

# EMBRACE

Winter 2024

**Eight Questions to  
Ask at Your Annual  
Wellness Visit**

**Express Scripts  
and Our New  
Find-a-Pharmacy Tool**

**How to Prevent  
Childhood Obesity**



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# EMBRACE

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AvMed, one of Florida's oldest and largest not-for-profit health plans, provides affordable, quality health benefits throughout the state.

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Email us at **EMBRACE@AvMed.org** with your story and photo or share it on Facebook – tag AvMed and use the hashtag **#JoinTheWELLfluent**. You could be featured in an upcoming issue of the magazine.

## Dear Valued Member:



**H**ope your new year is off to a great start! This year, our mission remains the same: to help you live healthier. We will continue to go beyond the expected to encourage better health and an enhanced Member experience.

In this edition of EMBRACE, we include information about making your and your family's health a top priority this year, like what questions to ask at your annual wellness visit and how to prevent childhood obesity.

As a reminder, in the next few weeks, you may receive a survey in the mail from the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) about AvMed. We value your opinion and appreciate your feedback, as this tool plays an important role in your health care and ensures we continue delivering quality services.

We're proud to be a part of this community for over 50 years. As we continue through the year, I hope we inspire you to live a healthier, happier life. Thank you for the privilege of serving you and your family.

We look forward to another great year in 2024!

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James M. Repp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**James M. Repp**

President, AvMed

**[EMBRACE@AvMed.org](mailto:EMBRACE@AvMed.org)**

### Questions About AvMed Coverage or Benefits?

Contact AvMed's Member Engagement Center:  
Please call the number listed on your AvMed Member ID Card  
(TTY 711) Monday-Friday, 8 am-8 pm; Saturday, 9 am-1 pm.  
Hours may vary according to your policy.

# Eight Questions to Ask at Your Annual Wellness Visit



Your annual wellness visit shouldn't be another item on your to-do list. This regular checkup presents a wonderful opportunity to learn about your risk factors for many chronic diseases and create a personalized prevention plan. And, hopefully, you'll go home with a new appreciation for healthy habits.

Here are eight key questions to ask at your next annual wellness visit:

## 1. Is my blood pressure in the healthy range?

Elevated blood pressure is one of the first signs of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and kidney disease, so it's good to know where your numbers fall on the spectrum. If you're close to the borderline, your doctor might recommend self-monitoring, lifestyle changes, or even medication.

Lifestyle changes may include the following:

- Eat a well-balanced, lower-salt diet
- Limit alcohol
- Stay physically active
- Don't smoke
- Keep up with any medications you've been prescribed

## 2. Am I at a healthy weight for my age?

Discussing your current weight and body mass index (BMI) gives your Provider an entry point to talk about the importance of exercising and a healthy diet. BMI numbers aren't 100% accurate for indicating how healthy you are, but knowing your BMI is a useful tool when gauging your overall health.

## 3. Is there anything in my family health history that's a concern?

Several diseases and chronic conditions are passed on via familial genes. With this information, your doctor can talk to you about specific preventive measures and/or tests that can help you avoid the same fate. Be sure to bring up any new illnesses diagnosed in your family since your last visit.

## 4. What health problems should be on my radar?

Ideally, your doctor will bring up common health issues for your age as part of the checkup, but you should if they don't. This question aims to open a dialogue about your lifestyle and health habits and to put wellness issues on your radar.

## 5. Am I due for any health screenings or medical tests?

An annual wellness visit is often the way to find out whether you should schedule any of the following tests:

- Bone mineral density (osteoporosis) test
- Colonoscopy
- Diabetes screening
- Kidney screening
- Liver screening
- Mammogram

Don't leave your appointment without asking about these tests, and ask your provider if there are any others you should schedule.

## 6. Do I need to tweak any of my daily habits?

If your doctor hasn't asked about how often you drink alcohol or what kind of daily stress you're under, take a deep breath and bring up these sensitive issues yourself. Regarding stress management, your doctor can share healthy ways to manage life's challenges, and excessive alcohol consumption is linked with chronic diseases and health issues, including:

- Cancer
- Depression
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Liver disease

## 7. Are my medications still necessary?

Remind your doctor about all your prescriptions, their dosages, and any supplements or over-the-counter medications you take regularly. Health conditions can improve, and bodies can change, which may mean it's time to take a second look at your medicines.

## 8. Is this normal?

The human body can sometimes seem mysterious, and just about everyone has some embarrassing body issue they're curious or concerned about. Ask your doctor, and they will be able to provide treatment options, even for those issues you may have difficulty discussing.

# Wellness Visits: THANK YOU FOR GETTING YOUR FLU SHOT!



Getting the flu vaccine is the first and most important thing you can do to protect against the flu, and if you've already had your flu shot, we applaud you for embracing better health. If you haven't, it's still not too late!

The flu shot is the best protection against the flu for everyone, even pregnant women, and vaccination while pregnant is the best way to protect women and their babies under six months old from the flu. Ask your doctor or visit an AvMed Participating Pharmacy for your flu shot.

