

Healthy

Summer 2024

Highlights

In this issue

- **Tips to prevent heat-related illnesses**
- **Summer safety for pets**
- **Benefit highlights: dental and hearing**

Hello!

Welcome to summertime. We're helping you take good care of yourself with tips on how to beat the heat and stay safe. We care about your pets too, so we've got information to keep them healthy as well. We're also sharing how to stay safe online with ways to spot a scam.

In this issue we've got details about your dental and hearing benefits, and we help you find easier ways to get and take your medications, too. Get comfy and enjoy reading this issue from cover to cover.



Did you take your medicine today?

About 50% of patients do not take their medications as prescribed.¹ Taking your medication as directed is an important part of your health. It can help keep your symptoms under control, and it can help reduce your overall health costs.

Here are some tips to help you stay on top of your medications:

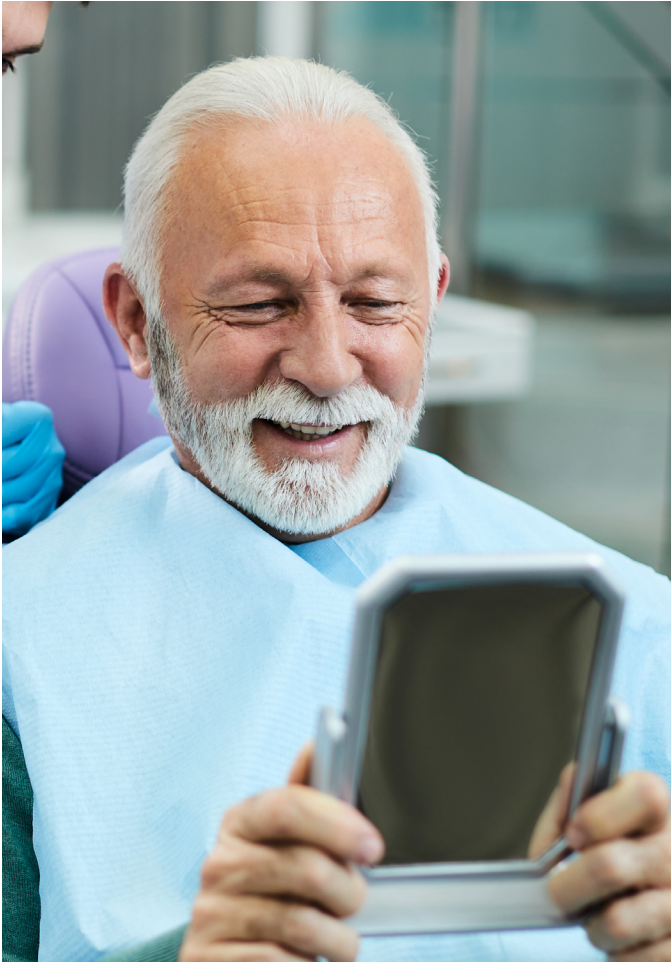
- **Set an alarm on your phone.** An alarm can be a helpful reminder to take your medications.
- **Bring your medication with you to the doctor.** This will let your doctor see what you're taking. Your medications and how you take them can change. If you are experiencing side effects or have questions about your medicine, your doctor can help.
- **Ask your doctor for a 90-day prescription.** If you are eligible for a 90-day supply of medications, this may allow for fewer trips to the pharmacy and often reduces the copay.²
- **Get your prescriptions delivered to your door.** Express Scripts® pharmacy partners with us to deliver medications directly to you. They will fill and deliver 90-day prescriptions. For information about home delivery, call Sentara Medicare Member Services at **1-800-927-6048 (TTY: 711)**.
- **Get your medication from our preferred network of pharmacies.** Tier 1 medications (also called Preferred Generic) have a \$0 copay for all members when purchased at a preferred in-network pharmacy. Our preferred pharmacy network includes Walgreens, Walmart, Rite-Aid, and more. To find a preferred pharmacy in your area, learn about home delivery, or search our drug list, visit **sentarahealthplans.com/pharmacy**. Standard copay amounts still apply at other in-network pharmacies.



