Medicaid coverage active. Here's how to recertify:

**Four months before renewal:** We will send you a Medicaid Recertification Guide. It will include the deadline and the information you need to mail back to us.

**Sixty days before renewal:** You will get a recertification letter from the Social Security Administration, New York State Department of Health, or the Human Resources Administration.

What You Need to Do:

- **Gather Documents:** Collect the papers you need when you get the recertification guide.
- **Complete Forms Quickly:** When you get the recertification letter, fill out the forms by the deadline to keep your coverage.
- **Get Help:** Do you have questions? Call our Medicaid Recertification Team at 1-877-357-8544, Option 4 (TTY: 711), Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm.

## Comfort Care When You Need It Most

When you are living with a serious illness, sometimes you just want to feel better. That's when you need palliative care.

With **palliative care**, you will:

- keep treating your condition with your regular doctor;
- have extra help coping with pain, nausea, depression or other symptoms.

When no amount of care can cure your condition, you and your family can choose **hospice care**. While it's not covered through your health plan at VNS Health, hospice is available through original Medicare. We can help connect you to a hospice provider.

Visit [vnshealthplans.org/comfort-care](https://vnshealthplans.org/comfort-care) or call us to learn more about these comfort care options.



## Help Us Serve You Better

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) may ask you to complete surveys about VNS Health's quality of care. These surveys can ask about your health plan, services, providers, and physical and mental health. You may be asked to rate your Care Manager, health plan, Home Health Aides (HHAs), and your involvement in making decisions about your care. Surveys may be sent by mail, email, or phone.

**Your Voice Counts:** If you get a survey, please fill it out. Your answers help us improve our services and care for you and others.

## Choosing the Right Care: PCP, Urgent Care, ER

Not all health concerns need a visit to the hospital's emergency room. Many issues can be handled at urgent care clinics. Other times, it might be best to see your primary care provider. Consider your symptoms before deciding where to go for help. This way, you can get the right care at the right place.



### Call your Primary Care Physician (PCP) for:

- Sore throat, earache, runny nose, cold
- Mild pain
- Medication refills, annual exams, screenings

### Go to Urgent Care for:

- Burns, broken bones, sprains, strains, minor injuries
- Fever, flu-like symptoms
- Cannot reach your primary care provider

### Go to Emergency Room or Call 911 for:

- Severe pain, serious injury
- Chest pain, difficulty breathing
- Sudden loss of vision, blurred vision

### Go Online:

- Search the Provider Directory for providers or urgent care centers near you:  
[vnshealthplans.org/find-a-doctor/](https://vnshealthplans.org/find-a-doctor/)

Source: *Mayo Clinic*



Any questions? Check your online account anytime at **[vnshealthplans.org/account](https://vnshealthplans.org/account)** or call us toll free at **1-866-783-1444 (TTY: 711)**.

October – March

7 days a week, 8 am – 8 pm

April – September

Weekdays, 8 am – 8 pm

[vnshealthplans.org](https://vnshealthplans.org)

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## If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us

VNS Health Total is committed to finding and stopping fraud, waste, or abuse in our health care plans.

## Anonymous Reporting

VNS Health Total Compliance Hotline:

**1-888-634-1558 (TTY: 711)**.

File an online report: [vnshealth.ethicspoint.com](https://vnshealth.ethicspoint.com).

Learn more: [vnshealthplans.org/compliance-program](https://vnshealthplans.org/compliance-program).



## Loaded Hummus Pitas



A fiber-rich, no-cook meal packed with fresh vegetables.

### Ingredients

- ½ cucumber
- 1 cup grape tomatoes
- ¼ red onion
- 8 Kalamata olives
- 1 Tbsp chopped parsley
- 2 oz. feta, crumbled
- 4 pitas
- 1 cup hummus
- 2 tsp olive oil
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of black pepper

### Instructions:

Chop the cucumber, tomatoes, red onion, and parsley. Crumble the feta. Spread 1/4 cup hummus on each pita. Add the cucumber, tomato, red onion, salt, and pepper. Top with crumbled feta, parsley, and a little olive oil.

Source: *Budget Bytes*