

Health Matters

SUMMER 2026

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Because Life.™

Nourish your heart, one meal at a time.

Simple food choices for better blood pressure.



Food is one of the most powerful tools you have to manage your blood pressure. In fact, about 70 – 75% of adults lowered their numbers in just one week by eating less sodium.¹ Let's take a closer look at how you can do the same.

DASH your way to better blood pressure.

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is a proven way to help lower blood pressure. It's balanced, flexible, and easy to follow. Here's what it looks like when it comes to everyday food choices:

More of these:	Less of these:
Fruits and vegetables	Salty snacks
Whole grains like brown rice and oats	Processed meats
Lean protein like chicken, beans, and fish	Canned foods with added salt
Low-fat milk or yogurt	Fried foods and sweets

Cut out the sample food label below and take it with you the next time you grocery shop.

Salt sneaks in. The label helps you catch it.

Sodium can hide in foods like bread, soup, and frozen meals. The Nutrition Facts label can help you spot it quickly.

Start here:

- **Sodium line** – This is where you'll see the amount in milligrams (mg).
- **Serving size** – All numbers are for one serving. If you eat two, double the sodium.

High vs. low sodium. What's the difference?

- **High sodium:** 300 mg or more per serving
- **Low sodium:** 140 mg or less per serving
- **Very low sodium:** 35 mg or less per serving
- **Percent daily value:** 5% or less is low. 20% or more is high.
- **Daily goal:** Aim for 1,500 to 2,300 mg per day.



Try this easy, heart-smart meal.

Chicken Picadillo²

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 medium red and green bell peppers, finely chopped
- 1½ tbsp garlic, mashed, about 3 cloves
- 12 oz boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into thin strips
- ½ cup no-salt-added tomato sauce
- ½ cup low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup lemon juice
- ¼ tsp ground cumin
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup golden seedless raisins

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the onion, bell peppers, and garlic, and sauté until vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the chicken and stir fry for another 5 – 10 minutes until chicken is no longer pink inside.
3. Add the tomato sauce, chicken broth, lemon juice, cumin, bay leaves, water, and raisins to the vegetables and chicken.
4. Cover the pan and reduce the heat. Simmer for 10 minutes.
5. Remove the bay leaves. Garnish with fresh cilantro, capers, and green olives.



Healthy food should feel within reach.

Having steady access to healthy food can make a real difference in blood pressure and overall health. If food feels harder to manage right now, you have options:

- **Answer a few quick questions** at quiz.highmark.com/sdoh.
- **Reach out to a social worker** about SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), food pantries, or meal programs.
- **Meet one-on-one with a wellness coach** to talk through simple, budget-friendly meal ideas.



Or visit highmarkcommunitysupport.com to find resources near you.

¹ American Heart Association

² National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Every meal is a new opportunity to improve your blood pressure. With simple steps and the right support, you can continue to build habits that protect your heart.

Protect your future health with a colonoscopy.



A message from Dr. Law, Chief Medical Officer.

One of the most important preventive benefits included in your Highmark Health Options Duals plan is a colorectal cancer screening. As a Chief Medical Officer at Highmark, I want to share why a colonoscopy plays a big role in reducing your risk.

Colorectal cancer often begins as small, benign growths called polyps. When a polyp is removed, it can't turn into cancer.

During a colonoscopy, doctors can find and remove these growths before they become serious. That's why screening is considered the gold standard of prevention.

Here's what I want you to remember: screening saves lives. When found early, colorectal cancer is highly treatable — and many cases can be prevented altogether.

Still, many adults haven't had their recommended screening. About one in three adults age 45 and older have not been screened¹, and nearly 30% of adults ages 50 to 75 are not up to date.² If you're overdue, you can still get back on track. Let's talk about what to do next.

When to schedule your colonoscopy.

If you're 45 or older and at average risk, it's time to start screening. If you haven't had a colonoscopy, schedule one now. Most people repeat the screening every 10 years, unless their doctor recommends a different schedule.

Your doctor can help you decide what's right for you.

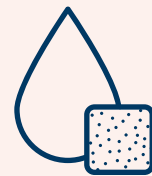
What to expect.

