The flu season is just around the corner, and it’s time to protect yourself! Influenza (or the flu) is a respiratory illness that can be mild to severe. It’s most common during the winter. However, flu outbreaks can happen as early as October.

“The flu is contagious and people with the disease can spread it to others up to six feet away when they cough or sneeze,” UCare’s Medical Director Mike Lynch, M.D., said. “If you have the flu, you can even infect others a day before you know you are sick and up to seven days after becoming sick.”

YOU CAN PREVENT THE FLU!
One of the easiest and most effective ways of preventing the flu is by getting your annual flu vaccine. This vaccine causes your body to make antibodies. If you are exposed to the flu later, the antibodies provide protection against the flu virus. Ask your doctor if it’s best to receive the vaccine through a flu shot or nasal spray.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the flu vaccine prevented 79,000 hospitalizations during the 2012-2013 flu season. Even if you don’t become sick enough to require hospitalization, the flu can keep you out of work, school, or other activities for one to two weeks.

WHO SHOULD GET A FLU VACCINE?
We recommend that everyone who is at least six months old get a flu vaccine every year. Pregnant women who get the flu vaccine are protecting themselves and their unborn baby.

WHERE CAN YOU GET A FLU VACCINE?
You can get a flu shot or nasal spray at your doctor’s office, a drugstore, the pharmacy, food market, or store clinic. Also, if you’re a UCare member who uses our Health Ride transportation service to get to medical appointments, you can use it to get your flu shot or nasal spray. Information about flu clinic locations in Minnesota is available online at www.mdhflu.org.

FLU SHOTS AND NASAL SPRAYS ARE COVERED FOR UCARE MEMBERS
Protect yourself and your family.
Get a flu vaccine today!

Delta Dental is coming to UCare!
On January 1, 2015, our partnership with DentaQuest, the company that maintains the list of UCare’s dentists, ends. Beginning in 2015, we will use a new list of dentists put together by Delta Dental of Minnesota.

Most members will not need to do anything because their current dentist will be on the Delta Dental list of providers. However, there will be members whose current dentist will not be in the Delta Dental network, so they will need to find a dentist on our new list. You can also review our new list to see if there is a dentist you’d prefer to see in 2015.

To find out if a dentist will be in our network in 2015, please call the UCare Customer Services number on the back of your UCare Member Identification Card and request a list of our 2015 dentists.

Remember – until January, you can continue to see dentists on our current list. As of January 1, you may need to find a new dentist, or you may decide to change to a new dentist.

LEARN MORE ONLINE
Go to: ucare.org/myhealthdecisions
Search: Flu vaccine
Dear UCare member,

2014 marks UCare’s 30th anniversary and provides a great opportunity to recognize how far we have come since we first set out on our mission in 1984.

We’ve grown nearly every year and recently crossed the 400,000 member milestone. We are proud to serve each of you by improving your health through innovative services and partnerships across communities.

Throughout the years, we’ve worked hard to provide health care to those who may have challenges getting the care they need. We’re so pleased to have the largest and most diverse Medical Assistance membership of any health plan in Minnesota. We were also the first to offer programs specifically for people with disabilities, and we currently serve more people with disabilities enrolled in Medical Assistance than any other health plan in Minnesota.

The reason that we are in business is to serve you, our member. We thank each and every one of you for trusting us to provide your health care coverage. We remember every day what an important responsibility that is.

Here’s to another 30 years of health care that starts with you!

Nancy J. Feldman
President and Chief Executive Officer

Do you have a complaint or concern?

Keep in mind that you have the right to file an appeal or grievance with UCare. If you have any issues, simply call the Customer Services number on the back of your UCare member ID card for more information. We want to hear how we can help improve your experience with UCare.

President and CEO
Nancy J. Feldman

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UCare member, Virgil Sis, was diagnosed with diabetes fifteen years ago. His condition caused high blood sugar levels, which he treated with an injection called insulin. Virgil learned that high blood sugar levels are associated with health problems such as blindness, heart disease, and stroke. After lots of research, he decided that his lifestyle needed to change.

