Take Charge

a Wellness Connection newsletter

September 2012

Print version

This month let's focus on your numbers.

Knowing your blood pressure, total cholesterol and waist circumference numbers can help you identify potential health problems.

High blood pressure can result from a poor diet, inactivity, excessive weight or your family history. Having high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol can lead to heart disease and diabetes.

Don't wait. Find out your numbers and learn what you can do to reduce your risk of health problems and disease.

Biometric screenings

There are a few appointments left – go online today and **schedule your appointment at** www.registerformyevent.com/coh. **Appointments are listed by department, but you can go to any location.** Or you can call 800-694-4982 to register. There are a limited number of screenings this year, so be sure to log on and make your appointment today.

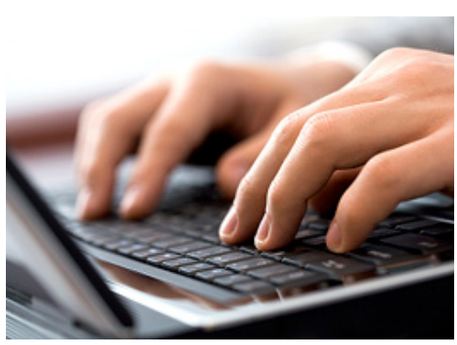
You may also see your personal physician for your free annual physical. All subscribers to a city health plan receive a free annual physical.

Make sure to get your blood pressure, total cholesterol and HDL - or good cholesterol, and your weight, height and waist circumference numbers to complete your online health assessment.

After your biometric screening, don't forget to complete your health assessment.

Health assessment Q&A

Who has to complete the health assessment?



All city medical plan subscribers are required to complete the online health assessment by September 30, 2012. Without the assessment, you will need to reach into your pocket for $25 more a month toward your health insurance contribution. You can save the $25 by taking the assessment at mycigna.com.

Retirees, spouses and dependents are not required to complete the health assessment, but they can participate if they choose.

Maintain your health and save $25 on your monthly premium. It's a win-win.

Need more information regarding the health assessment and screening? Contact your employee wellness team at wconnection@houstontx.gov.

Walk for wellness; and for a good cause

Join Honorary Chair, Annise Parker and the Wellness Connection at the United Negro College Fund Walk.

UNCF Walk
Saturday, September 8
Tom Bass Park, Section 1
Registration 7:00 a.m.
Run/Walk 8:00 a.m.
USTAF Certified 5K (3.1 Miles)
Participation Free

To join your city of Houston coworkers visit http://give.uncf.org/HoustonWalk. Click "Join a team," then choose "City of Houston" from the drop down menu. You will see the City of Houston team with captain Certeria Johnson. Click on "Join" and follow the prompt to finish your registration.

There will be a drawing among walk participants for an iPod shuffle.

No more flu shot excuses

Quick and easy ways to get vaccinated this season

"I'm healthy. I don't need a flu vaccine."

Anyone can become sick with the flu and experience serious complications. Older people, young children, pregnant women and people with medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or kidney disease are at especially high risk from

What is the health assessment?

The health assessment is an online reporting tool at mycigna.com, where you report your biometric measurements and answer general health questions.

Why is the health assessment important?

The health assessment helps you identify what to work on to maintain or improve your health and gives you access to programs and information that help you. In addition, the Wellness Connection initiative uses aggregate city data from the assessment to develop innovative programs tailored to city employees and aimed at improving overall employee well-being.

Completing the health assessment

Health assessments can be completed on your home or work computer by visiting mycigna.com. You will need your Cigna user ID and password to log in and complete the health assessment. Forgot your user ID or password? Call 800-284-8346.

24-hour health information line

City employees who subscribe to a Cigna health plan can call the Cigna customer service line, 800-997-1406, to talk to a nurse about health issues, get assistance, or access a health information audio library to learn about a wide range of health topics.

Registered nurses will speak with you 24 hours a day. They can:

- Help you locate doctors or pharmacies if you're away from home.
- Direct you to call 911 or other area emergency services if you need emergency care.
- Answer questions about your symptoms and advise you on self or professional care.

