

Making **HEALTHY LIVING** Easy

Winter 2011 Member Newsletter

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**Disponible
en español**

Holiday Safety

Each year fires during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 people. Some of these tragedies can be avoided by following some simple steps listed below.

Holiday Trees

- **Selecting a Live Tree:** Needles should be green and hard to pull off, the trunk should be sticky. Trees that have been pre-cut for a long time are a fire hazard.
- **Care of your Tree:** Do not place your tree near a heat source such as a fireplace, vent, radiator, etc. The heat will make the tree dry out quicker. Do not smoke near your tree. Keep your stand filled with water the entire time your tree is up. Do not leave your tree up for more than two weeks.

Holiday Lights

- **Maintain Your Holiday Lights:** Check your lights every year for worn wires, missing plastic coating, broken or cracked bulb sockets. Use only approved lighting. Do not use indoor lights outside.
- **Do Not Overload Outlets:** Do not link more than three sets of lights unless directions say that it can be done. Connect lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord in. Check your wires periodically to make sure they are not hot. The wires will be warm, but they should not be hot.
- **Never Leave Holiday Lights Unattended:** If you leave the house, turn your lights off.

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Holiday Safety

Holiday Decorations

- **Use only Nonflammable Decorations:** Look for nonflammable or flame retardant decorations. Keep away from heat sources. If you choose an artificial tree, make sure that it is flame-retardant.
- **Never Put Wrapping Paper in or on a Fireplace:** If you have a fireplace please do not decorate the front of the fireplace with wrapping paper, since this can be a fire hazard.

Candle Care

- **Avoid Using Lit Candles:** If you choose to use them, make sure they are in stable holders that can not easily be knocked down. Never leave

the house with candles burning. Keep away from curtains and drafts.

- **Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree:** Do not use lit candles anywhere near your tree.

Make sure that you have working smoke detectors on every level of your home. Check your batteries monthly. Have an escape plan in case there is a fire and practice it regularly. Have a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Shopping on a Budget

When you are on a tight budget, holiday shopping can be stressful. You can shop on a shoestring budget and not break the bank. Try using these helpful tips:

- **Make it:** Make cookies, cakes, put the ingredients together in a jar but don't bake them; use your crafting skills, take a family picture and put it in a nice frame.
- **Give coupons for something you can do:** Make a coupon to help with housework, a massage, a movie in January, together time, activities with the kids.
- **Shop discount stores:** Stores like Big Lots, Wal-Mart and Ross will give you more for less.
- **Trim down your list:** You may want to give everybody a gift, but you cannot afford to. People will understand. Draw names as a family or with friends.
- **Get creative:** Throw a party and have everyone bring a dish. Decide on a way to celebrate that does not require spending money that you don't have.
- **Re-gift:** If you have something unused that will benefit another, give it to them. They will be happy to get it. (Do not give it to the person who gave it to you.)
- **Shop late:** The best sales are usually after the holiday season is over. Sometimes it pays to wait.

Gift giving should be fun. Let's not forget the reason for the season.



WINTER FAMILY FUN

There's no reason why kids can't get exercise in the winter. Just bundle them up with warm coats, gloves, boots, and hats and send them outside! (If you don't have snow boots, wrap little kids feet with plastic bags so they stay dry under their shoes). Here are some fun suggestions to keep your kids active during the winter:

With Snow

- **Headless Snow Man:** everyone builds a snowman without a head. Use your head as the top of the snowman and snap photos of each family member standing behind the headless snowman.
- **Snow Ball Throwing Contest:** fill spray bottles with water and food coloring and create your own bull's-eye in the snow.
- **Snow Treasure Island Hunt:** pack a cooler with treats and hide in the snow. Then give clues (either with pictures or words) and place in plastic bags before hiding in the snow. Begin the hunt by handing the players their first clue.
- **Snow Ball Tag**

Without Snow:

- **Ice Sculptures:** find different shaped containers, add water and food coloring. Freeze and bring outside to build your ice sculpture!
- **Foot Volleyball** (can do inside or outside): tie a string about 1 foot from the ground. Divide into teams and play crab style (stomach up, leaning on hands and feet). Kick a blown up balloon or large ball back and forth between teams and keep score.

Spending time outside can benefit children in more than one way. Fresh air can help prevent a cold. The sunlight can help increase vitamin D levels and lower seasonal depression. Plus, regular exercise helps kids stay at a healthy weight, helps kids focus better in school, and increases creativity! Parents don't forget to join them because it helps you too and your family will love it!

www.familyfun.go.com

HOLIDAY CLOSURES & SCHEDULING TRANSPORTATION

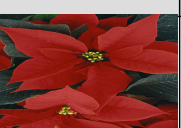
In observance of the Christmas Holiday, Virginia Premier offices will be closed on Friday, December 23 and Monday, December 26. We will reopen on Tuesday December 27. In observance of the New Years' Holiday, our offices will close at noon on Friday December 30 and will remain closed on Monday January 2, 2012. Our offices will reopen on Tuesday January 3, 2012.

Please note, that you are now able to schedule your transportation requests through January 5, 2012.

When calling to schedule transportation, please remember that you will be asked to provide the Member Services Representative with the following information: your Member Identification number, appointment date and time, the complete pick-up and delivery address, the name of the facility or physician that you are scheduled to meet with, and the phone number for the facility or physician's office.

