

Member Newsletter

2021



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You're in Charge

One of the most important factors in making sure you get the right care is you. Patients who are more involved with their care and take part in every decision tend to get better results.

There are lots of ways you can take charge of your care. One is to call Member Services and speak with one of our care coordinators or health educators. And here are some more to consider:

Know Your Prescriptions

Make sure your doctor knows about all the drugs you are taking. This includes over-the-counter drugs and dietary supplements, such as vitamins and herbs.

Medicines and Supplements

Better yet, bring all your medicines and supplements to your doctor visits. That way, your doctor can see them all and determine whether there are any problems. It also helps keep your records up to date.

Allergies

Tell your doctor about any allergies or bad reactions you have had to any medicine.

Doctors' Notes

Make sure you can read your doctor's handwriting. If you cannot read your doctor's handwriting, your pharmacist might not be able to either.

Get Answers You Can Understand

Sometimes medical terms get in the way of knowing about the drugs your doctors give you. Don't be afraid to ask:

- What is the drug for?
- How do I take it, and for how long?
- What side effects are likely?
- What if they occur?
- Can I take it with other medicines or dietary supplements?
- What food, drink or activities should I avoid while taking this drug?
- Is this the drug that my doctor prescribed?



Clear Instructions

Drug labels can be hard to understand. For example, ask if "four times daily" means taking a dose every six hours around the clock or just during regular waking hours.

Liquid Medicine

Ask your pharmacist for the best device to measure your liquid medicine. For example, many people use household teaspoons, which often do not hold a true teaspoon of liquid. Special devices, like marked syringes, help people measure the right dose.

Side Effects

Ask for written information about the potential side effects of your medicine. If you know what might happen, you will be better prepared if something does happen.

Leaving the Hospital

When you are being discharged from the hospital, ask your doctor to explain the treatment plan you will follow at home. This includes new medicines, follow-up appointments and finding out when you can get back to your regular activities.

Be Certain About Surgery

If you're having surgery, make sure your doctor and surgeon confirm with each other exactly what will be done. This will help prevent any harmful errors.

Hospital Choice

Choose a hospital that is known for the type of surgery you're getting. Patients tend to have better results at hospitals with surgical experience.

Speak Up

You have a right to question anyone who is involved with your care.

Care Coordination

Have someone, such as your primary care provider, coordinating your care. This is especially helpful if you're in the hospital or have several health problems.

Health Information

Don't assume every doctor has all your health information. Make sure your doctors have all the records they need.

Use the Buddy System

Take a friend or family member to appointments with you. You never know when you might need their help or input.

More is Not Always Better

Find out if a test or treatment is really needed. You could be better off without it.

