

~ Healthy Lifestyle ~

Protect your health during cancer treatment



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(StatePoint) Cancer can be a difficult and overwhelming diagnosis, and if you have cancer or are undergoing cancer treatment, your top priority is to get healthy. After your cancer diagnosis, there are many new things you might need to learn and manage. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Blood Clot Alliance want you to protect your health by understanding your risk for dangerous blood clots, because cancer and some cancer treatments can increase your risk. About 900,000 people in the U.S. each year are affected by blood clots, and about one in five of these blood clots are associated with cancer.

The risk for a blood clot is greatest in the first few months after cancer is diagnosed. Some cancers pose a greater risk for blood clots, including cancers involving the pancreas, stomach, brain, lung, uterus, ovaries and kidneys, as well as blood cancers such as lymphoma and myeloma. The higher your cancer stage, the greater your risk for a blood clot. The type of cancer treatment you receive may increase your risk for blood clots too. Treatments involving hospitalization, surgery, chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, catheters placed in your veins, and some other therapies can increase your blood clot risk.

Know the Signs and Symptoms of a Blood Clot

Blood clots occur most often in the legs or arms, and symptoms include:

- Swelling
 - Pain or tenderness not caused by an injury
 - Skin that may be warm to the touch, red or discolored
 - Blood clots in your legs or arms can travel to your lungs, which can be deadly.
- Symptoms of blood clots in your lungs include:
- Difficulty breathing
 - Chest pain that worsens with a deep breath
 - Coughing up blood
 - Faster than normal or irregular heartbeat

Contact your cancer doctor immediately if you experience any blood clot symptoms.

A Plan to Protect Your Health

As you take steps to preserve your health, make blood clot awareness

part of your care.

- Know your risks for blood clots, and discuss these risks with your cancer doctor.
- Stay alert for any signs or symptoms of blood clots after surgery or treatment in an outpatient clinic. Contact your cancer doctor right away if you experience any of these signs or symptoms.
- Work with your cancer doctor and make a plan to protect yourself

against blood clots that is specific to your personal medical history and treatment.

Visit www.stopthe-clot.org/spreadtheword/cancer for more information.

If you have cancer or are undergoing cancer treatment, protect your health. Know your risk for blood clots and talk to your doctor if you experience any blood clot signs or symptoms.

FREE HELP WITH MEDICARE PLAN CHANGES FOR 2021

HICAP is a program of Contra Costa County Aging and Adult Services. HICAP is here to help you to figure out how these changes affect your coverage in 2021, so that you can make informed decisions.

Our web site, www.cchicap.org has information on how to register for FREE one-on-one counseling, online talks, and updated Medicare plan information.

Our phone number is
(925) 602-4163



LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

Why weighing your Medicare Part D options is crucial this year



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(StatePoint) You likely hear the same word of advice every fall: review your Medicare Part D plan. While you may be tempted to stick with what you have, it's important to remember that plan specifics change annually, your health needs are always evolving, and as this year has shown, unexpected global events can impact your health and finances. For all these reasons, doing your homework is not only important, it has the power to substantially reduce your out-of-pocket costs.

"Reviewing your Medicare Part D options is the best way to ensure your prescription needs are met affordably in the coming year," says Kelle Turner, Express Scripts Medicare Part D expert. "COVID-19 has highlighted how having the right coverage is critical to helping you stay safe and healthy."

To help those turning 65 and older make sense of their options, Turner offers the following tips:

• **Don't procrastinate:** Part D enrollment is taking place from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7 this year. If you're like most people, you may be inclined to delay your decision. Indeed, nine out of 10 people wait until the last minute to select a plan, according to Express Scripts. However, the selection process can be complicated, so don't deprive yourself of the time needed to thoughtfully comparison shop.

Factor in how the COVID-19 landscape has potentially impacted your selection process. With many in-person resources (e.g., local Medicare workshops, working with a broker or agent, etc.) being conducted virtually or requiring you advance scheduling this year, you can get ahead of the game by starting early.

One good resource to check out is RoadmapForMedicare.com, a free access website now offering short educational videos, recorded webinars and articles with tips to select the plan that's best for you. The site also features FAQs and expert advice so you can better assess your options.

• **Look beyond premiums:** While reviewing your options, look at the multiple factors which can affect your overall costs over the course of the year. While a lower premium might save you money upfront, these plans can have much higher copayments, which over time can add up.

• **Check coverage:** Plans change annually, so don't assume that because your medications were covered under a certain plan last year that they will be covered again this year. Before enrolling or re-enrolling, check that your current drugs will be covered. Likewise, check out each plan's pharmacy network and what is covered to ensure that it meets your needs. For example, you may find that right now, your top priority is the safety and convenience of home delivery of prescriptions drugs in order to reduce your chances of exposure to coronavirus.

• **Get savvy:** Free expert advice can help you navigate the selection process and make informed decisions about your healthcare. Be sure to look for trusted sources who can provide the information you need to pick the plan that will work best for you and your budget.

Take a closer look at your Medicare Part D choices. In these uncertain times, it is particularly important to be prepared to weather whatever comes your way.



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