Call Cigna's customer service line at the above number, which is also on your Cigna health insurance card, and listen to prompts to be directed to the 24-hour nurse line and health information audio library.

Wellness learning communities

Come learn more about leading a healthier lifestyle. We have a variety of health and wellness seminars for employees, but the first 20 employees who register for a seminar will receive a complimentary lunch courtesy of Cigna.

Cholesterol, Blood Sugar and Blood Pressure: What Do the Numbers Mean?
7411 Park Place Blvd.,
Tuesday, Sept. 11, view map
12 - 1 p.m
Register

the flu, but kids, teens and adults who are active and healthy also can get the flu and become very ill from it. Flu viruses are unpredictable, and every season puts you at risk. Besides, you might be around someone who's at high risk from the flu ... a baby ... your gradparents, or even a friend. You don't want to be the one spreading flu, do you?

KelseyCare Members

Members enrolled in the Cigna Limited Network KelseyCare have two options for flu shots: (1) Make a nurse-only flu vaccine appointment at a Kelsey-Seybold clinic or get a flu shot at your regularly scheduled doctors appointment. (2) Visit www.houstontx.gov/ess to register for one of the free flu shot events below:

Sept. 11
1200 Travis
8 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Sept. 25
5500 McCarty
8 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Oct. 3
1002 Washington
7 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Oct. 9
611 Walker
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Oct. 17
611 Walker
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Renaissance IPA Members

Members enrolled in the Cigna Limited Network Reniassance IPA: Contact your doctor.

Open Access and CDHP Members

Members enrolled in the Cigna OAP and CDHP have two options: (1) Contact your doctor. (2) Get a flu shot at HEB or CVS pharmacies.

If the flu shots are received from HEB or CVS, members will have to pay out of pocket for the vaccine and file a claim for reimbursement.

Prevention Tips

Help for Common Prostate Concerns
611 Walker, 4th floor, Civil Service conference room, Wednesday Sept. 12
12 - 1 p.m
Register

Weight Watchers

You can sign up for Weight Watchers at a discount with no joining fee, thanks to the city Wellness Connection initiative.
You can pay the monthly-pass fee of $39.99 plus tax with a debit or credit card, and the card information will be used for your pass to be automatically renewed each month until you cancel it.

Come to one of the following meetings to find out more and talk with a Weight Watchers instructor.

Every Thursday, 9:45 - 10:45 a.m.
1200 Travis St., 24th floor, ADR conference room

Every Thursday, noon - 1 p.m.
900 Bagby St., third floor conference room

Or sign up today for your monthly pass:

- Log on to https://wellness.weightwatchers.com
- Enter the following
  - Company ID: **56929**
  - Company pass code: **ww56929**
- Sign up for a location convenient for you.

If you have any problems purchasing your monthly pass, please call Weight Watchers at 866-204-2885.

Medical checkups and health screening tips

Getting regular medical checkups and health screenings help you keep track of your health. Knowing about your health also helps you prevent and treat disease, according to the Center for Disease Control. Here are some tips from the CDC to help you prepare for your next checkup or health screening:

Know your family history

Being informed about your family's history of health problems helps identify your risk of developing similar health problems and diseases. Take time to learn what health problems run in your family including high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes. Make sure your doctor is aware of your family's medical history. Don't forget to update your doctor about recently diagnosed diseases within your family.

Learn about regular screenings

Depending on your current health, age, and family medical history, your doctor might recommend certain health screenings. Routine screenings can include checking your cholesterol, weight circumference or body mass index. Other screenings can include vision, colon cancer, mammograms, pap smears and diabetes. Know what the risks of certain screenings are, and if they are necessary. Not sure what health screenings you need? Visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the recommended health screenings for women and men.

Know what to ask

Just because you're not a doctor doesn't mean you can't be informed about your health. Asking the right questions can help you and your doctor determine a health plan that is right for you. Write down your questions and take them with you to your checkup. Have an upcoming medical checkup or health screening? Do some research and find out what questions you need to ask, or log on to health.gov to learn the basics of specific screenings.