

This May, celebrating women's health



Stephanie Stewart

Over the last few weeks, our nation has faced an uncertain time. Our day-to-day lives and routines have been turned upside down. Our normal way of living has changed, and we've had to make tough decisions based on our own personal safety, as well as the safety concerns of our families and the elderly and high-risk members of our communities. Taking all this into perspective, the word for the day is selfless. According to Miriam-Webster, the definition of selfless is "having no concern for self, or unselfishness."

As letter carriers, this is in our nature, but I implore you, don't forget yourself when it comes to health.

Remember, self-care is not selfish; in fact, it's the exact opposite. I'm extremely confident that we have many selfless men and women out there; however, because both National Women's Health Week and Mother's Day are in May, I would like to focus on women's issues for this article. Don't worry, I'll discuss men's issues next month!

Sometimes, as women, we continually put ourselves at the bottom of the list when it comes to self-care. So what do you do when the teapot is empty and there is nothing left to pour? My answer is simple: consider your health.

Are you, or are the women in your life, individuals who spend so much time juggling a career and thinking of others that there is little time left to think of their own needs? Over the next few weeks, we may not be able to get into a doctor's office, but this is a prime opportunity to look at the calendar and start planning for future appointments.

Remember, when you support your health, or encourage the women in your life to support their health, you are still giving to those around you. Sometimes this is the best gift, as many illnesses can be detected in early stages with preventative care.

In 2020, the Plan covers the following at 100 percent when you use a PPO provider:

- Routine physical exam—one annually, age 22 and older
- Biometric screening—one annually, including:
 - Calculation of body mass index
 - Waist circumference measurement
 - Total blood cholesterol
 - Blood pressure check
 - Fasting blood sugar
- Routine pap smear test for females age 21 through 65—one annually

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) testing for women age 30 through 65—once every three years
- Osteoporosis screening limited to:
 - All postmenopausal women younger than age 65 who are at increased risk as recommended by the U.S. Preventive Service Task Force (USPSTF)
 - Women age 65 and older
- Breast cancer gene (BRCA) testing and genetic counseling for women at increased risk of breast or ovarian cancer as recommended by the USPSTF. Prior approval is required.
- Counseling for sexually transmitted infections
- Screening and counseling for human immunodeficiency virus for sexually active women
- Screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence

Mammogram health

Another important area that we sometimes forget, or ignore for various reasons, is scheduling a mammogram. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women.

The Plan covers a routine mammogram for women age 35 and older as follows:

- Age 35 through 39—one during this five-year period
- Age 40 and older—one every calendar year

So, what is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast used to screen for early signs of breast cancer. The image often makes it possible to detect suspicious areas that may not be felt.

Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies program

Are you an expectant mother feeling overwhelmed and needing some support? The Plan offers a voluntary program for all expectant mothers. Upon enrolling, you will receive educational information and support throughout your entire pregnancy and after you give birth. Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies will work together with you and your doctor to develop a plan of care. After delivery, you also will be screened for signs of postpartum depression.

If you are in the High Option Plan, you can contact 877-220-6252. If you are enrolled in the CDHP or Value Option Plan, you can contact 855-511-1893.

This is only a summary of some of the features of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Detailed information on the benefits for the NALC Health Benefit Plan can be found in the official 2020 brochure (RI 71-009). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations and exclusions set forth in the official brochure.