Medicare Member Appreciation Week is September 23–27

To show our appreciation for having you as a member, we'll be sending you reminder emails of all the perks to being a valued Sentara Medicare member, such as incentives for completing preventive screenings and more. Don't miss out—make sure we have your current email address. Sign in to your member portal at **member.sentarahealthplans.com/sign-in** or use the Sentara Health Plans mobile app to make updates to your email address.

Benefit Highlights



More reasons to smile with your dental benefit

Keep your teeth in tip-top shape with your dental benefit through DentaQuest. Review your Evidence of Coverage for full benefit details. You can access it online at sentaramedicare.com/documents.

Your dental benefit includes:

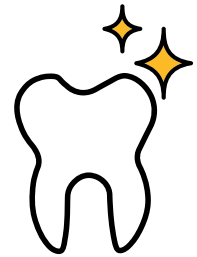
Two oral exams
every 12 months

Two cleanings
every 12 months

Two fluoride treatments
every 12 months

Two bitewing X-rays
every 12 months

One full-mouth X-ray
every 36 months



Keep your hearing crystal clear with NationsHearing®

You can get a routine hearing exam every year with a \$0 copay with your hearing benefit through NationsHearing. If you would prefer, you can access an online hearing test from your computer or mobile device at NationsHearing.com/SentaraMedicare. You'll get a digital record of your hearing test results

If you need hearing aids, we provide free fittings and an allowance of up to \$2,000 per year for a set of hearing aids. A 12-month warranty and one-time replacement coverage is included, and you'll have up to a one-year supply of hearing aid batteries.

Call NationsHearing at **1-877-438-7521 (TTY: 711)**, 7 days a week, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to find a provider and make an appointment.

You can search for a dentist at dentaquest.com. For help making an appointment or if you have any questions, call Sentara Medicare Member Services at **1-800-927-6048 (TTY: 711)** for help.

Learn about your health plan and earn \$10

When it comes to using your plan to the fullest, there's a lot to know. That's why we created a video with tips on getting the most out of your plan. Visit sentaramedicare.com/members and look for the link near the top of the page to our Orientation to Your Plan video. Then, complete and submit the online form to claim your Healthy Reward.³



Pharmacy focus: Alternatives to swallowing pills

Many people have a hard time swallowing. There's even a word for it: dysphagia. Dysphagia has many causes, but it affects older adults the most.

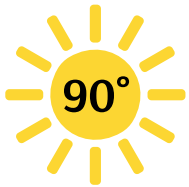
When you have medicine to take, dysphagia can be a real problem. Ask your pharmacist if your medication is available in another form, such as a liquid or dissolvable tablet. However, please be aware that getting your medication in another form may change the price. Don't crush, divide or open tablets and capsules without talking to your pharmacist first.

Here are a few tips for swallowing medications:!

- **Drink plenty of water.** Before placing the pill in your mouth, take a large sip of water and then another sip of water with the pill.
- **Imagine yourself swallowing the pill.** If you are still unable to swallow it, remove the tablet and dry it with a clean paper towel so it won't dissolve. Try again in a few minutes.
- **Use applesauce or pudding.** You can trick your brain into swallowing pills by putting them in a spoonful of food. However, not all medications can be taken with food, so be sure to read the information that came with your medication or ask your pharmacist first.
- **Use a straw.** The reflex movement of sucking up the liquid through a straw while sealing the straw with your lips is a good way to help you get pills down.
- **Coat the pill with gel.** Talk to your pharmacist about lubricants for coating your tablets to make swallowing them easier. They may recommend a gel made for taking medicine, and you can use your prepaid flex card to buy it.
- **Tell your doctor.** They are the best source for treatment options.



Tips to stay cool¹



Stay in air-conditioned places when it's 90 degrees or above outside. Don't rely on a fan as your main source of cooling.



Remain hydrated by sipping water. Even if you don't feel thirsty, keep water nearby and have a drink often.



Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing and a hat when you are outside Consider wearing clothing with UVA/UVB sun ray protection built in.



Shield your eyes. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun when you're outside.



