



HOP NEWS

Show Your Heart Some Love

Your heart is amazing!

Beating over 100,000 times per day, your heart pumps about 1.5 gallons of blood every minute, adding up to over 2,000 gallons a day. Another fact that is not as fun is that heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States. With that in mind, in this issue we're focusing on heart health and how to keep your ticker in tip-top shape.

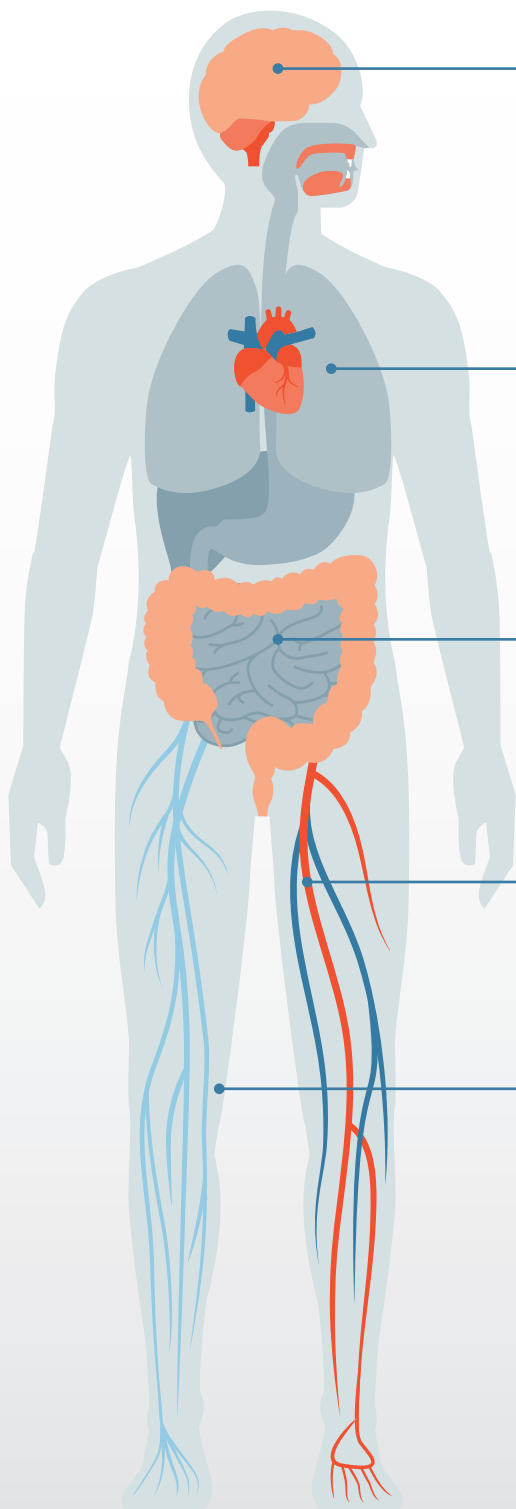
Every Day Is a Chance to Get Healthier

Looking for general wellness tips, specific condition care, nutrition resources, or smoking cessation tips? Health Options Program members can connect with well-being resources through the Elder Care program. Call 1-866-794-0685 to speak to a social and human services advocate.

If you are facing a serious health condition or treatment, the Health Care Management program can help guide you. In most cases, a representative will reach out to members based on their claims experience. Members can always call the Health Care Management program directly at 1-800-480-6658.

How Medical Conditions Affect Your Heart

Your heart is your body's health hub, helping all your organs work efficiently. Many diseases or chronic conditions can affect the heart, but the **HOP Medical** and **Value Medical Plans** offer tools and resources to keep your heart—and all of you—healthy. Our plan options provide financial protection from the high cost of health care, and other programs—such as the Elder Care and Health Care Management programs—help with everything else.



MENTAL HEALTH Controlling stress can have positive effects on your blood pressure, reducing your risk for heart attacks and stroke. See the related article on page 3 for tips on **stress relief**.

LUNGS Your heart and lungs work together to provide oxygen-rich blood to your body. Patients with lung diseases such as asthma and COPD are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease. This is one reason it's important to stick to proper medication for those conditions and to make lifestyle changes—like quitting smoking. **The Health Care Management program** can help you if you are dealing with certain challenging medical conditions. A similar program might be available through your MAPD plan. Contact your provider for more information.