Please refer to the calendar below for scheduling dates through January 5, 2012

DECEMBER 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!			1 Scheduling for 12/06/11	2 Scheduling for 12/07/11	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Scheduling for 12/08/11	Scheduling for 12/09/11	Scheduling for 12/12/11	Scheduling for 12/13/11	Scheduling for 12/14/11	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Scheduling for 12/15/11	Scheduling for 12/16/11	Scheduling for 12/19/11	Scheduling for 12/20/11	Scheduling for 12/21/11	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Scheduling for 12/22/11	Scheduling for 12/23/11	Scheduling for 12/26/11 Scheduling for 12/27/11	Scheduling for 12/28/11 Scheduling for 12/29/11	OFFICE CLOSED	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	OFFICE CLOSED	Scheduling for 12/30/11	Scheduling for 1/02/12 Scheduling for 1/03/12	Scheduling for 1/04/12	Half Day! Scheduling for 1/05/12	

Si desea una copia en español, por favor llame al 1-800-727-7536 y oprima la opción numero 7. Avísele al representante que desea una copia del boletín de noticias en español. Gracias.

Say No to Lead!

Get your child tested for lead today!

Did you know?

Medicaid enrolled children are required to have a lead screening at 12 and 24 months! Please make sure you get your child's screening done before the age of two! Just a small amount of lead can hurt your child's growth and IQ!

How does lead make children sick?

Lead can damage many organs, especially the nervous system, brain and kidneys. It can interfere with normal brain development, causing reduced IQ, learning disabilities, behavior problems, reading problems, headaches, irritability, persistent tiredness or hyperactivity and constipation. ***This damage is permanent!*** At very high levels lead can cause seizures, coma and even death.

How do children get lead in their bodies?

- **Eating paint flakes** — Children can put things in their mouths that have paint flakes or paint dust on them.
- **Playing in dirt** — Some dirt may have lead in it.
- **Using water from old pipes** — This includes drinking, cooking with, or mixing baby formula with hot water.
- **Putting painted toys in their mouth** or playing on old playground equipment.

What can parents do?

The good news is that parents can help children be lead free!

1. Remove any known lead-based products from the home.
2. Be sure to keep children away from chipping paint.
3. If you rent a home or apartment, talk with your landlord about fixing peeling paint.
4. Keep your home clean and dust free.
5. Wash child's hands, bottles, pacifiers and toys frequently.
6. Ensure well balanced meals — Children with healthy diets absorb less lead.



IMMUNIZATIONS

You do the best you can to keep up with appointments. But everyone is human and it is possible to miss an immunization. If you find that your child is behind in a shot and you cannot get in to your child's pediatrician's office, there are other options. You can go to your area health department or call our member services department to see what clinics are available. The Health Department website is www.vdh.state.va.us.



How do I report a concern? VPHP COMPLIANCE HELP LINE

Your integrity counts. VPHP maintains a confidential compliance help line where you can report a compliance concern. Please call our help line at (800) 620-1438. The call is toll free, anonymous and available 24 hours/7days/365. Bilingual reps are available if needed. You can also contact the health plan directly by calling (800) 727-7536 ext. 5173 or 5245.

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**You are invited to attend the VPHP
Member Advisory Committee (MAC) Meeting**

This meeting is a way for you to tell us how you feel about Virginia Premier Health Plan and how we can better serve you.

First Quarter:

Discussion Topics: Cervical Cancer Awareness & Pregnancy Program

Tidewater	Jan 10th, 2012		11:00am
Neketa Knight	(800) 828-7989	Ext 5596	
Richmond	Feb 14th, 2012		11:00am
Sheila Cox	(800) 727-7536	Ext. 5395	
Roanoke	Mar 13th, 2012		11:30am
Penny Williams	(800) 727-7536	Ext. 5399	

Second Quarter:

Discussion Topics: Heart Health/Cholesterol & Nutrition

Tidewater	Apr 10th, 2012		11:00am
Francine Santiago	(800) 828-7989	Ext 5578	
Richmond	May 16th, 2012		11:00am
Penny Williams	(800) 727-7536	Ext. 5399	
Roanoke	Jun 12th, 2012		11:30am
Sheila Cox	(800) 727-7536	Ext. 5395	

Third Quarter:

Discussion Topics Immunization's/Lead Screening & Physical Activity

Tidewater	Jul 10th, 2012		11:00am
Neketa Knight	(800) 828-7989	Ext 5596	
Richmond	Aug 15th, 2012		11:00am
Sheila Cox	(800) 727-7536	Ext. 5395	
Roanoke	Sept 18th, 2012		11:30am
Penny Williams	(800) 727-7536	Ext. 5399	

Fourth Quarter:

Discussion Topics: Diabetes & Eye Exams

Tidewater	Oct 9th, 2012		11:00am
Francine Santiago	(800) 828-7989	Ext 5578	
Richmond	Nov 13th, 2012		11:00am
Penny Williams	(800) 727-7536	Ext. 5399	
Roanoke	Dec 4th, 2012		11:30am
Sheila Cox	(800) 727-7536	Ext. 5395	



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Heart Healthy Cooking

The holiday season is upon us and that means you may be looking forward to consuming lots of sweets and starches. Here are some heart healthy tips to keep in mind when you are cooking your favorite foods with friends and family.

- Use oils that are higher in “good fat.” For example: vegetable oil, canola oil, olive oil and sunflower oil. These are your monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. They are low in saturated fat.
- Limit adding extra salt to your foods. Most foods contain enough sodium.
- Use spices, herbs, garlic or lemon juice to season your foods. Too much salt intake can lead to high blood pressure.
- People who have high blood pressure, diabetes and/or chronic kidney disease should decrease their sodium intake by 1500 mg a day.
- Try cooking some heart healthy fish such as salmon and mackerel.
- Bake, roast, broil or grill your chicken instead of fry.
- Cook Canadian bacon or lean ham as a substitute for bacon.
- If you love potatoes, choose sweet potatoes over the others. They are high in fiber, low in sodium, a good source of protein and more!

Take the time to enjoy your meals and eat the sweets and starches in moderation. Remember, portion control is key!