Protect yourself from sunburn. Use plenty of sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher and reapply it often. Stay in the shade as much as you can.

Beat the heat this summer

Summertime is all about having fun with family and friends and enjoying the warm weather. But some days, it's just plain hot outside. Getting too hot is dangerous for everyone, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says people aged 65 and older are more likely to have heat-related illnesses.

Some heat-induced ailments, such as sunburn (skin is red and tender, develops blisters, peels, and may be warm to the touch), heat rash (red clusters of small blisters on the skin similar to pimples), and heat cramps (muscle spasms in the abdomen, arms, and/or legs) can be helped with rest, hydration, and skin treatments like aloe vera gel and lotion. However, there are other illnesses that can be dangerous and warrant immediate medical attention.

According to the National Institute on Aging, the most common and serious heat-related illnesses and some of their symptoms are:

- **Heat syncope** – Feeling lightheaded, dizzy, or fainting.
- **Heat edema** – Swelling in your ankles and feet.
- **Heat exhaustion** – Nausea, thirst, weakness, and heavy sweating.
- **Heat stroke** – Confusion, loss of consciousness, seizures, very high body temperature, and profuse sweating. Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness.

If you, or someone near you, is experiencing any of these symptoms, call for help right away. Sit or lie down in a cool place. Use cold compresses on the head, face, and neck, and sip water, juice, or a sports drink until medical help arrives.

Use your over-the-counter (OTC) products allowance to make your summer more comfortable

You can buy sunscreen and other items, like bug spray, allergy medicine, and aloe vera gel. View the full OTC catalog at sentaramedicare.com/2024otc. To order, sign in to your NationsBenefits® member portal at SentaraMedicare.NationsBenefits.com, or call **1-877-438-7521 (TTY: 711)**, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week.

Summertime smoothie

A cold smoothie on a hot summer day can be so refreshing. Not only are smoothies with fruits and greens healthy and delicious, they can also be customized to your taste.

Making a smoothie is as easy as 1, 2, 3. In a blender, add:



1 cup of liquid

Try your favorite dairy or non-dairy milk, fruit juice, coconut water, or plain water.



2 cups of fruits or greens

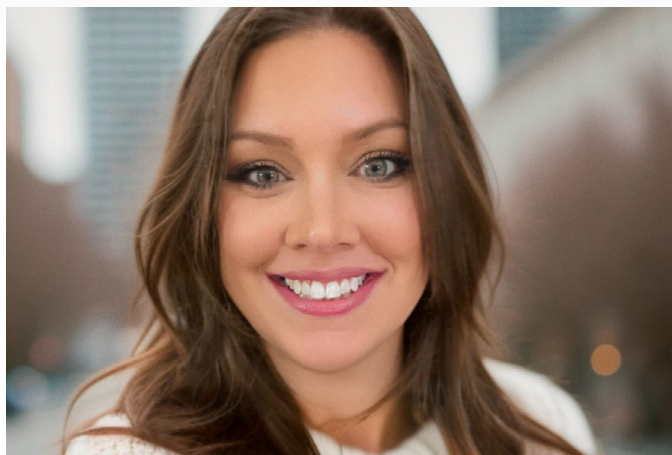
Try nutrient-dense greens like spinach. Add fresh or frozen fruit.



Up to 3 tablespoons

of protein powder, nut butter, chia seeds, or superfood powders.

Blend all ingredients until well combined, then drink up and enjoy every sip.



Cheryl F, BSN, RN, CCM, Integrated Care Management

Ask a nurse care manager

Q: I don't like having my eyes dilated. How important is this type of eye exam?

A: According to the National Eye Institute, a dilated eye exam is the best thing you can do for your eye health. It's the only way your doctor can check for eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD) before they cause vision loss.

If you've never had your eyes dilated, it's a simple and painless procedure. Your doctor will put drops in your eyes to dilate (widen) your pupils. This allows more light into your eyes so your doctor can look for eye diseases. If your doctor finds any, they will discuss treatment options so you can decide what's best for you.

