

A Quality You

Your QualChoice Member Newsletter | Winter 2015

Out with the Old, In with the New

Most everyone thinks about doing something differently in the new year. After all, there's always room for improvement—and there's always room for support, too! So read on for some tips on keeping those goals. We wish you happy holidays and a healthy new year!

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Season's Greetings!

Make a Healthy Resolution ... and Keep It

Are you promising yourself that the new year will be a healthier one for your body and mind? Let QualChoice help!

Slim Down and Shape Up

To take off the pounds safely and for good:

- Set small, specific goals. Instead of vowing to lose 20 pounds, be more active every other day of the week.
- To fight cravings, eat small amounts of your favorite foods once in a while.
- Sneak in exercise. Try using the stairs or parking your car a block or two away from where you're going.

If your plan includes our QCARE Health & Wellness program, get the help of a health coach to set and reach your weight-loss and fitness goals. Learn more at qualchoice.com, or call **501.228.7111** or **800.235.7111**.

Boost Your Finances

Make the most of your health benefits. Here are some tips:

- Make sure all your doctors and others involved in your care are in your network—whether it's the QualChoice full network or one of our smaller High Value Networks. Your benefits are paid at a lower rate if your doctor is not in your network.
- Find out ahead of time which services require pre-authorization (approval before getting the service).
- Know what's covered in an office visit. Some routine treatments are covered



under the office visit co-payment. But other complex ones are applied to your deductible (the amount you must pay before QualChoice starts to pay your claims) or coinsurance (your share of the cost of the service, such as 20 percent).

For a list of services that require pre-authorization or a list of routine and complex office procedures, visit qualchoice.com. Under *Members*, select *Pre-Authorization List* or *Medical Policies*. You can also call Customer Service at **501.228.7111** or **800.235.7111**.

Live a Healthier Lifestyle

Smoking and heavy drinking can cause serious health problems. If you're pregnant, both are very dangerous to your baby.

Stay healthy by using your preventive care benefits. Most screenings, checkups, and counseling are covered at no cost to you. Use these benefits for annual pap tests, mammograms, and flu shots.

If your plan includes our QCARE Health & Wellness program, enroll in Kick the Nic! for help quitting tobacco use (see page 3) or our Special Additions Maternity Program. Learn more at qualchoice.com or call **501.228.7111** or **800.235.7111**.

A New Year of Happy Customers

Thanks to everyone who took part in the 2014 Member Survey! Over 95 percent of our members responded. We're happy to report that our customer service continues to get high scores; 96.9 percent of the respondents reported they are treated with courtesy and respect. Customer service and claims both scored within the top 1 percent of other health plans, improving over last year.

Your feedback matters to us. We hear your request for more information on costs. You also want more information on medicines to help stop tobacco use and how to quit smoking—problems we address in this issue!

We always welcome your ideas on ways to improve our service! Call our Customer Service Department any time Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at **800.235.7111** or **501.228.7111**.

Terri James, PAHM
Customer Service Manager

Our Resolution: To Serve You Better!

Making Coverage Decisions

We work to make sure our members get the right care for every health issue in every care setting. We affirm that:

- We make coverage decisions based only on appropriateness of care and the existence of coverage.
- We do not reward healthcare providers or others who review Utilization Management to deny coverage of service or care.
- We do not offer financial incentives for under-utilization.

Staying In Touch

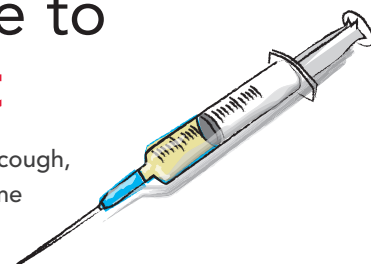
We depend on your input! Contact us any time to ask a question, voice a concern, or tell us how to serve you better. Use our QuicQuestions online service and get a reply within 24 hours. Go to **qualchoice.com** and select *QuicQuestions*.