“I went on a low-carb diet and besides losing weight, cut my blood sugar and insulin intake down,” Virgil said of efforts to manage his diabetes. He also joined UCare’s Health Journey health coaching program to help support his health goals.

THE ABCS OF A1C
If you have diabetes, like Virgil, make sure to have your A1c levels measured at least twice a year. Your A1c test results reflect your average blood sugar level over the past two to three months. The result is reported as a percentage. The American Diabetes Association suggests an A1c of 7% or less.

Your goal is to keep your A1c as close to your target level as possible. You and your health care provider will work together to set your safe target level. Uncontrolled high blood sugars over time can be severe and lead to conditions such as kidney disease, vision loss, and amputations.

Here are some ways the A1c test can help you manage your diabetes:
- Confirm self-testing results or blood test results by your health care provider.
- Judge whether a treatment plan is working.
- Show you how healthy choices can make a difference in diabetes control.

“\[Virgil’s quote\]” Virgil said.

To find out more about UCare’s Health Journey health coaching program, call 612-676-6539 or 1-866-863-8303 toll free. TTY machine users call 1-800-688-2534 toll free. We’re available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

LEARN MORE ONLINE
Go to: ucare.org/myhealthdecisions
Search: Diabetes

Are you ready for a new member site experience?

Soon we will launch our new easy-to-use member website. The updated site will allow you to easily view plan materials, sign up for electronic materials, check claims status, and even allow you to print out an extra copy of your UCare member ID card. Go online to ucare.org and select “Member Log In” to learn more.
The start of a new school year can be hectic for both parents and children. A child may need a new backpack, pencils, folders, clothing, lunch supplies, and more! Plus, there are always the worries that go along with new school activities, teachers, and friends.

With all that’s happening this time of year, it may be easy to overlook a Child and Teen Checkup (sometimes called a well-child exam, well-care visit, or an annual physical). However, remembering to schedule and attend this crucial appointment can help your child or teen to grow into a healthy adult.

“I’m so happy for the partnership with my children’s doctor and clinic,” Cindy Kallstrom, UCare’s Health Promotion Manager, said. “These exams helped discover my child needed eyeglasses, and kept my children safe with updated immunizations. In fact, when whooping cough broke out two years ago, I knew my children were already protected – that’s huge peace of mind for parents.”

Here are a few things to consider when scheduling your child’s check-up:

- **Check in with the school.** Minnesota state law requires immunization (shots) forms completed for children entering kindergarten and 7th grade. Connect with the health office or school nurse at your children’s school for the appropriate forms.

- **You can expand other exams.** If your child needs a sport or activity check-up, you can ask to expand it into a full annual exam.

- **Have a list of questions ready.** Has anything been bothering you about your child, but you don’t know if it’s a big deal? Ask now!

- **Don’t catch the flu.** With flu season coming up, make sure to ask your doctor about the best time for your child to get a flu shot or nasal spray.

- **Arrange transportation ahead of time.** Be prepared to be on time for these appointments. If you have difficulty getting to your appointment, call the Customer Services number on the back of your child’s ID card and ask if you are eligible for our Health Ride transportation service.

These appointments can be very important for finding and treating conditions early. Even if a child is completely healthy, UCare recommends Child and Teen Checkups for all members, birth through age 20. These are covered services, so there is no cost to members.
Stay safe on the road with UCare’s car seat program

Car-related injuries are the leading cause of death for young children. That’s why UCare wants to make sure your child is safe in the car. Through our Seats, Education, And Travel Safety (SEATS) program, we give car seats and safety education to eligible UCare members who are either pregnant, or are children age 0 up to 8.* UCare works with counties and other agencies statewide to give car seats and safety education to members.

Knowing how to install and use a car seat is very important. All UCare members are required to be trained on proper use to get a car seat. Depending on where you live, you can have in-home visits or go to classes to learn how to install and use the car seat the right way. Classes are taught in English, Hmong, and Spanish in the Twin Cities. Call UCare Customer Services to learn more.

* You must pre-register; typical wait time is two to three weeks.