Your vision may be blurry and sensitive to light for a few hours after the exam. For this reason, you may want to have someone drive you home from the appointment, and you'll need to wear sunglasses. Sometimes doctors will give you disposable sunglasses to wear home.

August is National Eye Exam month, and a great time to have your annual eye exam if you haven't done so already. You get a yearly eye exam at no cost with your vision benefit through Sentara Medicare. You also get a yearly allowance for the purchase of eyewear, including contact lenses, eyeglass lenses, and frames.

You must go to an in-network provider for the exam and to use your allowance. You can search for an in-network provider at cecvision.com/search or call Member Services at **1-800-927-6048 (TTY: 711)**.

-Cheryl F, BSN, RN, CCM, Integrated Care Management



Summer safety: Pet edition

As full-fledged members of the family, it's fun to bring our pets with us on outdoor adventures. Spending time with our furry friends enhances their lives as well as ours. But just like humans, there are some precautions¹ we should take to make sure their summer is safe.

Keep up with flea and tick prevention. Fleas and ticks are at their worst in the summertime. Not only are flea bites itchy, but they can also cause skin issues, hair loss, and even anemia. Ticks can transmit tapeworms and Lyme disease. Talk to your veterinarian about the right prevention medication for your pet.

Pets can get heat stroke, too. Make sure your pet has plenty of water and shade when they are outside. If you notice your pet is panting heavily, salivating excessively, or has other signs they may be too hot, bring them inside to cool off in the air conditioning. If you think your pet may be having heat stroke, seek emergency care at a veterinarian's office right away. Also, never leave your pet alone in a vehicle. When it's 80 degrees outside, the temperature inside a car can reach 109 degrees after 20 minutes, and 123 degrees after 60 minutes.¹

Protect your pet's skin and paws. Pet-safe sunscreen is available to protect your pet's skin when they are in the sun. If you're taking your pet to the beach, first make sure animals are allowed, and if so, follow leash and waste disposal rules. Bring a life jacket for your pet if you plan to let them swim in the water. If the sand is too hot for you to walk barefoot, it's also too hot for your pet's paws. Avoid walks during the hottest part of the day, and always check the pavement temperature with your hand before you go. If your pet isn't walking the way they usually do, it may be because the ground is hot, and their paws are uncomfortable.

Restrain your pet while in a car using a crate, pet car seat, or pet seat belt. This will help keep them from distracting the driver, as well as help keep everyone in the car (including your pet) safe in the event of an accident. And never let your pet ride with their head out of the car window. According to [tripswithpets.com](https://www.tripswithpets.com), your pet can be hit with flying objects and road debris, the wind may damage their ears, and they may even fall out. Similarly, dogs should never ride in the back of an open pick-up truck, as it is easy for them to be injured.

We hope these tips help keep your pet safe so you can enjoy the summer together.

Boost Your Brain Power: Word Search

(Answers on page 11)

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciation | <input type="checkbox"/> Pets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beach | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cool | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepared |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coverage | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber | <input type="checkbox"/> Rewards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dental | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Smile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Smoothie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heat | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricane | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrate | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunshine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Vision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition | <input type="checkbox"/> Wellness |

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Cyber safety: Impersonation scams

Scammers can impersonate, or pretend to be, anyone or any service, including Sentara Health Plans employees. They typically request Social Security numbers, account login details, and bank account or credit card information. Sentara Health Plans employees will not ask for your Social Security number or bank account information. Never provide this information regarding your Sentara Health Plans account.

Be skeptical of unsolicited communications:

- **Phone calls:** Scammers may pretend to be a health plan representative to obtain your personal information. They often know more than expected and can seem to communicate in a knowledgeable manner. Be wary of unexpected phone calls claiming to be from your health plan.
- **Emails:** Don't click on links in emails from senders you don't know. Be cautious of unexpected emails that include a link that requires you to install software or provide your login information.
- **Text messages and social media:** Like emails, be cautious of text messages with links or requests for personal information. Scammers can also initiate a verification text and ask you to give them the security code.

Stay alert with these tips:



Never share sensitive information with someone you didn't initiate contact with.



Never click on links or open attachments you didn't request or were not expecting.