The Doctor Is In

Stephen Sorsby, M.D.
Vice President of Medical Affairs

It's Not Too Late to Get a Flu Shot

The flu can mean up to 14 days of fever, cough, body aches, severe headache, and extreme fatigue—plus possible problems such as pneumonia.



How can you avoid it? The answer is simple: Get a flu shot.

Getting vaccinated every year is the single best way to keep the virus away. It's best to get vaccinated as soon as shots are available—ideally before December. This gives your body time to create virus-fighting antibodies before flu season is in full swing. The antibodies last for eight to 10 months, so don't worry about the vaccine wearing off.

Your doctor can prescribe other antiviral medicines, and they can help. But a prescription is not a magic bullet. If you start an antiviral within 48 hours of the start of symptoms, your flu will last one day less than without the medicine. So it's better to just get the vaccine and skip the flu altogether.

Everyone ages 6 months and older should get the vaccine. It's even more important for those at high risk for flu-related problems—pregnant women or people who have a chronic illness such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease—or those who live with someone who does.

So if you haven't done it already, roll up your sleeve and get your flu shot!

New Drug Lists

New formularies—prescription drug lists—for 2015 have been posted at **qualchoice.com**. Click on *Pharmacy* on the left-hand side. If you are not sure which formulary your plan includes, log on at **qualchoice.com** and select *Your Drug Formulary* at right, then *Covered Drug List*.



Money-saving tip: Switching to a generic form of your prescription drug may help you reach your New Year's resolution to save money! Ask your doctor if a generic version is available and if it will work for you.

Resolve to Quit!

It's never easy to stop using tobacco. But research has shown that quitting smoking can make a big difference in your breathing. The study, published in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, found that smokers who had asthma improved their lung function by more than 15 percent after six weeks of not smoking. Their breathing even improved after just one week.

So what are you waiting for? Make a commitment to quit today. Here are five tips to help get you started:

Set a date to quit. Pick a day in the next two weeks. Mark your calendar.

Get support. Tell your family and friends you've decided to quit and ask for their support. If any of them smoke, ask them to quit with you or to not smoke around you.

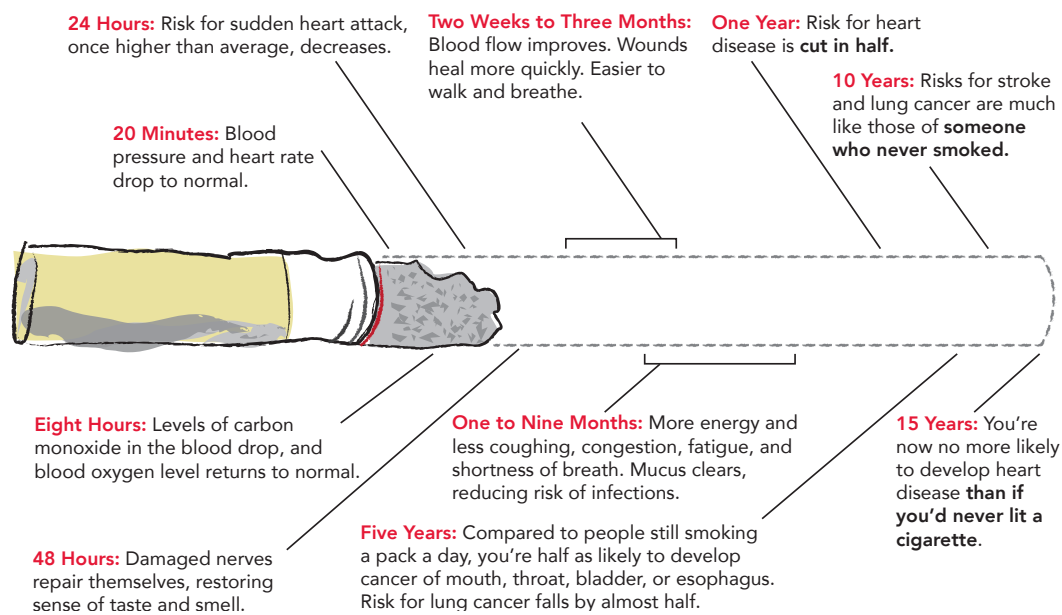
Plan ahead. Think about what things make you want to smoke, such as drinking alcohol or talking on the phone. Try to avoid these situations or make a plan to deal with the cravings. You can sip water or chew on sugar-free gum or a toothpick, for example.