It's normal to have questions. Here's what I tell my patients:

- **The prep:** You'll follow a short-term diet change and drink a liquid that cleans out your colon. This step helps your doctor get the most accurate results.
- **The procedure:** You'll be comfortably sedated and asleep. The exam usually takes about 30 minutes. Most patients have no discomfort and go home the same day.



A proactive step for healthier kidneys.



Two key tests for people with diabetes.

While every procedure comes with some risk and temporary discomfort, a short colonoscopy — performed while you're asleep — can help prevent colon cancer before it starts. Taking this step now may help you avoid much more serious treatment later.

And rest assured, medical teams are trained to protect your comfort and privacy throughout the process.

Your doctor can help you decide what's right for you.

Take the next step.

If you're due for a screening, I encourage you to talk to your doctor about scheduling your colonoscopy. It's a simple step that can support your health for years to come.

— Dr. Law

Your kidneys work hard every day to filter waste from your blood. Over time, uncontrolled diabetes can cause damage that may not be obvious at first. A yearly screening is a quick way to check in and keep your kidneys healthy.

Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease.

In fact, one in three adults with diabetes also has kidney disease.¹ Screening is simple — and it's covered by your Highmark Health Options Duals plan. It includes two quick tests that give your doctor a clear picture of how your kidneys are working:

- **A blood test (eGFR)** — This test shows how well your kidneys filter waste from your blood. A higher number usually means your kidneys are working well.
- **A urine test (albumin and creatinine ratio)** — This test checks for albumin (a type of protein) against the amount of creatinine (waste product). It is used to detect early signs of kidney damage, even before symptoms appear.

Both tests are needed to complete your yearly kidney screening.

How to prep for your screening.

These tests are quick and usually done during a routine doctor's visit. Here's how to get ready:

- **For the blood test**, no special preparation is needed. Your provider will take a small sample of blood from your arm.
- **For the urine test**, you'll be asked to urinate in a sterile cup. It's best to provide a first-morning sample for the clearest results.

You should also tell your doctor about all the medications you take, including over-the-counter drugs and supplements.

A yearly kidney screening helps protect your kidneys and your overall health. If you're ready to schedule, call your doctor to make an appointment. If you need help finding a provider, call Member Services at the number on the back of your member ID card.

¹American Cancer Society

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Staying healthy after a hospital stay.

A simple guide to healing at home.



As a Highmark Health Options Duals member, you have support during every stage of care — including your recovery at home after leaving the hospital. Adjusting to your normal routine is a big step forward after a setback. Here are a few simple ways to stay on track.

Create a discharge plan.

Before you head home, you and your care team will create a discharge plan together. This plan helps you understand your care, medications, and what to expect during recovery. Here's what to keep in mind:

- **Review your hospital care.** Take time to go over any new diagnoses, your treatment plan, and any new medications — or changes to the ones you're already taking.

- **Know your next steps.** Make sure you understand which doctors you need to follow up with and when. It's also helpful to talk through any activity restrictions or lifestyle changes that will support your recovery.
- **Share any new concerns.** Ask about help with food, housing, or transportation if needed. Be sure you understand any warning signs to watch for and when to seek medical care, so you can feel prepared once you're home.

Start with a follow-up visit.

Try to see your doctor within seven days of leaving the hospital. Patients who see their doctor within this time frame are less likely to have complications that may require a readmission. Here are a few ways to make the most of this visit:

- **Bring a copy of your discharge summary.** This helps your doctor understand what happened during your hospital stay and any new instructions you were given.
- **Talk through your hospital experience.** Share what led to your stay, how you're feeling now, and any concerns that have come up since you've been home.
- **Go over your medications together.** Review every medication listed on your discharge paperwork and confirm any changes.
- **Keep your medication list up to date.** Write down what you take, when you take it, and how often.
- **Ask questions.** If something isn't clear, make sure to speak up. Your doctor is there to help, and asking questions can give you peace of mind.

Know when to call your doctor.

As you heal, pay close attention to how you feel. Call your doctor if you notice:

- Fever.
- More pain, swelling, or redness.
- Shortness of breath.
- New fluid leaking from a wound.
- Any changes that concern you.

