



## Healthy Holidays

Being home for the holidays takes on new meaning this season as we prepare to celebrate with friends and family. We may not be able to celebrate our favorite holidays the same way we always have, but we have an opportunity to get creative and start new traditions.

Whether you're hosting or attending, first consider what will make you and other guests feel most comfortable. If you can, find ways to gather outside. If you have to bring the party inside, limit your guest list. Bigger families or friend groups can also break off into smaller gatherings based on location to cut down on travel. The most important to-do this year is to set expectations. Either on the invitation or over the phone, rules should be communicated ahead of time. When in doubt, don't be afraid to ask questions. For example, you may want to know if you'll be asked to wear a mask or take special precautions. Keep an open mind, be patient with one another, and always have extra supplies like hand sanitizer handy.

Remember, just because you host every year, or you brought everyone's favorite dish last year, doesn't mean you need to do the same this year. Our comfort levels may be different, but there are lots of other ways to feel connected.

If you're staying home, come up with a few fun activities for your family to enjoy. Decorate homemade cookies or cards and send them out to your loved ones.

The little things are what make this time of year feel so special, no matter where you are.

**Define This: Health Screening** This is a test done to find a condition early — before symptoms begin and when they are easier to treat. Routine health screenings are an important part of preventive care. Some examples of routine screenings include mammograms and colonoscopies. Talk to your doctor each year about what screenings you or your child need and when to start them.

### It's Not Too Late to Get Your Flu Shot



It's one of the easiest ways to help you stay healthy every winter. You can visit your doctor to get your flu shot or go to a local pharmacy if it's easiest. Learn more at [emblemhealth.com/flu](https://emblemhealth.com/flu).

**Consider AdvantageCare Physicians\* (ACPNY)** — At ACPNY, you can get your flu vaccination during a regular medical visit or by scheduling a specific flu shot appointment. Many of the 37 ACPNY office locations across New York City and Long Island will have designated Saturdays for flu vaccination appointments. In the Bronx, patients may visit three convenient locations of BronxDocs.\*\*

To schedule a flu shot appointment:

- **ACPNY:** Go to [acpny.com/flu](https://acpny.com/flu) or call **646-680-4227**
- **BronxDocs:** Call **646-680-5200**

Source: CDC

\*AdvantageCare Physicians is part of the EmblemHealth family of companies.

\*\*BronxDocs is an affiliate of AdvantageCare Physicians.

## Make the Most of Your Mask

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, your mask should fit snugly over your face — from the bridge of your nose to under your chin — to prevent germs from entering and leaving as you breathe. The sides should be flat against your cheeks with no gaps. Here are tips on how you can make your mask more comfortable and safe.

**Make your mask fit better.** If it's too large, shorten the ear loops by tying a knot in each loop. Make sure the knot is behind your ear and doesn't pull the top and bottom of the sides together. If it's too small, tie a piece of string to each ear loop and tie the strings together behind your head.

**Prevent your glasses from fogging up** by rubbing dish soap onto both sides of each lens and rinsing off. This will create a clear layer that will reduce temperature changes to your lenses that cause fogging. When wearing your mask, shape the fabric around your nose and place your glasses over the mask.

**Give your ears a break** by attaching a paper clip to the ends of each loop, then pull the loops to the back of your head and fasten together with the clips — like a headband.

Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the latest mask guidance.



## Some Habits Are Meant to Be Broken

During this uncertain time, we are all taking a closer look at our health and well-being. Breaking unhealthy habits, like smoking, may require additional resources. Starting **Nov. 1, 2020**, our Medicaid and HARP members will have access to as many smoking cessation counseling (SCC) sessions as medically necessary.



SCC services include screening, behavioral interventions, medication for adults, and behavioral interventions for school-aged children and adolescents. This benefit is available to members who use smokeless tobacco products (dip, chew, snuff, etc.), cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and vaping of nicotine products. Taking advantage of these services could be the first step towards improving your quality of life.

If you're unsure about what benefits your plan offers, call the number on the back of your member ID card. A Customer Service representative will be happy to help you.

## Defend Against Winter Blues

During the winter months, you may feel moody, anxious, or less energetic. It's also common to feel the need to sleep and eat more and be less social. These symptoms are part of a condition called seasonal affective disorder (SAD), or winter blues, that's likely caused by a mismatch between your body's natural rhythms and the timing of sunrise and sunset.

After several months of lockdowns and limited social gatherings, this winter may be especially difficult. You can prevent or relieve SAD by getting the right amount of sleep, eating right, and exercising daily. If those things aren't helping you feel better, talk to your doctor.



## Stay Informed

We want to make sure that you get the information you need about COVID-19, your benefits, and more. You can find updated information at [emblemhealth.com/covid19](https://www.emblemhealth.com/covid19). We also encourage you to check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or your state's department of health webpage for the important updates.

And be sure to visit [emblemhealth.com/blog](https://www.emblemhealth.com/blog) for the latest health and wellness information, resources, and more.

*Health Matters* is published by EmblemHealth 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. This is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, cost-sharing, and restrictions may apply. They may change each year. Our network may change at any time. You will receive notice when necessary.

## Choose the Right Doctor for You

Choosing the right primary care doctor, who will manage your everyday care, is one of the most important things you can do for your health.

You can begin by searching for in-network doctors who accept your insurance plan by signing in at [emblemhealth.com/sign-in](https://www.emblemhealth.com/sign-in). As an EmblemHealth member, you must choose doctors who participate in our network. You can also narrow your search by doctor type, and select and save a primary care doctor to your account for easy access in the future.

Make sure the office locations and hours of operation fit your lifestyle. Whomever you choose as your doctor, be sure you both communicate often.