Throw away all your cigarettes before the big day. Don't keep any "just in case." The same goes for all matches, lighters, and ashtrays.

Talk with your doctor. He or she may recommend using a nicotine patch or gum to help you quit.

For more help quitting, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at healthfinder.gov and type "quit smoking" in the search bar. You can also go to qualchoice.com, select *Members*, *QCARE Health Management Programs*, and then *Stopping Tobacco Use*.

The Perks of Quitting Smoking: Hour-by-Hour



Kick the Nic!

To support your efforts to quit tobacco use of all kinds, we offer a free 12-week **Kick the Nic!** program, available to all new and renewing QualChoice members.* The program includes:

- The help of a health coach trained in stopping tobacco use
- Two free doctor visits with no co-payment
- Free stop-smoking medicine (Chantix), if prescribed
- Nicotine replacement therapy, if prescribed



To learn more or enroll, call a QCARE health coach at **501.228.7111** or **800.235.7111**.

*Program may not be offered with all benefit plans. Please check with your benefits manager or employer.

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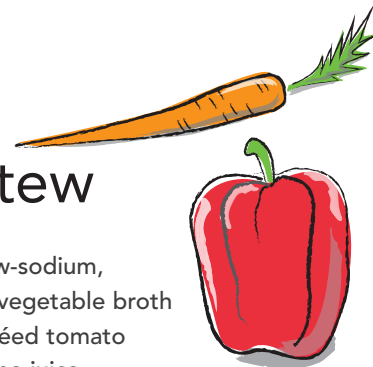
2014 Community Outreach Recap

Improving the health of our community is just as important as improving the health of our members. In 2014, QualChoice volunteers spent more than 2,000 hours proudly supporting the following community organizations:

- ABLE (Amputees Beyond Life's Expectations)
- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- Centers for Youth and Families
- Easter Seals Arkansas
- JDRC (Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation)
- Little Rock Marathon
- Pine Bluff Black Firefighters
- Single Parent Scholarship Fund
- Susan G. Komen
- Women Run Arkansas
- Youth Home

We look forward to another year of fellowship and community involvement in 2015! For more information or to register for any of our community events, email christy.garrett@qualchoice.com.

Recipe for Health: Winter Vegetable Stew



Ingredients

- 1 sweet potato
- 2 carrots
- 1 lb. banana squash or Hubbard squash
- 1 cup parsnips
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 cup onions, peeled and cut into ½-inch wedges

- 2 cups low-sodium, low-fat vegetable broth
- 1 cup puréed tomato
- 2 tbsp. lime juice
- ¼ tsp. cayenne (to taste)
- 1 (10 oz.) package frozen peas
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. black pepper
- 1 bunch cilantro sprigs or thinly sliced green onions

Directions

1. Peel sweet potato, carrots, squash, and parsnips; cut into ¾-inch pieces.
2. Peel and mince or press garlic.
3. Cut bell pepper into ½-inch strips.
4. Cook sweet potato, carrots, squash, parsnips, garlic, onions and 1 cup of broth in a covered pan for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add a few tablespoons of water if mixture begins sticking to pan. Bring to a boil.
5. Add 1 more cup of broth, along with the bell pepper, puréed tomato, lime juice, and cayenne. Return to a boil; reduce heat.
6. Simmer covered until vegetables are tender, about 12 to 15 minutes. If stew sticks to pan, add more broth.
7. Add peas and stir occasionally until hot, about two minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.
8. Ladle into soup bowls and garnish with cilantro or sliced green onions.

Per Serving

Serves six; serving size is about 2 cups. Each serving provides: Calories 150, Total fat 2 g (Saturated fat 1 g), Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 390 mg, Total carbohydrate 30 g, Dietary fiber 8 g.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention