

Member News

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Tips for getting a mammogram



A mammogram is an important step in taking care of yourself and your breasts. Whether this is your first mammogram or you're a veteran, knowing what to expect may help the process go more smoothly.

How to prepare for your mammogram

- If you have a choice, go to a facility that specializes in mammograms and does several mammograms a day.
- Try to go to the same facility every time so that your mammograms can easily be compared from year to year.
- If you're going to a facility for the first time, bring a list of the places and dates of mammograms, biopsies, or any other breast procedures you've had before.
- If you've had mammograms at another facility, try to get those records to bring with you to the new facility (or have them sent there) so the old pictures can be compared to the new ones.
- Schedule your mammogram for when your breasts aren't likely to be tender or swollen, to help reduce discomfort and get good pictures. Try to avoid the week just before your period.
- You might find it easier to wear a skirt or pants, so that you'll only need to remove your top and bra for the mammogram.
- On the day of the exam, don't apply deodorant, antiperspirant, powders, lotions, creams, or perfumes under your arms, or on or under your breasts. Some of these contain substances that can show up on the x-ray as white spots. If you're not going home after your exam, you might want to take your deodorant or antiperspirant with you to apply after your exam. (Many centers will have cleaning and deodorant wipes to help you wipe off the deodorant and then replace it after the exam.)
- Discuss any recent changes or problems in your breasts with your health care provider before getting the mammogram. (If you have symptoms, you may need a diagnostic mammogram so special images can be taken of any area of concern.)
- Make sure your provider is aware of any part of your medical history that could affect your breast cancer risk, such as surgery, hormone use, breast cancer in your family, or if you've had breast cancer before.



What to tell your technologist

To help ensure you have a good quality mammogram, make sure your technologist knows:

- About any breast changes or problems, you're having.
- If you have breast implants.
- If you have trouble standing and holding still alone (without the aid of a cane or walker).
- If you're breastfeeding or if you think you might be pregnant.

Tell the technologist right away if you start feeling lightheaded or dizzy during the mammogram.

What to expect when getting a screening mammogram

- You'll have to undress above the waist to get a mammogram. The facility will give you a wrap to wear.
- You and the technologist will be the only ones in the room during the mammogram.
- To get a high-quality picture, your breast must be flattened or compressed. You'll stand in front of a machine, and the technologist will place your breast on the machine. The plastic upper plate is then lowered to compress your breast for about 10 to 15 seconds while the technologist takes an x-ray. You will then need to change position, so your breast is compressed from side to side before the next x-ray is taken.
- If you're getting a 3D mammogram, the procedure is the same as above, but you will notice that the machine will move in a small arc, either over top of your breast or along the side of your breast, for each image. You might be asked to hold your breath each time an image is taken.
- The whole procedure takes about 20 minutes. The actual breast compression only lasts about 10 to 15 seconds for each image.
- You might feel some discomfort when your breasts are compressed, and for some women it can be painful. Tell the technologist if it hurts so they can try to adjust the compression to your comfort.
- Two views of each breast are taken for a screening mammogram. But for some women, such as those with breast implants or larger breasts, more pictures may be needed.

How will I get my mammogram results?

A full report of the results of your mammogram will be sent to your health care provider. Call your provider or the facility where the mammogram was done.

Comprehensive pediatric visits for all ages

Strong minds and strong bodies go hand in hand; support your child's health every day. A single visit to your pediatrician can take care of routine wellness checks, sports physicals, and important immunizations. This isn't just for school-age kids; younger children, even before their first classroom experience, benefit from yearly well-child visits and timely vaccines!

What Is a Well-Child Visit?

A well-child visit is an annual checkup that supports your child's overall health by:

- Tracking growth and developmental milestones.
- Addressing health concerns such as behavior, nutrition, and sleep.
- Offering personalized guidance for each stage of childhood.
- Providing essential vaccinations to prevent serious diseases like measles, whooping cough, and meningitis.

Vaccines are safe, proven, and vital. They protect your child and community from preventable illnesses and help stop disease outbreaks before they start.

What Is a Sports Physical?

A sports physical is a focused exam that checks whether your child can participate safely in athletics by:

- Reviewing medical history and past injuries.
- Assessing heart health, flexibility, and strength.
- Ensuring they're physically ready for team or school sports.

