

Fighting the Flu: Get Vaccinated

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 200,000 people are hospitalized due to flu-related complications each year in the United States, and about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes. The best way to fight the flu is to get vaccinated.

TRICARE covers the flu vaccine based on the CDC's current flu season guidelines. Anyone who wants to decrease his or her chances of getting the flu can get vaccinated, but the CDC recommends that people in certain high-risk categories get vaccinated every year. These include:

- Children ages 6 months through 18 years
- Pregnant women
- People age 50 and older
- People with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from the flu, including health care workers, household contacts of other people at high risk and household contacts and caregivers of children less than 6 months old

The flu shot is approved for people age 6 months and older, and the nasal-spray vaccine (FluMist®) is an option for healthy people ages 2–49 years who are not pregnant. In order to be covered by TRICARE, the flu vaccine and other vaccines must be administered in a doctor's office. Vaccines can also be administered at one of the convenient MinuteClinics located in select CVS Pharmacies throughout the South Region. Flu vaccines are **not** covered by TRICARE when provided at other civilian pharmacies, drug stores or supermarkets.

Protect yourself and your family from the flu this season—make an appointment with your health care

provider today to get vaccinated. Military treatment facilities (MTFs) may also offer flu vaccines.

Note: Active duty and reserve personnel must receive vaccinations at an MTF. This will ensure their immunization records are complete and their compliance with Department of Defense immunization policy is documented.

For more information about the flu and vaccination guidelines, visit the "Immunizations" section at www.humana-military.com, available under "Health & Wellness" on the beneficiary portal. ■



Veterans Day Salute

On Veterans Day of 1961, President John F. Kennedy stood before the country to honor veterans and commemorate a historic day of peace.

"In an age that threatens the survival of freedom, we join together to honor those who made our freedom possible," he said. "We celebrate this Veterans Day for a very few minutes, a few seconds of silence and then this country's life goes on."

Today, we celebrate more than 43 million men and women who have fought valiantly throughout history to preserve our heritage of freedom and democracy. Some of them are resting peacefully at home and abroad, yet many walk beside us as neighbors, colleagues and friends. These heroes include you—our TRICARE-eligible veterans—and your families. You have made sacrifices for our country and defended our liberty, and we are forever grateful for your service. ■



An Important Note about TRICARE Program Information: At the time of printing, this information is current. It is important to remember that TRICARE policies and benefits are governed by public law and federal regulation. Changes to TRICARE programs are continually made as public law and/or federal regulation are amended. **Military treatment facility guidelines and policies may be different than those outlined in this publication.** For the most recent information, contact your TRICARE regional contractor, TRICARE Service Center, or local military treatment facility.

TRICARE Pharmacy Program Update

The TRICARE Pharmacy Program provides the medications you need, when you need them, in a safe, convenient and cost-effective manner. Under a new contract beginning Nov. 4, 2009, Express Scripts, Inc. (Express Scripts) will continue to administer the TRICARE Pharmacy Program to provide your mail-order, retail and specialty pharmacy services. If you have used the TRICARE Pharmacy Program before, you will be pleased to know that you do not need to do anything. New prescriptions are not required, and you can continue to use your current pharmacies.

Your pharmacy options continue to include:

- **Military treatment facility (MTF) pharmacies:** MTF pharmacies are your least expensive option for filling prescriptions. You may receive up to a 90-day supply of most medications at no cost. Most MTF pharmacies accept prescriptions written by civilian and military providers. However, non-formulary medications generally are not available.
- **Mail Order Pharmacy:** The Mail Order Pharmacy is the second most economical option. You may receive up to a 90-day supply of maintenance medications delivered directly to your home for minimal out-of-pocket costs.

Simply fill the first prescription by mail or fax and request refills online or by phone. You can also transfer your current retail prescriptions to the Mail Order Pharmacy by calling the Member Choice Center at 1-877-363-1433. Visit www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE for more information and to register.

- **TRICARE retail network pharmacies:** Network pharmacies are a convenient option for short-term medications when MTF pharmacies are not available. To receive your medication, present the written prescription along with your uniformed services identification card to the pharmacist. To locate a network pharmacy, visit www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE or call 1-877-363-1303.*
- **Non-network retail pharmacies:** At non-network pharmacies, you will pay full price for your medication and file a claim for reimbursement. Reimbursements are subject to an annual deductible or out-of-network cost-shares and copayments.

For your safety, every prescription is checked for accuracy and potential drug interactions. For more information on the TRICARE Pharmacy Program, visit www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/Prescriptions or www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE. ■

* The phone number is effective after Nov. 4, 2009.

Unable to Keep an Appointment? Let Your MTF Know!

Change of plans? Can't get there in time? There are many reasons why you or a family member may be unable to keep a medical appointment. We all have those days when things simply do not go as planned. However, your local military treatment facility (MTF) needs your assistance to make sure that your scheduled appointment gets cancelled when you cannot use it.

To cancel an appointment, call the appointment desk and simply let the clerk know or leave a message with your last name, name of the clinic where the appointment was scheduled and date of the appointment. Just taking a couple of minutes to do this you will free up an appointment for someone else in need, as well as save the MTF dollars that could be spent elsewhere. Appointments cancelled even just one hour before the scheduled time are likely to be used by other patients. If you don't cancel the appointment and are a "no-show," then that time is lost.