Never trust information an unknown person has shared with you. Call Member Services using published information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sentara Medicare Member Services at **1-800-927-6048 (TTY: 711)**.



The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period begins October 15

The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) is October 15 through December 7. During this time, if needed, you can make changes to your Medicare plan effective January 1, 2025. That makes this a great time to review your current health plan and see all the benefits you have.

In preparation for AEP, this fall we will send you an Annual Notice of Changes (ANOC). Be sure to review it carefully, as it outlines any changes to your plan's coverage and costs effective January 1. This document can help you decide if your current plan still meets your needs or if another Sentara Medicare plan would be better. If you ever need to review your current ANOC, you can find it on our website at [sentaramedicare.com/documents](https://www.sentaramedicare.com/documents).

Sentara Medicare has many plans to choose from. We are always looking for new ways to design Medicare Advantage plans to meet our members' needs. For more details about each plan, please visit our website at [sentarahealthplans.com/medicare](https://www.sentarahealthplans.com/medicare). If you love your current Sentara Medicare plan, there's nothing you need to do. You will be automatically enrolled in your current plan for 2025.

If you have any questions about your health plan or AEP, please call Sentara Medicare Member Services at 1-800-927-6048 (TTY: 711).



Staying safe during hurricane season

Hurricane season is June 1 through November 30. If you live near the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, now is the time to check your hurricane supplies. If you aren't sure what you need, the website **ready.gov** has a full list and other helpful information about storm preparation.

If you find yourself in the path of a storm, always follow the directions from local authorities, including evacuation orders. Be aware of the flood zone you live in, so you'll know if your area is being evacuated. You can find your flood zone by visiting **msc.fema.gov/portal/search** and entering your address. Also, find out where the nearest shelter is located, and if you have pets, ask if you can bring them with you. If pets aren't allowed, you'll need to have a separate plan for them.

If you must leave town, your health plan will travel with you. Be sure to take your Sentara Medicare member ID card, or you can also view your member ID card on the Sentara Health Plans mobile app. Visit **sentarahealthplans.com/app** to download it today. If you also have a Medicaid plan, take that ID card with you as well. If you need to order medication refills before their regular refill time because of a storm, we will cover them for you. We're always here for you, even during hurricane season.

Footnotes

¹Sources: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, webmd.com, nia.nih.gov, cdc.gov, aarp.org

²For more information on your specific copay amounts, refer to your Evidence of Coverage online at sentaramedicare.com/documents.

³Medicare approved Sentara Medicare to provide some of these rewards as part of the Value-Based Insurance Design Program. This program lets Medicare try new ways to improve Medicare Advantage plans. Rewards cannot be used to buy tobacco or alcohol. Rewards cannot be converted to cash. You can only receive one reward per applicable service per plan year. Rewards are not available to Sentara Medicare Savings (HMO) plan members.

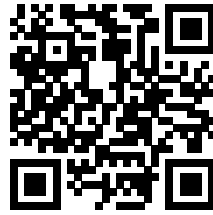
Answer Key:

J	D	U	Z	E	A	U	Z	B	N	B	X	K	R	T	G	D	Q	G
K	Z	I	D	C	M	P	Z	O	M	H	V	L	E	Y	E	R	B	P
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H	O	W	R	Q	T	S	J	C	I	G	V	L	A	K	U	U	G	X
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V	M	J	O	O	H	Y	D	R	A	T	E	S	C	X	T	R	R	H
M	P	B	N	N	F	O	F	I	S	H	I	N	G	S	Y	M	G	B

Keep your plan close at hand with the Sentara Health Plans mobile app

- View, print, fax, and share your ID card
- Request a new ID card
- Search for a provider
- Review claims
- Get copay and coinsurance amounts

Go to sentarahealthplans.com/app



or scan this code with your smartphone camera or QR code reader app for access.



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For additional information, call Sentara Medicare Member Services at **1-800-927-6048 (TTY: 711)**.

October 1-March 31 | 7 days a week | 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

April 1-September 30 | Monday-Friday | 8 a.m.-8 p.m.