



## Member News ————— 2

- American Heart Month Was Observed in February
- Mental Health Resources
- How To Protect Yourself From RSV
- Lower Back Pain Awareness
- What Can I Do To Reduce My Risk of Cervical Cancer?
- Sentara High Risk Breast Program
- Help Direct the Healthcare Conversation



## Pharmacy Changes ————— 9

- Pharmacy Changes Effective April 1, 2023





## Member News

# American Heart Month Was Observed in February

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is the leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke which are both leading causes of death in the United States. Blood pressure is the pressure of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries which carry blood from your heart to other parts of your body. Your blood pressure fluctuates throughout the day but can damage your heart if stays high for a long time.

Blood pressure is measured using two numbers. The first number is systolic pressure (measures the pressure when your heart beats) and the second number is diastolic pressure (measures the pressure when heart rests between beats). A normal blood pressure is less than 120/80mmHg. The higher your blood pressure levels, the greater your risk for health problems such as heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. Your doctor can diagnose high blood pressure and make treatment plans if necessary.

### You can help prevent heart disease by:

- choosing healthy habits
- keeping a healthy weight
- getting regular physical activity
- avoiding tobacco use



### Take charge of your medical conditions by:

- checking your cholesterol
- controlling your blood pressure
- managing your diabetes
- taking your medications as directed
- working with your healthcare team

Source:  
Prevent Heart Disease | [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/prevention.htm). (2023, March 21). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/prevention.htm>





## Member News

# Mental Health Resources

If you feel down or you're overwhelmed, MDLIVE® licensed therapists and board-certified psychiatrists are ready to help. Schedule an appointment at a time that works best for you, including evenings and holidays, from the comfort of home.

At the first sign of a sniffle or stress, talk to an MDLIVE doctor in minutes. Less costly than urgent care clinics or the ER, MDLIVE is dedicated to helping you get better faster while avoiding long waits and waiting rooms filled with sick people. Visit [optimahealth.com/MDLIVE](https://optimahealth.com/MDLIVE) to get started.

Optima Health also has a mental health resource page to help you and your loved one's view articles, videos, webinars, and more. Find ways to positively affect your mental health by focusing on your emotional well-being and personal growth, as well as building resilience and understanding the impact of viruses on your overall health [here](#).





## Member News

# How To Protect Yourself From RSV

Optima Health encourages you to protect yourself from the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). RSV is similar to a cold but can be more severe. It is commonly diagnosed in young children and adults. There has been an increase in RSV cases—which has led to more emergency department visits and longer wait times.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), you should protect yourself and know the symptoms of RSV.

### Prevention:

- cover your mouth when you cough
- wash your hands frequently
- avoid close contact with others
- clean high touch surfaces often



### Symptoms:

RSV usually goes away on its own, but symptoms can last for at least a week or more and consist of the following:

- decrease in appetite
- coughing
- sneezing
- fever
- wheezing
- runny nose

Optima Health suggests that you get your flu and COVID-19 vaccines because both can reduce the likelihood of contracting RSV. Please speak with your primary care provider regarding questions about your care. To learn more about the CDC's reports and recommendations for RSV, visit [cdc.gov/rsv](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv).





## Member News

# Lower Back Pain Awareness

Did you know that about 80% of the population suffers from lower back pain at some point in their lives, with the cause often being unknown? Patients who participate in conservative care that includes over-the-counter pain meds, prescription muscle relaxants, and physical therapy showed marked improvement over four to six weeks. In most cases, imaging studies are not typically effective in treating strained muscles and ligaments and expose the patient to unnecessary radiation and increased out-of-pocket costs.

X-rays only show bones and can help diagnose:

- broken bones or fractures
- changes due to aging
- changes in the alignment of the spine



**In many cases, lower back pain gets better on its own.**

Collaborate with your provider to see what the best course of treatment is for you. If you have more questions or would like additional information, visit [optimahealth.com/members/health-and-wellness/health-conditions/back-pain-prevention](https://www.optimahealth.com/members/health-and-wellness/health-conditions/back-pain-prevention).

Sources:

Branch, N. S. C. a. O. (2023, March 3). Back Pain. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. <https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/back-pain>

Lower Back Pain: What Could It Be? (2022, June 9). Johns Hopkins Medicine.

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/back-pain/lower-back-pain-what-could-it-be>



However, if it doesn't, the following guidelines are helpful for when to seek professional help:

- if the pain lasts four weeks or longer
- if the pain keeps getting worse as time goes by
- if you are experiencing other symptoms, such as fever, major weight loss or weight gain, loss of function or weakness in extremities, bladder problems, etc.