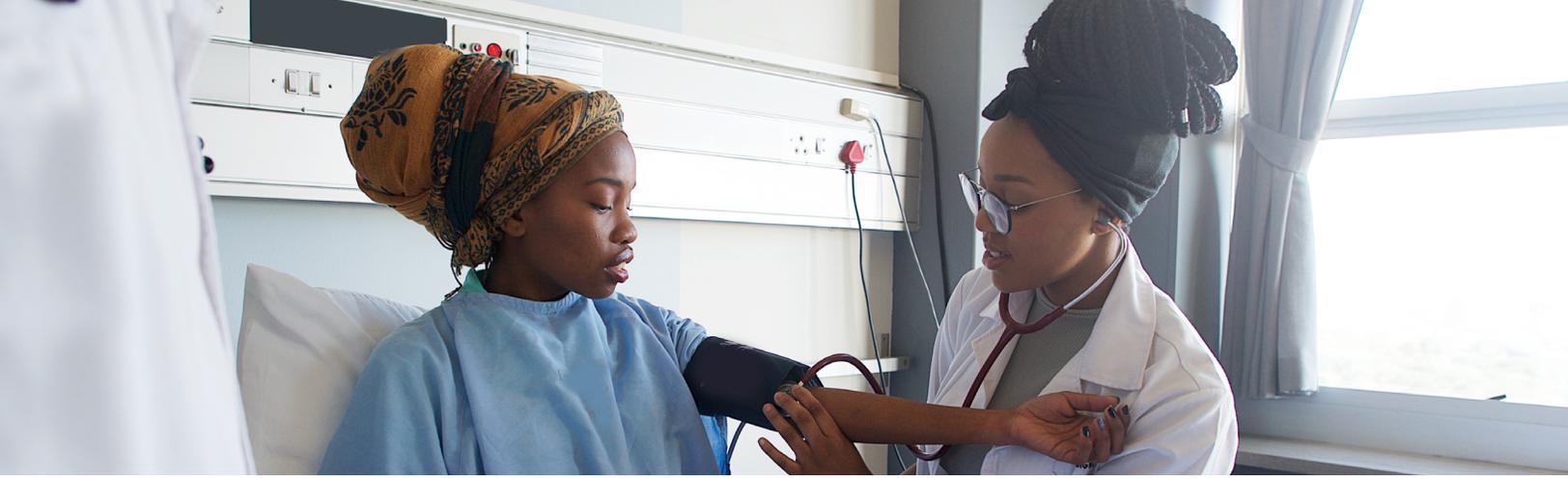
Get Your Results

No news isn't always good news. If you have a test done, ask how and when you will get the results.

Available Treatments

Learn about your condition and available treatments. A good place to start is the Effective Healthcare Program at effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov.

Source: 20 Tips to Help Prevent Medical Errors. Retrieved June 2019. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/care-planning/errors/20tips/index.html



Different Cultures, One Team

For you to get the best care possible, you and your doctors need to be able to communicate. Cultural differences, however, are sometimes a barrier to good communication.

To keep this from being a problem, we offer our providers training on how to bridge these differences. It's important that doctors see you as a unique person, showing you respect and understanding so that the two of you can find common ground when it comes to setting treatment plans.

Below are some of the things we suggest to our doctors to keep in mind. Look through them, see if they make sense to you and if they give you any ideas about other ways to keep cultural differences from being an issue.

We suggest that our doctors:

- Learn more about a patient's culture by noticing how their family members interact. Finding out how a family copes with crises can be helpful in developing treatment options or discharge plans.
- Find out how long the family has been here. The less time they have been in the U.S., the more influence their native culture has.
- Understand that culture can affect some behaviors. For example, some cultures may require same-gender healthcare providers. And avoiding eye contact is sometimes a sign of respect, and shouldn't be taken as indifference.
- Keep a list of trained medical interpreters. Unless necessary, don't let family members act as interpreters. Family members may not be objective, and patients may be uncomfortable discussing certain things with family present.
- Pay attention to cultural differences that may affect care. For instance, in cultures that limit women's responsibilities, a mother may be unwilling to sign a consent form for their child.
- Provide resources and training to office staff on awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences. Search the internet for information on cultural competency and cultural diversity. Libraries and book stores are also a good resource.
- Be careful about stereotypes. Don't assume that everyone from a certain country is alike. Culture and beliefs vary widely in the U.S.; the same is true of other countries.
- Take our Cultural Competency Course, which offers instruction for doctors on how to treat and care for members of diverse backgrounds.

Can you think of anything you could do to make better connections with your doctors?



Looking for a Doctor?

Virginia Premier wants to make sure that you can get the healthcare you need, when you need it. That's why we have a wide range of doctors and other healthcare specialists all across Virginia.

Even more, we follow specific guidelines for your access to healthcare. These standards take into account:

Time: How soon you can set an appointment with a doctor or other provider

Distance: How far you have to travel to get to an appointment

If you'd like to learn more about these standards, just see the Member Handbook or Evidence of Coverage (EOC) for your plan.

To find a doctor, just use the information below for your Virginia Premier plan:

- Visit our website at **VirginiaPremier.com/find-a-doctor/**
- See page 13 of this newsletter to contact Member Services

**Elite Individual and Elite Family
(Medallion 4.0 and FAMIS)**

Elite Plus (CCC Plus)

See your Member Handbook **here**

See your Member Handbook **here**

Coordination of Care

If you're not sure what coordination of care is, you need not worry. Coordination of care is what it sounds like.