If you think it's an emergency, call 911 right away.

Keep a personal health record.

Having your health details in one place can make follow-up visits easier. Be sure to include:

- Your medical history and past surgeries.
- A current list of medications and allergies.
- Contact information for your doctors.

Expect calls from your care team.

After you return home, you may receive calls from the hospital, your doctor's office, or even your health plan. Your health plan has a team of dedicated nurses that can:

- **Check on your recovery.** Talk about how you're feeling and answer questions.
- **Review your care plan.** Make sure you understand next steps.
- **Assess your follow-up care.** Connect you to support for post-discharge needs.

When you see these calls, try to answer. They are an important part of your ongoing care.

Remember, you play an important role in your recovery. Taking these steps can protect your health and help you heal safely at home.

Make the most of your prescription dollars.

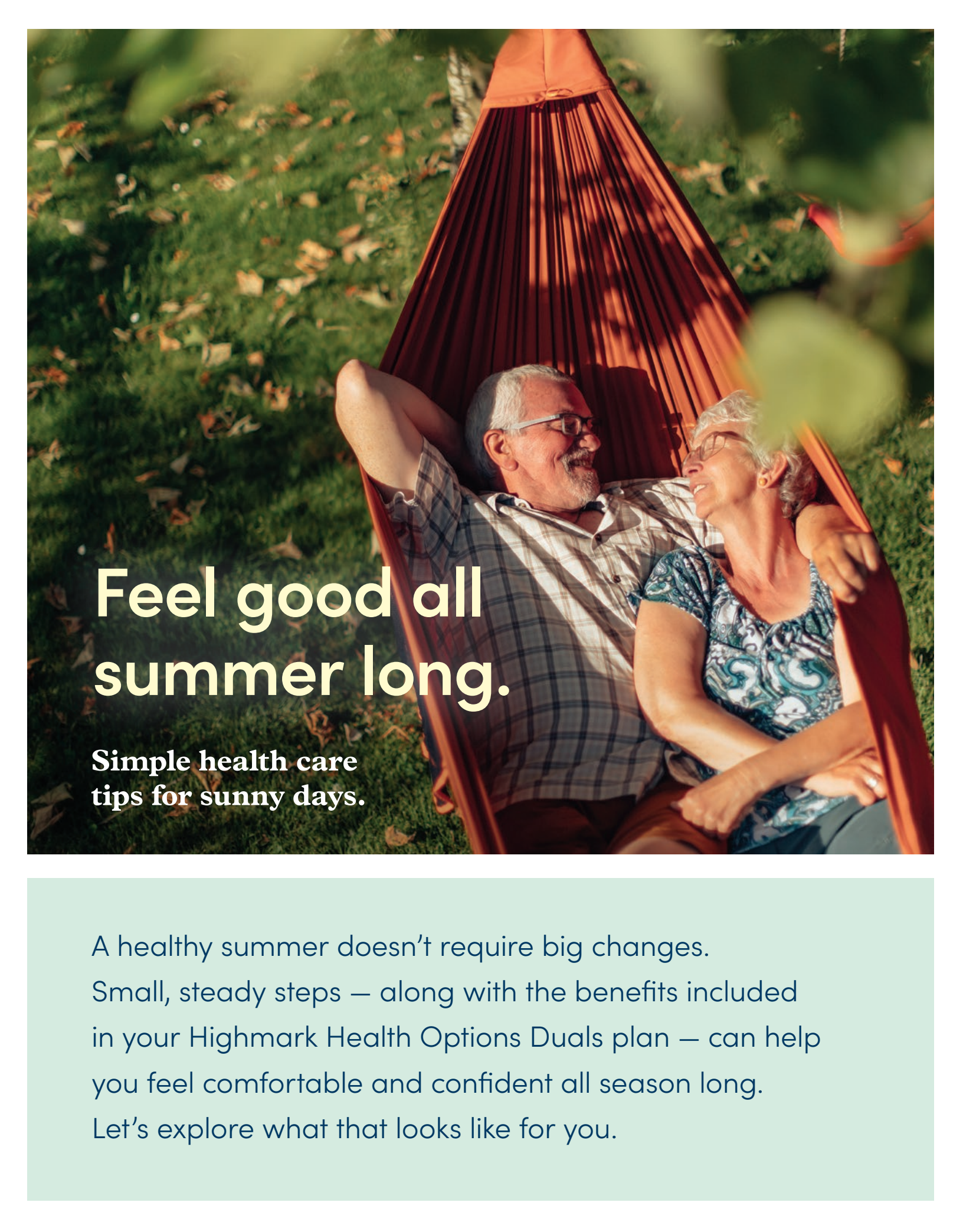


Your plan includes built-in ways to help you save.

Your Highmark Health Options Duals plan comes with options that may help lower what you pay for your prescriptions. Let's take a look at a few simple ways to make your dollars go further.

- **Mail order through Express Scripts** delivers medications safely to your home and may help lower your costs.
- **Generic or lower-cost drug options** may work just as well as brand-name drugs and often cost less. Talk with your doctor about what's right for you.
- **The Low Income Subsidy (LIS or "Extra Help") Program** can help people with limited income pay for Medicare prescription costs. To learn more, contact your local State Health Assistance Program (SHIP) at shiphelp.org or call 1-877-839-2675.
- **A 100-day supply of many medications** may be available at your pharmacy or through home delivery. If you're on a stable maintenance medication, talk with your PCP to see if a 100-day supply is right for you.

Taking a few minutes to explore these options could make each refill easier. If you'd like help reviewing your medication costs, Highmark Health Options Duals is ready to support you. Just call the Pharmacy Quality team at 833-560-1831.

A photograph of an older man and woman relaxing in a red hammock on a grassy lawn. The man is wearing a plaid shirt and glasses, and the woman is wearing a patterned top and glasses. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a lush green lawn with some fallen leaves, and the scene is bathed in warm, golden sunlight.