## Help Us Do Even Better!

Our top priority is to continuously improve your Member experience and benefits to help you stay healthy. In the next few weeks, you may receive an independent survey in the mail from the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) program. By filling out this survey, we can learn more about your AvMed experience to improve our services and meet your needs. This tool plays an important role in your healthcare and ensures we continue delivering quality services and the best healthcare experience possible. **We value your opinion. If you receive a letter or call about a survey, we kindly ask that you take a few minutes to participate.**

# Why You Should Care About Heart Health

Although heart disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S. according to the American Heart Association, it's not a normal part of aging. Even if it runs in your family, heart disease isn't inevitable. You can greatly reduce your risk by maintaining a healthy weight and maintaining your cholesterol and blood pressure at normal levels. The best way to do that is by committing to a healthy lifestyle and keeping up with annual wellness visits.

## Five things you can do to reduce your risk of heart disease:

**1. Stay active.** Take a fitness class, walk, stretch, do yoga, or ride a bike—as little

as 10 minutes a day of physical activity can deliver some health benefits.

**2. Choose healthy foods.** Good nutrition helps keep critical risk factors like cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, and weight in check, and you'll feel better.

**3. Stop smoking.** The toxic chemicals in cigarettes negatively impact the functionality of your heart and blood vessels, which leads to a build-up of plaque in your heart arteries.

**4. Limit alcohol:** Having more than two drinks per day for men and one per day for women can increase your risk of high blood pressure and obesity, which can raise your risk of heart disease.

**5. Relax.** Managing stress in a healthy way is essential to your mental and heart health.



Talk to your doctor about your risk factors and learn more at [Heart Disease | CDC.gov](https://www.heartdisease.gov).

## Express Scripts and Our New Find-a-Pharmacy Tool

AvMed continuously looks for ways to improve our Members' benefits, services, and cost efficiencies. As a result of these efforts, we have made the strategic decision to change our pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) from CVS Caremark to Express Scripts®. We're partnering with Express Scripts to ensure you can get more from your pharmacy benefits and access the clinical expertise needed to improve and maintain your health and well-being. All Members should have received a new Member ID Card as of **January 1, 2024**.

AvMed also recently launched our new **Find-a-Pharmacy** tool. On this webpage, you can review a benefits overview and find information about in-network pharmacies and medication pricing. If you need additional information or

have questions, contact the Member Engagement Team by calling the number listed on your Member ID Card.





## Preventive Corner

# How to Prevent Childhood Obesity

One out of every five children in this country is obese. Childhood obesity occurs when a child has significantly higher than average weight for their age and height. It's important to know what parents can do to prevent this before it's too late. Children aged 3-17 should have an annual visit with their doctor, including a BMI percentile, counseling for nutrition, and physical activity. If weight is a struggle for the whole family, everyone should take steps to create a change.

- **Do as I do, not as I say.** Good parenting involves setting a good example, especially regarding eating and exercise habits. If your child sees you enjoying exercise or eating nutritious foods, they are more likely to want to join you.
- **What's up, doc?** It's essential to take your children to the doctor once a year for well-child checkups. Their height, weight, and BMI (body mass index) will be measured so you can easily track changes from year to year and get advice from your pediatrician.
- **Think healthy.** Focusing on general health improvements and not just weight loss is best. Promote an overall healthy lifestyle for you and your family.
- **Patience is a virtue.** Sometimes, children can grow out of being overweight, and you may not see



changes overnight. An overall patient outlook will also soften any negative feelings your child may be experiencing as a result of being overweight.

- **Pencil it in.** Keep your family's meals on a schedule, including snacks. Ensure your fridge and pantry are stocked with nutritious food options for everyone. The more routine eating a well-rounded diet feels, the more it will become a lasting habit.
- **The family that eats together...** Include the whole family in nutritious eating and exercising. Treating overweight children differently can contribute to unhealthy habits that result from low self-esteem. Plan fun physical activities for everyone, like swimming or group bike rides.

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**Important Contact Information**

AvMed's Member Engagement Center\*:  
 Please call the number listed on your AvMed Member ID Card (TTY 711), Monday–Friday, 8 am–8 pm; Saturday, 9 am–1 pm.  
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- AvMed Nurse On Call: **1-888-866-5432** (TTY 711) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Fraud and Abuse Hotline: **1-877-286-3889**
- AvMed website: **AvMed.org**
- AvMed Facebook  **www.Facebook.com/AvMedHealth**



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*Si usted tiene necesidades específicas relacionadas con el idioma, comuníquese con el Centro de Atención para Afiliados de AvMed en el número que aparece en su tarjeta de afiliado de AvMed.*

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<sup>1</sup> Add a spouse/domestic partner to a primary membership for additional monthly fees. Spouses/domestic partners must be 18 years or older. Fees may vary based on fitness center selection.  
<sup>2</sup> Monthly fees are subject to applicable taxes.  
<sup>3</sup> Costs for premium exercise studios exceed \$28/mo. and an enrollment fee will apply for each premium location selected, plus applicable taxes. Fees vary based on premium fitness studios selected.  
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