Your care – including your doctors, services, insurance and medicines – is coordinated, or organized. The goals of care coordination are to:

- Improve healthcare
- Improve health and wellness for those with complex and special needs
- Integrate services around member needs
- Ensure members receive appropriate services and desirable treatment outcomes

Your Primary Care Provider (PCP) leads the coordination and ensures that your needs and preferences for health services are met by:

- Increasing communication among your PCP, Behavioral Health provider, and any specialists as part of your care.
- Making sure that all members of your care team are aware of any tests, procedures and services you're scheduled to receive.
- Sharing decision-making among all of your providers.

What Does Coordination of Care Mean for You?

Virginia Premier has care coordinators and care managers willing and ready to help you coordinate your medical, behavioral health and substance abuse services. They will assist you and your providers in the authorization process for services, organizing and scheduling treatment meetings and finding additional resources and referrals. Care coordinators at Virginia Premier can influence and assist with ensuring:

- Safety – Communication between your doctors helps to ensure that medical errors do not occur.
- Involvement – Communication between you and your doctor allows you to be more involved in your own healthcare.
- Better Care – You are more likely to receive the preventive care and services you need to remain healthy when care is coordinated.

You can contact Virginia Premier Member Services if you are interested in connecting with a care coordinator or care manager.

Does Everyone Need Coordination of Care?

No, but it can be helpful for those with:

- Children with special health needs
- High-risk pregnancy
- Disabilities and complex medical conditions
- Behavioral health needs

How Can You Help with Coordination of Care?

- Ask your behavioral health provider to give your PCP updates on your care.
- Ask your specialists to send reports to your PCP.
- Be sure your PCP knows about any specialists you are seeing, and why you are seeking care from the specialist.
- Give your PCP a list of all the medications you are taking.

If you don't already have a care coordinator or care manager, you can call Virginia Premier Member Services to ask for one to be assigned. We will then do an assessment to see if care coordination is right for you.



Bringing You the Best Care We Can

At Virginia Premier, we work with doctors, nurses and hospitals to bring you the best care possible. And we're constantly looking at the latest medical research. That way, we can find out which treatments do the best job of treating an illness.

And then we work to make those treatments available to you. There are certain conditions that we're especially focused on right now:

- Diabetes
- Asthma
- COPD
- Coronary artery disease
- Hypertension
- Heart failure

We offer health programs to support members with these and other conditions. If you'd like to learn about them, visit your plan's website:

If you're a member of

- Elite Individual – Medallion 4.0
- Elite Family (FAMIS) – Medallion 4.0
- Elite Plus (CCC Plus)



Follow this link for Medicaid health programs.

Whatever your healthcare needs, be sure to speak with your doctor about finding a treatment plan. Along with Virginia Premier, they're looking out for you.



Evaluation of New Technology

An ever-changing healthcare market presents new rules, regulations, trends, best practices and increasing needs to adapt to new technology. As such, Virginia Premier has a review committee to evaluate new technology. Virginia Premier's review committee appraises the inclusion of new technology and the new application of existing technology in its benefits plan, including medical and behavioral healthcare procedures, pharmaceuticals and devices. While reviewing new technology, the review committee evaluates the utilization, potential for harm, cost, clinical trials, peer-reviewed medical literature from appropriate government regulatory bodies (e.g., FDA and CMS), recommendations from professional societies and opinions from specialists.



Chronic Care Management

Virginia Premier is committed to helping you take control of your health. Our Chronic Care Management programs help you better understand the following conditions and health concerns.

- Asthma
- Behavioral health
- Cancer (breast, lung, colorectal, hematologic)
- Childhood nutrition
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Heart failure
- Hypertension

Join Virginia Premier's Chronic Care Management Program

Join today by calling us at 1-866-243-0937 (TTY: 711). Once you've joined, a Registered Nurse will talk to you about:

- How your condition affects your lifestyle
- Developing a plan with you
- Helping you partner with your doctor to feel well and live well
- Important health exams you might need or benefit from

Check Out Our Healthy Living Blog

Live a healthy lifestyle and improve your overall well-being with health resources and articles on the Virginia Premier blog. Whether you're looking for prenatal resources, information on your chronic condition or help navigating the world of healthcare, get inspired to take control of your health at viriniapremier.com/blog.

Empowering a healthier you

Get inspired to live a healthy lifestyle and improve your overall well-being with health resources and articles on the Virginia Premier blog.



The Safe Way for Babies to Sleep

Babies don't just need a lot of sleep, they also need to sleep safely. Fortunately, there's only a few steps to follow to ensure that babies are following safe sleep practices.

[READ MORE](#)



Postpartum Care Visits

When you're pregnant, it's important to get the medical care you need to keep both you and your baby healthy.

[READ MORE](#)



The Importance of Prenatal Care

When you're pregnant, it's important to get the right kind of medical attention before you give birth. Some health issues and challenges are unique to pregnancy.

[READ MORE](#)



Changing from a Pediatrician to a Doctor Who Cares for Adults

If you're between the ages of 18 and 21, it's a good time to switch from a pediatrician (a doctor for children and teens) to a doctor who cares for adults.

How You Can Switch to Your New Doctor

First, start to look for a new doctor. You can use our online Find a Provider tool to see all of the doctors available in our network. It's a long list, so give us a call. We can help narrow down your search.

Then, get a copy of your immunization (shots) record from your pediatrician. You'll need to show it to your new doctor. If you're not up to date on your shots, then your new doctor can help you get caught up.

After you select one, transfer your medical records to your new doctor. Your pediatrician can help you with this. You may need to sign an authorization form.

Finally, schedule your first appointment with your new doctor. Make sure you bring your:

- Insurance card
- Treatment histories
- Immunization record

If you have any more questions, or you'd like a little more help, talk with your pediatrician about transitioning your care. They'll be able to walk you through the steps.

NOTE: If you take any medications, make sure you have enough until your next appointment with your new doctor. This is because there may be a short gap before you're able to see your new doctor. And that doctor will want to talk with you first before writing a prescription.



Help Us Recognize Our Quality Doctors

We like to recognize and promote the quality doctors and healthcare providers that we work with. That's why each year we award an outstanding doctor or healthcare provider through our Practitioner Golden Globe Award. This award goes to a doctor or healthcare provider who promotes safe clinical practice, delivers quality care and takes part in their community through volunteering and health education.

If you know a healthcare provider who is deserving of this award, let us know! If you want to nominate your doctor, tell us what makes them stand out. Please call us at 757-252-7571 Extension: 27571 and ask for Quality or **fill out a brochure online**.



Help After the Loss of a Loved One

The loss of a child is perhaps the worst tragedy for a parent or caregiver to bear.

For Medallion members who have lost a child 22 weeks or older and under the age of 18 years, we offer help for you as you go through the process of grieving. These services are available even if your child was a Medallion 4.0 member but you weren't.

In addition, Virginia Premier's Adult Bereavement Program is available for all its Medicare, Medicaid and dual-eligible members. Our staff are here to help members and their families cope during a difficult time. This program can also connect members with community resources available for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.

Please let us know if you'd like our help. Just call Member Services and we'll put you in touch with our Bereavement Program. From there, we'll be able to put you in touch with community resources, including social work and mental health services.

You don't have to do this alone.



Bringing Quality Care to Our Members

Virginia Premier is committed to continuously improving the quality of care provided to our members and enhancing their overall health. Each year, we look at several measures that may impact our members' health and look for ways to improve.

Let's Meet

Did you know that Virginia Premier holds Member Advisory Committee (MAC) meetings for our Medallion and CCC Plus members? MAC meetings are where we connect with members to listen to questions and share information. Our experts, including health educators, social workers and care coordinators, team up to share information about benefits and resources that can keep you healthy.

You can call Member Services to see if there's an upcoming meeting near you.



Contact us

Medallion 4.0 (Elite Individual and Elite Family)

Call 1-800-727-7536 (TTY: 711). We are open Monday through Friday, excluding certain holidays, from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

CCC Plus (Elite Plus)

Call 1-877-719-7358 (TTY: 711). We are open Monday through Friday, excluding certain holidays, from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services are available to you free of charge. Call your plan's Member Services line.

You can also contact us online at: **[VirginiaPremier.com](https://www.virginia-premier.com)**

If you would like a print copy of this newsletter mailed to you, please call your plan's Member Service's line.