Feel good all summer long.

Simple health care tips for sunny days.

A healthy summer doesn't require big changes. Small, steady steps — along with the benefits included in your Highmark Health Options Duals plan — can help you feel comfortable and confident all season long. Let's explore what that looks like for you.

Hot days call for smart habits.

As the days get hotter, your body works a little harder. A few simple habits can help you stay cool when the forecast isn't. Remember to:

- **Stay hydrated.** Keep water nearby and drink it throughout the day.
- **Add electrolytes to your water.** They help replace what you lose in sweat.
- **Take breaks in the shade and indoors.** Midday heat can sneak up on you.
- **Watch for warning signs.** Dizziness, nausea, heavy sweating, confusion, or fainting can be signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. If you notice these symptoms, seek medical care right away.

Move in ways that work for you.

When it's too hot outside, you can choose indoor options that fit your needs. As a Highmark member, your fitness benefit includes indoor and virtual activities at no extra cost. You can:

- **Join a participating gym.** You can stay cool while walking indoors and using strength equipment.
- **Join a strength and balance class.** It's a great way to support steadier movement.
- **Log in to a virtual session at home.** It's an easy way to stay active while avoiding the heat.

Not every day calls for indoor exercise. When temperatures are mild, you might:

- Walk early in the morning or later in the evening.
- Stretch or practice balance exercises in the shade.
- Try bird watching from your window or porch.

Don't forget about sun protection.

If you're heading outside for a walk or workout, a little preparation goes a long way. Before you go:

- **Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen.** Make sure to reapply as directed.
- **Wear a hat and sunglasses.** They can help shield your face and eyes.
- **Choose light, loose clothing.** Covering your skin can help reduce sun exposure.

Know where to go, wherever summer takes you.

If you're heading out of town, plan ahead so you can travel with confidence. Don't forget to:

- **Refill your prescriptions.** Make sure you have enough for your entire trip.
- **Pack your member ID card.** You'll need it if you receive care. You can also access your ID on the Highmark Health Options Duals member portal.
- **Review your coverage.** As a Highmark member, you're covered for urgent and emergency care when traveling.

Long days are meant to be enjoyed.