Why Incorporate a Well-Child Visit, Sports Physical and Vaccinations into One Visit?

- Comprehensive care: Address all aspects of your child's health in one visit, including growth, development, sports readiness, and immunizations.
- Early detection: Catch and address issues early while avoiding duplicate exams.
- Time efficiency: Maximize your time with fewer missed school days and workday disruptions.

Schedule Ahead, Stay Ahead

It's essential for both school-age and younger children to have their well-child visits to support healthy growth, development, and protection from preventable illnesses. One visit provides total peace of mind and ensures a strong, healthy start.

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness month

Did you know more than 14,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year? This disease is preventable with vaccination and the proper screening.

Education is key to helping reduce the number of cervical cancer cases. To help raise awareness, we encourage you to learn more about why cervical cancer screening is important.

Take time this month to make sure you're up to date on your cervical cancer screening.

Together let's make a difference, get informed, and get screened.

Immunization schedules for you and your family

Life can get busy, but it's important to stay up to date on vaccines for yourself and your family. Staying up to date is one of the best ways to protect your health and the health of your loved ones.

Over time, the protection from childhood vaccines can lose effectiveness, and new vaccines may be recommended as you age. Your age, health conditions, and lifestyle can increase your risk for certain diseases. Talk with your doctor today and see what vaccines they recommend.

Immunization schedules

Stay protected at every age by receiving recommended routine vaccines like the ones below:

- COVID-19 (also available for members 6 months old and up)
- DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type B)
- HPV (human papillomavirus)
- Influenza (flu)
- IPV (poliovirus vaccine)
- Meningococcal (meningitis)
- MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella)
- PCV (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine)
- Pneumonia
- Rotavirus
- Tdap
- VZV (varicella-zoster virus)

To learn more about vaccines for you and your family check with your doctor, you can view the detailed recommended immunization schedules, which are broken out by age.



Cold, Flu, and RSV simplified

Fall brings lots of change. Whether you are a parent with kids back in school, caring for aging loved ones, or looking to stay healthy, tune into Sentara Health Plans' recent episode of Health Simplified for easy-to-follow advice to help your family navigate the return of cold, flu, and RSV season with confidence.

Listen on **Apple Podcasts**, **Spotify**, and **Youtube**.



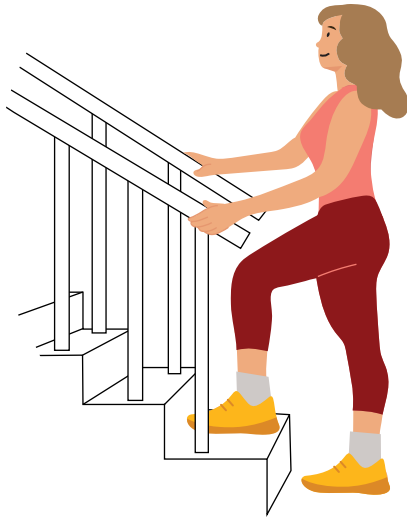
Sentara Bill Pay

Sentara Health Plans members who are Sentara patients can toggle between the member portal and Sentara Bill Pay. A link to “Pay your Sentara medical bill” can be found on the left navigation as well as on the claims page in the member portal for members to sign in to Sentara Bill Pay.

As a reminder, Sentara patients can quickly and easily view and pay bills from their Sentara provider and facilities through Sentara Bill Pay. If patients have a bill from Sentara, they can register to:

- Consolidate and manage their family’s hospital and physician bills in one place.
- See what their insurance has covered, itemized for each visit, like a summarized EOB.
- Set up a flexible payment plan.
- Access or print monthly statements, payment history, and receipts.
- Manage payment alerts and communications by email, text, or phone.
- Go paperless and reduce mailbox clutter.
- Manage upcoming appointments and connect with your provider by message, phone, or video call.
- Check test results, manage medications, and keep your personal details up to date.

Sentara patients can register for Sentara Bill Pay and learn more at **sentara.com/mychart**.



Take control of your health: 6 steps to prevent a fall

Every 11 seconds, an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury. Many falls are preventable. Stay safe with these tips!

