



Your **Link** to Better Health

Medicare Advantage

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Winter Safety Tips
- Diabetes Care
- Understanding Shingles
- Shingles Vaccine Q & A

Winter Safety Tips

To keep you and your family safe this winter:

- Store your snow shovel in your home or attached garage. That way you won't have to trek across slippery surfaces when it is needed.
- Keep a bag of ice-melting salt in your residence. Apply to icy steps and walkways before leaving home.
- Keep warm. Wear warm clothing and set your thermostat at a warm temperature.
- Keep a supply of medicine, nonperishable foods, water, batteries, and emergency items on hand.
- Use extreme caution with electric or gas space heaters. Turn them off when you leave the room.

Visit Welborn Health Plans on the Web at welbornhealthplans.com.



Diabetes Care

Diabetes is very serious. It affects all aspects of life for those living with it. When blood pressure and cholesterol levels are high, the risk for problems is even higher. For that reason, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends that blood pressure and cholesterol be closely checked in people with diabetes.

Cholesterol levels should be checked at least every year. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) is an important cholesterol test. If you have not had your LDL checked in the past year, talk with your doctor. LDL can be controlled with diet, exercise, and, if needed, medicine.

Blood pressure should be checked at every doctor visit. When a person with diabetes has high blood pressure, the ADA recommends two certain drugs to treat it. These include angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) and angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACE inhibitors). Ask your doctor which high blood pressure medicine you are taking.

Nurse case managers are available at Welborn Health Plans to answer any questions. Call 812-773-0378 or 812-773-0336.

Understanding Shingles

About 99 percent of adults older than age 40 have had chickenpox. A virus called varicella causes chickenpox. Once chickenpox symptoms go away, the virus stays in the body forever. Though it does not usually cause chickenpox again, it may cause shingles later in life. Only someone who has had chickenpox, or rarely, the chickenpox vaccine, can get shingles.

Shingles is a painful rash. It usually appears on only one side of the face or body. Shingles pain can be quite severe. Fever, headache, chills, and upset stomach may also occur. Symptoms last from two to four weeks. Very rarely, shingles can cause serious problems including

pneumonia, hearing or vision problems, brain inflammation, or death.

About one in five people who get shingles will continue to have severe pain long after the rash has cleared. This is called post-herpetic neuralgia, or PHN. When PHN occurs, the skin remains very sensitive to any touch. Even a breeze blowing on the skin may cause pain.

Shingles is more common in people older than age 50. It may also occur in people whose immune system is weakened.

A vaccine is available to help prevent shingles. The CDC recommends that adults older than age 60 receive the vaccination.



Shingles Vaccine: Questions and Answers

Does it work? The shingles vaccine prevents shingles in about 50 percent of people who receive it. Vaccinated individuals who get shingles usually have a milder case lasting less time. It provides six or more years of immunity.

Are there side effects? The most common side effects include redness, soreness, or itching at the injection site. Headache occurs in about one of 70 people.

Does Medicare pay for it? The shingles vaccine is covered under Medicare Part D for people older than age 60. It must be received at your doctor's office. The vaccine is not covered by Medicare Cost plans.

Visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines for more information.