A primary care appointment costs approximately \$150. In some of the higher-volume clinics in the TRICARE South Region, like the 37th Medical Group at Lackland Air Force Base, the number of dollars wasted due to no-shows can quickly add up. In March 2009, the 505 no-shows at the 37th Medical Group amounted to what it would have cost to pay a health care provider for a full year!

As we strive to provide you with appointments in clinics and hospitals within TRICARE's access-to-care standards, everyone's contributions make a difference. Your help in reducing the number of no-shows is greatly appreciated! ■



The Tragedy of Suicide

According to the National Institute for Mental Health, suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States. Someone commits suicide about every 16 minutes. During times of increased stress, suicide sometimes seems like the only way out for someone in deep emotional pain. It is therefore important to be aware of some of the risk factors and signs that someone might be thinking of suicide.

Things that may make someone more likely to consider or attempt suicide include:

- Access to firearms
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Family members who committed suicide
- Feelings of hopelessness or helplessness
- Mental conditions, such as depression or anxiety
- Ongoing medical illness

There are a number of myths surrounding suicide. One such myth is that talking about it will make the person do it. However, research has shown that talking to someone about suicide does not encourage it. Talking about it can actually help identify issues that need to be addressed and encourage the individual to get help.

If you or a loved one is experiencing depression, anxiety or substance abuse, please know that help is available. Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc. (Humana Military) and its behavioral health care partner, ValueOptions, encourage you to talk with your primary care provider or a behavioral health care professional. Non-active duty beneficiaries can self-refer for the first eight outpatient behavioral health care visits to a network provider per fiscal year (Oct. 1–Sept. 30). If you need assistance finding a provider in your area, you may call ValueOptions at 1-800-700-8646 between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Active duty service members are encouraged to talk with their chaplain, primary care provider or mental health counselors on base, or even their direct command. The most important thing is to get the help needed.

For additional resources, visit the National Suicide Prevention Web site at www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org or call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).

You can also access valuable information on Humana Military's Web site. Just go to the beneficiary portal at www.humana-military.com and click on "Behavioral Health" in the "Quick Links" section. ■



Eight Self-Referred Behavioral Health Care Visits Renew with Fiscal Year

With the beginning of the new TRICARE fiscal year on Oct. 1, the behavioral health care outpatient visit count is renewed for all TRICARE beneficiaries except active duty service members (ADSMs).* As of Oct. 1, you are once again eligible for eight outpatient behavioral health care visits to a **network provider** without prior authorization or a referral from your primary care manager (PCM) or Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc.'s (Humana Military's) behavioral health care partner, ValueOptions.

After the first eight visits, prior authorization **is required**. A physician referral is not required for these visits, but authorization is required to establish medical necessity.

There are certain providers, however, for which a **physician referral** and supervision are **always** required, even for the first eight visits. These include licensed professional counselors, licensed mental health counselors and pastoral counselors.

For more information on behavioral health care and prior authorization requirements, visit the "Behavioral Health" section at www.humana-military.com, available under "Health & Wellness" on the beneficiary portal. ■

* ADSMs **always** need a referral from their PCM (or service point of contact if enrolled in TRICARE Prime Remote) and ValueOptions to obtain civilian behavioral health care.

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CONTACTS

Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc.
1-800-444-5445
1-877-249-9179 (active duty)
1-877-298-3408 (National Guard and Reserve)
1-888-4GO-WNAP (Warrior Navigation and Assistance Program)
www.humana-military.com

Claims
1-800-403-3950

Behavioral Health
1-800-700-8646

Pharmacy Customer Service
1-866-DoD-TRRX (retail)
1-866-DoD-TMOP (mail order)
www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE

National TRICARE Web Sites
www.tricare.mil www.tricareonline.com

Update DEERS
1-800-538-9552
www.tricare.mil/deers

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TRICARE Health Matters is published by the TRICARE Management Activity. Please provide feedback at www.tricare.mil/evaluations/feedback.



MILVAX: Your Source for Vaccine Information

The Military Vaccine (MILVAX) Agency is a Department of Defense (DoD) executive agency that works to protect and enhance the health of service members and military beneficiaries by promoting immunization policy and practice and coordinating military immunization programs worldwide.

While the MILVAX Agency's primary mission is medical readiness, it is also imperative that service members are properly informed about vaccines. When looking for information on vaccines, the MILVAX Agency should be your primary source of information, especially for biodefense vaccines like anthrax and smallpox. Since these vaccines are only available to certain military personnel, most civilian providers have limited knowledge of them, so it is best to turn to the MILVAX Agency's scientific-based information.

For information on all vaccines, including the current DoD guidance on seasonal influenza, visit the MILVAX Agency's Web site at www.vaccines.mil. For specialized information on the smallpox and anthrax vaccines, visit www.smallpox.mil or www.anthrax.mil.

You can also obtain information about vaccines through the MILVAX Agency's e-mail question-and-answer service (vaccines@amedd.army.mil), which guarantees you an answer to questions within 24 hours. Finally, the agency offers a toll-free information line, 1-877-GET-VACC (1-877-438-8222).

TRICARE covers age-appropriate doses of vaccines as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If you are not sure whether an immunization you need is covered, you can ask your provider or regional contractor.

Note: You should always contact your health care provider if you believe you are having an adverse reaction to a vaccine, and should go to the closest emergency room if you are having chest pain or shortness of breath. ■