UCare wants to help keep YOU and your baby healthy

You and your baby can get off to a healthy start with UCare’s Management of Maternity Services (MOMS) program. The program offers eligible members nurse support, pregnancy education classes, and breast pumps. The MOMS program also encourages members to get regular care during and after a pregnancy, by offering gift cards for completing:

- A prenatal (while you are pregnant) appointment within the first trimester of pregnancy or within 42 days of enrolling in UCare.
- A postpartum (after you give birth) visit between three and eight weeks after your baby is born.

Call UCare Customer Services to learn more or check out ucare.org/healthandwellness.

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▲ Immunizations are due. ◆ Regular dental exam is due. ● Blood lead test is due.
In today’s fast-paced world, it’s easy to sacrifice good nutrition when you’re constantly on the run. But the lack of nutritional value that comes from settling for a caffeine rush to start the day, a vending machine lunch, or picking up a pizza for the family when you’re too tired to cook dinner can quickly take its toll. This lifestyle can even make you and your loved ones feel tired and sluggish. On the other hand, people who eat well-rounded diets and are physically active may be healthier and have more energy.

So how can you break the cycle? A little preparation goes a long way.

**Wake up to better health.** Give your body the fuel it needs to power through busy days. A whole-grain low-fat breakfast bar or yogurt are nutritious, portable breakfast options. Have a little time the night before? Consider preparing some hard-boiled eggs, cutting up fruit, or making a veggie-packed egg bake that you can reheat and eat over several days.

**Stock the fridge.** It’s easier to choose healthy options when they’re readily available. If you attend local farmers markets, choose in-season produce. It’s usually affordable and at peak flavor.

**Stay on the road to healthy eating.** Pack healthy snacks, like plain popcorn, nuts, or low-fat cheese and whole-grain crackers, for car rides to and from work and your children’s events.

**Improve desktop dining.** If you frequently eat lunch at your desk, try packing leftovers or low-sodium soup. Eating out? Salads topped with lean protein, veggie wraps, or soup with half a sandwich are all good options.

**Slow down your supper.** You can slow cook a healthy meal with very little effort or prep work. Some slow cooker models will even keep foods warm if the meal is done before you’re ready to eat. When you do find the time to cook, make a double recipe – freeze the rest for next week’s dinner.
Turkey and kiwifruit pasta salad

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Number of servings: 8

**DIRECTIONS**
Combine vinegar, oil, mustard, basil and garlic; mix well. Cook noodles as package directs. Add broccoli and squash to the last 30 seconds of cooking the noodles and drain. Pour dressing over noodles, and allow to cool. Peel and slice kiwifruit. Toss turkey, red pepper, green onions and kiwifruit with pasta. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese to serve.

**INGREDIENTS**
- ½ cup white wine vinegar
- 2-½ tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons basil
- 1 clove garlic (large), minced
- 1 package (8 oz) spiral noodles
- 2 cups broccoli flowerets
- 2 cups sliced crookneck squash
- 4 kiwifruit
- 1 pound cooked turkey breast, sliced
- 1 cup red pepper strips
- ½ cup sliced green onions
- ⅓ cup grated parmesan cheese

Recipe courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Fruits & Veggies Matter.

Eat right, even when money is tight!

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a U.S. Department of Agriculture nutrition program that provides low-income households with extra money for food. Benefits are available for eligible families and individuals of all ages, including children and seniors.

Second Harvest Heartland’s SNAP Outreach Program can help with safe and confidential eligibility pre-screening, assistance with the application, and more. For more information, visit [www.2harvest.org](http://www.2harvest.org).
American Indians can continue or begin to use tribal and Indian Health Services (IHS) clinics. We will not require prior approval or impose any conditions for you to get services at these clinics. For enrollees age 65 years and older this includes Elderly Waiver (EW) services accessed through the tribe. If a doctor or other provider in a tribal or IHS clinic refers you to a provider in our network, we will not require you to see your primary care provider prior to the referral.

**Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call UCare at 612-676-3200 or toll free at 1-800-203-7225.**