1. Find a good balance and exercise program. Look to build balance, strength, and flexibility.
2. Talk to your health care provider. Ask for an assessment of your risk of falling. Share your history of recent falls.
3. Regularly review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist. Make sure side effects aren't increasing your risk of falling. Take Medications only as prescribed.
4. Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses. Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet.
5. Keep your home safe. Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe, and install grab bars in key areas.

Talk to your family members. Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe. Falls are not just an issue for seniors.

To learn more, visit ncoa.org/Falls

Lower back pain

If you have low back pain, you are not alone. Back pain is one of the most common reasons people see a doctor or miss days at work. It can range from a dull ache to a sudden, sharp pain. There are two types of back pain: Acute, or short-term back pain which lasts less than 4 to 6 weeks. It is the most common type of back pain and is often caused by lifting something heavy or falling. Chronic back pain continues for 12 weeks or longer and is less common.

Acute back pain usually gets better on its own, but can be treated with:

- Medications designed to relieve pain and/or inflammation.
- Heat and/or ice.
- Gentle stretching (not vigorous exercise).

Clinical guidelines for treating patients with short-term low back pain strongly recommend against the use of x-rays, MRIs, or CT scans during the first six weeks after the beginning of lower back pain. Routine imaging of the lower spine can increase healthcare costs for patients with short-term back pain and is not supported by medical evidence.

Tips to prevent back pain:

- Use good posture and use good body mechanics when lifting. When lifting something heavy, bend your legs and keep your back straight.
- Exercise often and keep your back muscles strong.
- Stay at a healthy weight, don't smoke, and get your daily supply of Calcium and Vitamin D.

Sentara Health Plans makes it easy to support your back health with Daily Habits, powered by WebMD Health Services. Start the Back Health Daily Habit to create a simple plan for stretching and strengthening.

Sign in to your member account, select "Get Healthy", and explore your personalized wellness tools from WebMD Health Services. Start now for a healthier back.

For more information please visit: **Low Back Pain fact sheet** ([nih.gov](https://www.nih.gov)) and **Back Pain Prevention**

2027 Quality Excellence Award

Celebrating Excellence in Quality and Safety

At Sentara Health Plans, our commitment to quality and safety is at the heart of everything we do, especially when it comes to coordinating and managing care for our members. To honor those who exemplify this commitment, we proudly present the Dr. Melvin T. Pinn, Jr. Quality Excellence Award (QEA), a distinguished recognition program that celebrates clinical excellence across our provider network.

Established in 2006, the QEA was created to recognize providers who demonstrate exceptional dedication to delivering safe, high-quality care while focusing on improving outcomes. The award is named in honor of Dr. Melvin T. Pinn, Jr., a revered physician and community leader who championed care for the underserved. Throughout his career, Dr. Pinn received numerous accolades for his tireless advocacy and contributions to patient safety and quality improvement.

Each year, Sentara Health Plans continues this tradition by selecting one outstanding in-network provider who exemplifies excellence in clinical practice and a steadfast commitment to safe, high-quality care.

Nominations are accepted annually from January 1st through December 31st. Sentara Health Plans members, network providers, and provider office staff may nominate a physician at any time during this period.

To submit a nomination for the QEA award, click the link below:

Dr. Melvin T. Pinn, Jr Quality Excellence Award

To read more about the QEA, visit: **Dr. Melvin T. Pinn, Jr. Quality Excellence Award | Sentara Health Plans**

Lung Cancer awareness

Did you know that lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in both men and women in the United States? Early detection is key!

Take time this month to make sure you're up to date on lung cancer screening. If you are a current or former smoker (having quit within the last 15 years), you may qualify for lung cancer screening. Contact your physician for more information about eligibility, especially if you have a new cough that doesn't go away or shortness of breath. Screening is done by a low-dose CT scan and takes only a few minutes!