## Member News

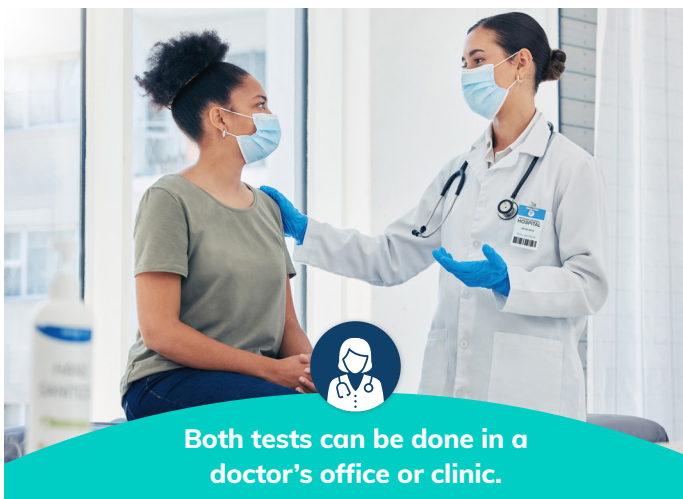
## What Can I Do To Reduce My Risk of Cervical Cancer?

The most important thing you can do to help prevent cervical cancer is to get vaccinated early and have regular screening tests.

### Screening Tests

Two screening tests can help prevent cervical cancer or find it early:

1. The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for precancers, cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately.
2. The HPV test looks for the virus (human papillomavirus) that can cause these cell changes.



Both tests can be done in a doctor's office or clinic.

### HPV VACCINE



The HPV vaccine protects against the types of HPV that most often cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers.

- HPV vaccination is recommended for preteens aged 11 to 12 years but can be given starting at age 9.
- HPV vaccine is also recommended for everyone through age 26 years if they are not vaccinated already.
- HPV vaccination is not recommended for everyone older than age 26 years. However, some adults age 27 through 45 years who are not already vaccinated may decide to get the HPV vaccine after speaking with their doctor about their risk for new HPV infections and possible benefits of vaccination. HPV vaccination in this age range provides less benefit, as more people have already been exposed to HPV.

If vaccination is started before age 15, a two-dose schedule is recommended, with the doses given 6 to 12 months apart. For people who start the series after their 15th birthday, the vaccine is given in a series of three shots.

HPV vaccination prevents new HPV infections but does not treat existing infections or diseases. This is why the HPV vaccine works best when given before any exposure to HPV. You should get screened for cervical cancer regularly, even if you received an HPV vaccine.

Source:

What Can I Do to Reduce My Risk of Cervical Cancer? | CDC. (n.d.). [https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic\\_info/prevention.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info/prevention.htm)



## Member News

## Sentara High Risk Breast Program

Sentara Medical Group recently launched a High Risk Breast Program in Hampton Roads. This program is aimed at identifying women who may be at greater risk for developing breast cancer by assessing their individual risk factors and creating a personalized surveillance plan. Patients are identified as high risk during their mammograms or can be referred by their primary care provider. Patients can also refer themselves to the program. Locations include offices at Port Warwick, Sentara Brock Cancer Center, and Sentara Princess Anne Hospital. For more information, visit [sentara.com/HighRiskBreast](https://sentara.com/HighRiskBreast) or call 757-624-0194 to speak with the High Risk Nurse Navigator.





## Member News

# Help Direct the Healthcare Conversation

Every year, SPH Analytics mails out a survey to a random selection of Optima Health members. The survey is called the **Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS<sup>®1</sup>) survey**. This survey asks members questions about the care and services received, such as the communication skills of the doctors that treat you and how soon you can see a doctor of your choice. The survey also asks how well Optima Health meets your needs.

It is important that we receive your completed survey. Based on your responses in the survey, we will try to change or improve our processes in order to meet your needs. Again, if you receive a survey by mail, please submit your feedback. We thank you in advance for your participation.

<sup>1</sup> CAHPS is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)







## Pharmacy News

# Pharmacy Changes Effective April 1, 2023

For groups with pharmacy benefits administered by Optima Health, the pharmacy changes are available online.

Download a printable listing of pharmacy changes [here](#) effective April 1, 2023.



## Healthcare at Your Fingertips

Download the **Optima Health Mobile App** today for instant access to your important plan information and questions, including:

- commonly asked questions and answers
- common forms and documents
- contact information
- tools to find doctors and facilities
- claims and authorizations
- wellness tools
- member ID card
- schedule virtual consults
- calculate costs for treatments and services
- account access for your HSA or HRA<sup>1</sup>
- receive important preventive care notifications
- and more!

Whether you're accessing your plan information from the mobile app, online from a computer, or mobile web from a tablet, Optima Health digital solutions provide a cohesive experience across all platforms.



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**Optima Health Mobile  
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and Google Play**



To learn more about the **Optima Health Mobile App**, visit [optimahealth.com/members/features/get-the-optima-health-mobile-app](https://optimahealth.com/members/features/get-the-optima-health-mobile-app)

<sup>1</sup>Applies to members with Health SavingsAccount (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) plans.