Being proactive now can help you stay ready for whatever the season brings. If you have questions about your benefits or need support, just call Member Services at the number on the back of your member ID card. We're here to help.

Important phone numbers



Member Services

1-833-957-0025 (TTY call 711)
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

24-Hour Nurse Line

1-833-957-0025 (TTY call 711)
24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Care Coordination

1-833-957-0025 (TTY call 711)
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Hotline

1-844-718-6400 (TTY call 711)

Healthy Rewards

1-833-957-0027 (TTY call 711)
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

National Helpline

Treatment referral and information, 24/7
1-800-662-4357 (TTY call 711)

Report Suspected Abuse of an Older Adult

800-352-6513

WV Tobacco Quit Line

1-800-Quit-Now
(1-800-784-8669)

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988

Fitness Benefit

1-888-423-4632 (TTY call 711)
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Transportation Benefit

833-623-2630 (TTY call 711)
and select prompt #5
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

FlexCard (PayForward)

1-833-623-2619 (TTY call 711)

RX Assistance Program

800-550-8722 (TTY call 711)

Check out important notices.

Highmark Health Options Duals (HMO SNP) wants to ensure you receive the quality care and service you deserve. You can ask for a printed copy of the Important Member Notices by calling **833-957-0025 (TTY call 711)** to learn about these and other important topics:

- Members' rights and responsibilities
- Medical necessity
- Doctor appointment guidelines
- Second opinions
- Protecting your privacy



One text could save you money.

Keep an eye out for messages from Highmark.

Highmark is working even harder to keep your health information safe. We're using a new way to check in with you about your doctor visits — and it could help stop fraud before it costs you.

Here's how it works.

- After you visit the doctor or hospital, we may send you a quick text message.
- The text will come from a safe system, so you'll know it's really us. It'll have a safe link that you can tap.
- The link will take you to a simple question: "Did you get this health care service?"
- Just tap "yes" or "no." It's that easy.

You'll still get a phone call from us, too.

Why we're doing this.

By checking with you, we can stop anyone from charging you for health care you didn't get. That means less chance of fraud and more money staying in your pocket.

If something seems fishy.

Call the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse hotline at **1-844-718-6400**. We'll look into it.



Mark your calendar

July

UV Safety Month

Catch the rays, not the risk. Sunscreen, shade, and smart coverage can help keep your skin protected.

Chronic Disease Awareness Day (July 10)

Take charge of your care. Consistent check-ins and healthy habits can help you manage your condition with confidence.

August

National Eye Exam Month

Keep your focus sharp. Schedule an eye exam to catch issues early and help protect your vision for the long term. If you're diabetic, ask about a retinal eye exam.

World Breast Cancer Research Day (August 18)

Be proactive about prevention. Stay up to date on recommended screenings — early detection can change everything.

And don't forget, in order to receive earned rewards, you'll need to opt in to the Healthy Rewards Program by December 31, 2026.
Call 1-833-957-0027 (TTY call 711) to enroll today.

Benefits and/or benefit administration may be provided by or through the following entities which are independent licensees of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association:

Delaware: Highmark BCBSH Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

West Virginia: Highmark Health Options West Virginia Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Highmark Health Options Duals is offered by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The Plan complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, including sex stereotypes and gender identity.

ATTENTION: If you speak English, free language translation and interpretation services are available to you. Appropriate auxiliary aids and services (such as large print, audio, and Braille) to provide information in accessible formats are also available free of charge. Call the number on the back of your ID card (TTY: 711) for help.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de traducción e interpretación de idiomas. También hay disponibles ayudas y servicios auxiliares adecuados (como letra grande, audio y Braille) para proporcionar información en formatos accesibles sin cargo. Llame al número que figura al dorso de su tarjeta de identificación (TTY: 711) si necesita ayuda.

ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis tradiksyon ak entèpretasyon aladispozisyon w gratis nan lang ou pale a. Èd ak sèvis siplemantè apwopriye (tèlke gwo lèt, odyo, Braille) pou bay enfòmasyon nan fòm aksesib yo disponib gratis tou. Rele nimewo ki sou do Kat ID w lan (TTY: 711) pou jwenn èd.