

ConnectiCare

HEALTH MATTERS

2024, Volume 1





The Importance of a PCP

The Copilot in Your Health Journey

Choosing the right primary care provider (PCP) is one of the most important decisions you can make for your health. This health care professional manages your everyday care, performs yearly checkups, recommends preventive screenings, and helps identify when you need to see a specialist. Specialists are doctors that focus on a specific part of your health.

Your yearly checkups help you develop a relationship with your doctor. You can use this visit to discuss factors that impact your health, including sleep, diet, activity, and stress. Your height, weight, blood pressure, and pulse are recorded during the visit. A PCP visit usually also includes a blood draw and urine sample at your doctor's office or nearby lab. The results can help identify if you need medicine to manage a condition or have a vitamin deficiency. Consistent visits create your health story, so you can compare the results over time. Based on your age and family medical history, a PCP may also recommend additional screenings:

- ✦ **Blood pressure monitoring:** Detects high blood pressure, which may put you at a higher risk for heart disease and stroke.
- ✦ **Cholesterol test:** This bloodwork checks your risk of heart and blood diseases.
- ✦ **CBC (complete blood count):** This bloodwork checks the number of platelets, which are important for fighting infections. A CBC can show a picture of your overall health or help diagnose a medical condition.
- ✦ **Colorectal cancer screening:** There are many screening options, including a stool test to check for blood in your sample and a colonoscopy performed by a gastroenterologist. The test uses a camera to look at your colon tissue for cancer or inflammation. You and your PCP can decide on the right option for you.
- ✦ **HbA1c test:** This blood test measures the amount of sugar in your blood to make sure you're keeping your blood sugar levels under control.
- ✦ **Kidney screening:** This may include yearly blood and urine tests to check how well your kidneys are working.
- ✦ **Mammogram:** This x-ray of breast tissue helps identify cancerous growths early when they may be easier to treat. Women who are 40 to 74 years old and at average risk for breast cancer should have a mammogram every two years.
- ✦ **Retinal eye exam:** This test can help prevent vision loss with early detection.
- ✦ **Skin check:** Done by a dermatologist. This is a head-to-toe look at your skin, paying special attention to moles or other changes.

Visit connecticare.com/live-well/preventive-care for a complete list of screenings. If you haven't scheduled a well-visit with your doctor yet, call today. As the year wraps up, appointments may be harder to schedule.

Need a PCP?

You can find one by signing in to your **myConnectiCare** member portal. Click "Find Care" and choose "Primary Care Provider" as your Service Type. The results of your search will only include health care professionals available in your plan's network. Don't have an account yet? Go to my.connecticare.com to register today!



Add This to Your “Fall To-Do List” for a Healthy Winter

One of the ways you can reduce your risk of catching seasonal viruses and suffering from potentially serious complications, is to get a flu and COVID-19 vaccine every year. Children, adults over 65, and people with chronic conditions such as asthma are at a higher risk of flu complications. Vaccination is also important for people who are pregnant or have recently had a baby. Also, viruses change fast, so last year’s vaccines may not protect you from this year’s viruses. You will need this year’s vaccines to fight this year’s flu or COVID-19.



Get Healthy With WellSpark Health!

It’s never too late to make positive lifestyle changes. WellSpark’s* digital platform offers a range of health resources to help you live your healthiest life. Sign in to **MySpark Central** to see what’s available to you. Depending on your plan, your program may include:

Wellness library: Videos and articles on a variety of topics including nutrition, exercise, and more.

Health coaching: Whether you want to focus on eating better, moving more, or reducing stress, a health coach can help you set and reach your goals.

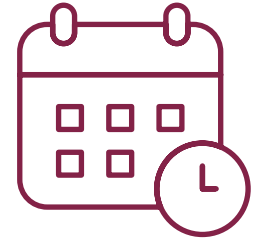
Member rewards: Earn rewards for staying on top of your health and completing annual wellness visits and preventive screenings.

Start your wellness journey today

1. Sign in to the secure **myConnectiCare** member portal at **my.connecticare.com**.
2. Go to the Health and Wellness tab.
3. Click “Get Started” in the Wellness Program section.
4. On the “MySpark Central” page, you can view the health resources available to you.

*WellSpark Health and ConnectiCare are part of the EmblemHealth family of companies. Health coaching does not replace care received from a provider. If it’s your first time using MySpark Central, you’ll be asked to register.

Mark Your Calendars: Medicare Eligibility and Open Enrollment Reminders



Each year, Medicare members have an opportunity to review and change their health plan coverage. This year, the Annual Election Period is Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, 2024.

During this time, everyone with Medicare can make changes to their prescription drug plans or health plans for coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2025. Make sure to keep these dates in mind as you receive documents that list changes to your plan or available plans for next year.

To help you make an informed decision, watch out for documents such as:

- **Annual Notice of Changes (ANOC):** This document highlights any changes in your plan coverage, service area, or costs and benefits that will go into effect Jan. 1, 2025. Review your ANOC carefully to make sure you know your coverage changes for the upcoming year.
- **Evidence of Coverage (EOC):** This document will be available online and will have more details about the plans available.
- **Provider and pharmacy directories:** These lists of health care professionals and pharmacies in our network can help you find your next doctor or pharmacy.
- **Formulary (drug list):** This document is a list of covered drugs. Review how any changes may impact your prescriptions.

We want to make sure you have all the information you need to make important decisions about your coverage. You can always call the number on the back of your ID card if you need help from one of our Medicare Connect Concierge agents.

Your Health, Your Rewards



ConnectiCare's Member Rewards Program gives you opportunities to be rewarded for taking care of your health. You can use your rewards for items that promote good health. To see if you are eligible, register for the program, or see what services could earn you rewards, call ConnectiCare Medicare Connect Concierge at **800-224-2273** (TTY: **711**). From Oct. 1 to March 31, you can call us seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. From April 1 to Sept. 30, you can call us Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

If registering by phone, you must agree to the terms and conditions during your call. If you want to review them before you call, visit [termsandconditions.connecticarewellness.com](https://www.connecticarewellness.com/termsandconditions). To get a copy mailed to you, call ConnectiCare Medicare Connect Concierge. To process your reward card for an eligible service, you must register for the program, complete the health service, and the claim or attestation must be received by Dec. 31, 2024. Only one reward can be earned for each service. Your gift card cannot be exchanged for cash. Other limitations may apply. Please allow eight to 12 weeks after your health service for your reward card to arrive.

A Personalized Approach to Wellness

As a ConnectiCare Medicare member, you can now get one-on-one confidential health coaching with WellSpark **at no extra cost!*** If you're looking for additional help achieving your health and wellness goals, finding balance in your habits, or deciding where to start, schedule a session with one of our trained health coaches.

Our program helps you find success with personalized sessions and easy online scheduling. You also get health resources and content on topics ranging from healthy recipes to improving your sleep.



Scan the QR code to learn more and get started today by completing our online form. A WellSpark representative will contact you to sign you up.



*WellSpark Health and ConnectiCare are part of the EmblemHealth family of companies. Health coaching does not replace care received from a provider.

YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS ConnectiCare is committed to making sure that your health information is kept private and safe. Our Notice of Privacy Practices explains how we use information about you and when we can share it with others. This important document also informs you about your rights with respect to your health information and how you can exercise these rights. To get a copy, visit connecticare.com/legal/privacy-policy or call the number on the back of your member ID card.

Health Matters is published by ConnectiCare to inform members of current health issues and improve the use of services. This publication should not replace the care and advice of your doctor. Always talk to your doctor about your personal health needs. Other providers are available in the network. Out-of-network/non-contracted providers are under no obligation to treat plan members, except in emergency situations. Please call the ConnectiCare Medicare Connect Concierge number or see your Evidence of Coverage for more information, including the cost-sharing that applies to out-of-network services.

ConnectiCare, Inc. is an HMO-POS plan with a Medicare contract. ConnectiCare Insurance Company, Inc. is an HMO-POS D-SNP plan with a Medicare contract and a contract with the Connecticut Medicaid Program. Enrollment in a ConnectiCare Medicare plan depends on contract renewal. Free events with no obligation to enroll.

Get Into the Routine of Better Sleep

Most people can benefit from better sleep. Sleep hygiene, aka healthy sleep habits, is important for physical and mental health.

There are several things you can do to get better rest each night. The key is to find a routine that allows your body to unwind from the day and ease into the night. An article in Harvard Health Publishing notes that most adults should aim for seven hours of sleep per night, but the quality of your sleep is more important than the quantity. Below, we've gathered some of the most helpful tips from The National Sleep Foundation:

- Have a solid sleep schedule. Plan to go to bed at the same time each night and have a fixed wakeup time on weekdays and weekends. Minimizing naps can also help you to stay on a sleep schedule.
- Prepare for bed the same way each night. This will help your mind recognize that it's bedtime.
- Find a calming activity — like reading, meditating, or journaling — to do before bed, and allow yourself 30 minutes to enjoy it.
- Dim your lights as you prepare for the evening, as bright lights can impact the body's production of melatonin, a hormone that helps facilitate sleep.
- Stay away from electronics. Not only do they stimulate your brain and make it more difficult to wind down, but the blue light also impacts melatonin production.
- Make your bedroom a relaxing environment with comfortable bedding, shades to block out light, and even ear plugs to drown out sounds.
- Limit alcohol consumption, caffeine, smoking, and eating large meals before bed.
- If you find yourself tossing and turning for more than 20 minutes, try to reset. Get up and do a restful activity under low light before returning to your bed to try again.

Put Your Health in Your Hands With myConnectiCare

This holiday season, give yourself the gift of staying on top of your health! It's easier than ever to put your health care in your hands by registering for our member portal, myConnectiCare. Simply head to my.connecticare.com, select "Register" at the bottom of the screen, and fill in the required information. Then, explore all the features of the portal:

- Find in-network hospitals and doctors.
- Download a virtual member ID card.
- View your plan benefits.
- Go paperless.
- And more!



Go Paperless

Once you're signed in to the portal, go paperless to view your documents and plan materials as soon as they are available. You will be notified of new communications by email or text message, based on your preferences. Click "My Profile" and select "Go Paperless" under "Communication Preferences."



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Visit Us at a ConnectiCare Center

**Have questions about your benefits? Need wellness support?
 Come to a ConnectiCare Center!**

Our friendly associates are here to support your health care journey. At ConnectiCare Centers, we can help you understand your current plan and learn how to get the most out of your coverage with a focus on your unique needs.

ConnectiCare Centers can also support your wellness goals with no-cost in-person and virtual fitness classes, health education, nutrition workshops, mental health seminars, and more. All events are free and open to the public, but registration is required. For more information, visit connecticare.com/events or call **877-523-6837** (TTY: **711**) to schedule an appointment, sign up for classes, and find a location near you. We look forward to seeing you.