

Member Update

Summer 2022



Geisinger

Tick talk

Found a tick attached? Don't panic. Knowing how to remove a tick — and how to avoid a bite in the first place — can help you enjoy the great outdoors.

Some ticks can spread Lyme disease and other diseases, but not all do. Symptoms of Lyme disease include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Headache
- A “bull’s eye” rash spreading outward from the bite

Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics and goes away after a few weeks. However, sometimes fatigue and muscle aches can last up to six months. So be sure to properly remove a tick as soon as you find it.

Steps in removing a tick

1. Use clean tweezers. Don't use other methods, or the tick could burrow deeper.
2. Grasp the tick firmly close to your skin and pull upward in a steady motion.



3. Use soap and water or rubbing alcohol to clean the area where the tick was attached.
4. Dispose of the tick in a sealed bag or container. Or you can flush it down the toilet or dunk it in rubbing alcohol. But don't crush it — that increases the risk of infection with a tick-borne illness.

After removing the tick, watch for any signs of Lyme disease. Call your doctor if you notice any.

To prevent tick bites in the first place:

- Apply insect repellent to clothing and exposed skin before going outside
- Wear long pants and sleeves
- Stick to areas without high weeds and grass

When you come in, always check for ticks on yourself, your family and your pets. Because avoiding the bite altogether is always the best tac-tick.

Keep an eye on your EOB

Fraud costs our nation billions of dollars every year. Most healthcare providers are honest and only bill for the care they deliver, but some may add or exaggerate the medical treatment provided to get more money. Why does this matter to you? Because you may need treatment in the future that could be denied because fraudulent billing shows you already received it.

Carefully review the explanation of benefits (EOB) mailed to you after you've been treated. Does the billing make sense? Are there charges for something you know was not part of your treatment? If so, contact the Special Investigations Unit at 800-292-1627 or email fa@thehealthplan.com to report the fraud.



Know where to go for care

Getting the right care in the right place protects you physically and financially. But which is the best place to go when you need medical attention?

Your main choices are primary care, urgent care and emergency care. Keep in mind that emergency care not only comes with a

pricey copay, but drives up healthcare costs for everyone. So use this helpful chart to decide what type of care you need — and only use the ER for life-threatening conditions.

To find an urgent care location near you, visit go.geisinger.org/urgentcare.

Where to go	Why to go
Day-to-day care: Your first stop should be your primary care physician (PCP), who oversees your health needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asthma • Cold or flu • Depression • Headache • High blood pressure • Sinus infection • Skin rash or allergies • Stomach problems • Urinary tract infection
If the doctor isn't in: In-network convenient care and urgent care facilities have lower copays than the ER, don't require appointments and are open later.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea • Eye irritation • Fever • Minor broken bone • Muscle strain • Skin rash • Stitches • Vomiting
If care can't wait: Call 911 or go to the nearest ER for treatment of life-threatening issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chest pain • Difficulty breathing • Fainting • Poisoning • Serious head, neck or back injury • Stroke • Sudden, severe pain • Uncontrolled bleeding

Wellness corner

More than 1 in 3 people have prediabetes, but most don't know they have it. Could you be one of them? This condition happens when your blood sugar is higher than normal but it's not (yet) high enough for a diabetes diagnosis.

The good news: You can often reverse prediabetes if it's caught early. How? By staying up to date on preventive screenings, developing a treatment plan with your doctor and making healthy lifestyle changes. An easy one is joining our diabetes prevention

program, Lifestyle Reboot. And check out our diabetes self-management program, Live Your Best Life with Diabetes. To learn more, call 866-415-7138 or register online at events.geisinger.org.

Learn how to improve your health with Geisinger's health and wellness team. Sign up for wellness challenges, classes, webinars and a monthly wellness update email at go.geisinger.org/wellnesscalendar.

How do I talk to my kids about tragedies?

Recent tragedies, such as mass shootings, can have a big impact on our children. Kids may have questions and feel anxious or fearful. It can be uncomfortable to talk about these events with young ones, but it's important to address them. Tawnya Meadows, PhD, Geisinger director of pediatric primary care behavioral health, offers tips to help parents get these conversations started.

Reduce anxiety and stress.

- Limit media exposure and don't watch coverage 24/7.
- Be mindful of the words you choose in talking about these events. Try not to show frustration or hate. Children pick up on our moods and overhear conversations that can make anxiety and negative feelings worse.

Make time to discuss your child's feelings on their level.

For elementary or middle school children, you could have a conversation while coloring, playing catch or kicking a soccer ball. This can help children feel relaxed and able to express their emotions.

High-schoolers, who are more aware of tragic events, may have conversations with their friends to find comfort and understanding. Ask them to be mindful of others when talking in public. And stress that if they see something that looks suspicious, they should say something.

Be a good listener.

Find out what your child knows about the subject and their feelings on it. Don't have these conversations right before bedtime, though, as it could cause kids to have trouble sleeping.

Be reassuring.

Let your child know that they're safe and that in general, schools and public places are safe. Talk about the security measures in your child's school. Remind them about the adults who are around to protect them.



There's no easy way to discuss tragedies with children. But listening to their feelings and understanding their concerns can go a long way toward helping reassure your children and making them feel safe. Dr. Meadows advises, "Teach your children to choose kindness and notice the kindness in others."

Healthcare providers from A to Z

Wondering what someone's role is in your care? A string of letters after their name on an ID badge doesn't always make it clear. So here's a crash course in common healthcare credentials.

MD is a doctor of medicine. An MD focuses on diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The training includes four years of medical school, then three to seven years in a residency program. Some doctors may also continue specialty training in a fellowship program.

DO is a doctor of osteopathic medicine. A DO also focuses on diagnosis and treatment. But sometimes, instead of treating symptoms with medication, they use a more hands-on approach by moving, stretching and putting mild pressure on muscles and joints to treat and prevent pain and illness. A DO goes through the same training as an MD, but attends a different type of medical school.

CRNP is a certified registered nurse practitioner — a registered nurse who has specialized education and training in clinical practice. They can diagnose illnesses and prescribe medications. A CRNP (sometimes called an NP) has a master's degree, and may also complete a PhD program or a doctor of nursing practice (DNP) program.

PA is a physician assistant. They are nationally certified, state licensed providers trained to assess, diagnose and treat patients. They can also prescribe medications. Most PA programs require at least two years of college (and some require a bachelor's degree) before applying to PA school, which takes about three years to complete. And many require prior healthcare experience such as EMT or paramedic work.

RN is a registered nurse. These nurses assess patients, record medical history and symptoms, give medications, draw blood, start IVs and do physical exams, among many other duties. An RN must have at least an associate degree, but may also hold a bachelor's or master's degree.



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Speak your mind!

Tell us what newsletter topics you love (and don't) so we can give you more of what you want. Scan the QR code or visit go.geisinger.org/commercialsurvey to take our quick survey. It's only three questions and takes about two minutes. Thanks!



We ask because we care

If you've started seeing a new Geisinger doctor recently, you may have noticed that we added questions about sexual orientation and gender identity to our intake process. We also ask your preferred name during registration.

This information is crucial — because accepting and understanding each patient is the basis of quality care. Knowing each person's sexual orientation and gender identity helps us deliver appropriate health services and culturally sensitive care to everyone.



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