DIGESTIVE SYSTEM Aiming for a healthy weight can reduce your risk of heart disease. Limiting alcohol use and choosing a healthy diet are two of the best weapons you have to fight cardiovascular disease. If you are prediabetic (see the Summer 2022 issue available online at HOPbenefits.com), take steps to reduce your blood sugar. Contact **the Elder Care program** for help with nutrition information. A similar program might be available through your MAPD plan. Contact your provider for more information.

CIRCULATORY SYSTEM High blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high glucose levels measured in your blood contribute to heart disease and diabetes, which both take a toll on your heart and blood vessels. Make sure you get your numbers checked during your annual preventive wellness exam, which is covered 100% at no cost to you under all Health Options Program Medicare Supplement and Medicare Advantage plans.

LEGS Being active reduces your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. You've probably heard that "sitting is the new smoking"—a sedentary lifestyle is **that** bad for you. So get up and get moving! See details about **SilverSneakers** on page 3 for ways to get active.

Why Stress Is Bad for Your Heart

Losing your cool may take a more serious toll on your heart than you'd expect. When we're feeling anxious day in and day out, our fight-or-flight response—the system that helps you respond in an emergency situation—is constantly activated. This chronic stress response can damage the arteries that supply blood to the heart, the electrical system that tells the heart when to beat, and the heart muscle itself.

And, if you already have heart conditions like high blood pressure, arrhythmia, or high cholesterol, you're even more vulnerable to a sudden heart attack. How? The anger response can cause rupturing of plaque inside a coronary artery.



4 Ways to Reduce Stress

Try not to overreact. Sure, it's frustrating to get cut off in traffic. But your anger response could be doing your heart more harm than you think.

Find something that you enjoy that will help you calm down and breathe more slowly and take deeper breaths. Reading, meditating, hiking, bird watching, knitting, cooking, or playing board games with friends—anything that takes you into the quiet part of your mind.

Just s-t-r-e-t-c-h. It doesn't replace a vigorous bike ride or brisk walk, but according to a recent study from Europe, mere stretching may reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke by improving blood flow.

Have a good laugh. Did you know that laughing as loud as you can is good for your heart? Laughing decreases artery inflammation, reduces stress hormones, and increases good cholesterol.

Take advantage of SilverSneakers[®], either at the gym or at home online, by visiting silversneakers.com. Use your SilverSneakers membership to access a large on-demand online workout video library. You can also access fitness programs on the go, track and schedule activities, find locations, and more with the SilverSneakers GO app. Download it from the App Store or on Google Play.

*SilverSneakers is available to members enrolled in the **HOP Medical Plan** or the **HOP Pre-65 Medical Plan**. Health Options Program members enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan may also have access to a wellness program. Contact the Medicare Advantage plan directly, or visit silversneakers.com for more information. Always consult with your physician before beginning a physical activity program.*



Scan the QR code to register for SilverSneakers.

Cold and Flu Season Alert! Some Meds May Raise Your Blood Pressure

If you have high blood pressure, you should know that decongestants may raise your blood pressure or interfere with some prescribed blood pressure medications. Avoid over-the-counter cold and flu medications that contain decongestants such as:

- Oxymetazoline (nasal spray decongestants like Afrin)
- Phenylephrine (Sudafed PE)
- Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed, Sudogest, Zephrex-D, Nexafed)

If you have any questions about how drugs interact with your blood pressure, ask your doctor or pharmacist. Do not stop taking any prescribed medications without discussing with your health care professional.

Be smart about your meds

The Health Options Program offers the Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program to help you understand how to properly take your medications and about any adverse drug interactions that could occur. If you meet certain criteria, you can enroll in the MTM program for FREE as part of your Medicare coverage. If you have any questions about the MTM program, please call the MTM Department at 1-866-352-5305 (TTY users dial 711), Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. CT.