If you have any questions about benefits, please call Member Services at **757-552-7401**



*For resources on quitting smoking, scan the **QR code**



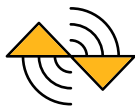
Clinical guidelines

Sentara Health Plans uses clinical guidelines to help healthcare providers make decisions about the best healthcare for members with specific needs including:

- Acute and chronic conditions
- Preventive and non-preventive behavioral health services

All clinical and preventive guidelines are:

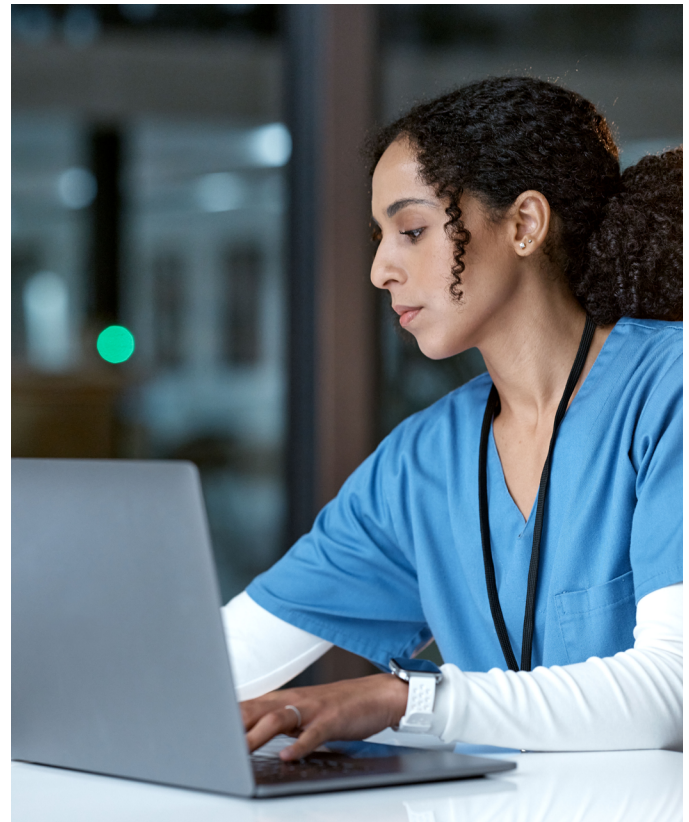
- Based on valid and reliable clinical evidence-based practices or agreement among healthcare experts
- Focused on what the member needs
- Reviewed and updated at least every two years
- Shared with providers and members each year
- Used to guide healthcare decisions, member education, and health plan service coverage



How we use the clinical guidelines

Sentara Health Plans makes sure in-network healthcare providers use these guidelines by using online tools, such as electronic databases, and reviewing manual medical records. These guidelines may change to meet your unique health needs. Providers can also make different choices based on your specific health needs.

These guidelines for medical and behavioral health are based on published national standards, literature reviews, and agreement among healthcare experts. The guidelines provide the latest advice for screening, testing, and treatment.



These guidelines are published by Sentara Health Plans as recommendations to manage specific conditions. In some cases, providers may need to make different choices based on your health information. The Sentara Health Plans guidelines are endorsed recommendations and are not intended as a substitute for a provider's judgment.

The clinical guidelines are available upon request. To request a printed copy of the guidelines, call member safety at **757-252-8400** or **1-844-620-1015 (TTY: 711)**. You can get a copy of these guidelines by mail, email, or fax.

To learn more about the guidelines for specific conditions, visit **sentarahealthplans.com/providers/clinical-reference/clinical-guidelines**.



Healthcare at Your Fingertips

Download the **Sentara Health Plans Mobile App** today for instant access to important plan information including:

- Member ID card
- Virtual consults
- Doctor and facility searches
- Claims and authorizations
- Wellness tools
- Treatment cost calculator
- Important preventive care notifications
- HSA or HRA¹ account access
- Answers to frequently asked questions
- Common forms and documents
- Contact information for the health plan

Whether you're accessing your plan information from the mobile app, a computer, or a tablet, Sentara Health Plans digital solutions provide a cohesive experience across all platforms.

Look for the Sentara Health Plans Mobile App:



To learn more about the Sentara Health Plans Mobile App, visit: **sentarahealthplans.com/app**.

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Did you know?

Sentara Health Plans members are entitled to certain rights and beholden to certain responsibilities. Members can review rights and responsibilities anytime on our website at **sentarahealthplans.com/members/manage-plans/member-rights-and-responsibilities-commercial**.

¹Applies to members with Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) plans