Resources: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure/understanding-overthecounter-otc-medications-and-high-blood-pressure>; <https://www.templehealth.org/about/blog/10-interesting-heart-facts-you-may-not-know>; <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/risk-factors-for-heart-disease-dont-underestimate-stress>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/03/well/mind/stress-heart.html>: Stress may be your heart's worst enemy

Check the sodium content. Some over-the-counter medications are high in sodium, which can also raise blood pressure. Look at the active and inactive ingredients lists for words like “sodium” or “soda.” People with high blood pressure should consume less than 1,500 mg of sodium per day from all sources—one dose of some OTCs can contain more than a whole day’s allowance.

Other drugs and substances that can raise your blood pressure include:

- Alcohol
- Amphetamines
- Antidepressants
- Atypical antipsychotics (for example, clozapine and olanzapine)
- Caffeine
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs, for example, ibuprofen and naproxen sodium)
- Systemic corticosteroids (for example, prednisone and methylprednisolone)



Plan Updates

Annual Privacy Notice

Important information regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

The Privacy Rule under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requires the Health Options Program to protect the confidentiality of your protected health information (PHI). The Health Options Program will not use or disclose your PHI except as is necessary for treatment, payment, health plan operations, and plan administration, as permitted or required by law, or as otherwise authorized by you. You have certain rights under the Privacy Rule with respect to your PHI, including the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures of the information and the right to file a complaint with the Health Options Program or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Your rights with respect to your PHI are explained in greater detail in the Health Options Program's Notice of Privacy Practices. The Notice also describes how the Health Options Program uses and discloses PHI. If you would like to see (or obtain a copy of) the Health Options Program's Notice of Privacy Practices, please call the HOP Administration Unit at 1-800-773-7725 (TTY: 1-800-498-5428). You may also access the Privacy Notice on our website at [HOPbenefits.com](https://www.hopbenefits.com).

Find more online

Visit [HOPbenefits.com](https://www.hopbenefits.com) for updates on:

- 2023 Medicare highlights
- 2023 updates for the Medicare Rx Options

Spring 2023 Information Sessions

Individual consultations

To schedule a 30-minute telephone appointment (not a group meeting), call the HOP Administration Unit at 1-800-773-7725, and let the representative know you want to schedule an individual telephone consultation.

Online webinars

Registration is not required. Go to the Information Sessions page on [HOPbenefits.com](https://www.hopbenefits.com) for the full schedule, webinar links, and webinar phone numbers. A preview of the schedule is below.

At the time of the webinar, click the link or dial the number, and provide your email and the password.

Important: The password "PSERS" is required to join the webinar.

Webinar schedule:

- Thursday, March 16, 10:00 a.m.
- Monday, March 20, 2:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 28, 9:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 5, 1:00 p.m.
- Thursday, April 13, 10:00 a.m.

Recorded webinars are available if you are unable to attend a live session.



HOP

HEALTH OPTIONS PROGRAM



WWW.HOPBENEFITS.COM®

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Lancaster, PA 17608-1764

Love Your



Have a Question?

If You Have a Question About	Please Call	Or Go Online
Health Options Program enrollment or eligibility HOP Medical Plan, Value Medical Plan, or HOP Pre-65 Medical Plan benefits or claims	HOP Administration Unit 1-800-PSERS25 (1-800-773-7725) TTY: 1-800-498-5428 From outside the U.S.: +1 717-305-7388 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET, weekdays	HOPbenefits.com
Prescription drugs (retail or mail order) under the Enhanced, Basic, or Value Medicare Rx Option or the HOP Pre-65 Medical Plan	OptumRx 1-888-239-1301 TTY/TDD: 1-800-498-5428 Available 24/7	HOPbenefits.com
Medicare Advantage or Managed Care plan benefits, claims, or prescription drugs	Please call the plan directly.	
MetLife Dental and EyeMed Vision Option	MetLife 1-855-700-7997 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. ET, weekdays EyeMed 1-855-663-7444 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. ET, weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. ET, Saturdays 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET, Sundays	MetLife Dental and EyeMed Vision Option page on HOPbenefits.com
Premium Assistance	Premium Assistance 1-866-483-5509 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET, weekdays	
Retirement	PSERS 1-888-PSERS4U (1-888-773-7748) 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET, weekdays	psers.pa.gov