

Spring 2009

Women's Health Connection

A Grand Valley Health Plan Publication

Serving the Grand Rapids Community Since 1982

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Shape Up for Summer!



Winter is a time where many Michiganders eat more, move less, and pack on a few unwanted pounds. Many people depend on Spring time to loose the weight before summer. If this sounds like you, then you may be wondering where to begin and how to lose weight successfully. A great way to begin is by taking Grand Valley Health Plan's Health Risk Assessment (HRA). The HRA is available to members 18 and older at no charge. You can either take it online at www.gvhp.com or call a Customer Service Representative at (616) 949-2410 and request a hard copy.

The HRA asks questions about your lifestyle choices and health status. You will need to schedule an appointment at your Family Health Center to complete your biometric testing, which includes height, weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol.

After completing GVHP's HRA, you will receive a confidential report that answers the questions, "How healthy am I?" and "How can I improve my overall health?" The following areas are addressed:

- Coronary & Cancer Risk
- Nutrition & Fitness
- Stress & Substance Use
- Safety & Health Follow Up

Once you have received your report, schedule an appointment to meet with your GVHP Provider. Together you can create a health care plan to help you meet your goals and reduce any risk factors. Part of your plan

may include working one-on-one with a GVHP Health Coach. A Health Coach can help you with behavioral lifestyle changes. Our Health Coaches have been very successful in helping members lose weight, reduce stress, quit smoking, control high blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and much more.

We encourage all of our adult members to take advantage of this excellent wellness tool. *Remember, summer is coming!*

GVHP Shape up steps:

1. Fill out a Health Risk Assessment Questionnaire.
2. Complete your biometric testing.
3. Look forward to receiving your results in the mail.
4. Follow up with your GVHP Provider.

Why go to the doctor when you are not sick?

Heart disease and cancer are the two leading causes of death in women in the United States. Yet most of us don't get the tests we need to prevent these conditions from happening.

Starting at age 20, all women should complete a Health Risk Assessment every 5 years. Your GVHP Provider uses this information to help determine if you are at risk for heart disease, cancer, and other health related issues. Even if you are perfectly healthy, now experts suggest the following to help keep you well.

- Don't smoke. Exercise regularly. Eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Know your body mass index (BMI) and maintain a healthy weight.
- Know your blood pressure and keep it under control. Women should have their blood pressure checked at least every 2 years.
- Know your cholesterol and triglyceride levels and keep them under control. Women should have their cholesterol screened every 5 years.
- Starting at age 45 women need to be screened for diabetes at least every 3 years.
- Get screened for cancer. Women should be screened for cervical cancer every 1-3 years.

Starting at age 40, women should be screened for breast cancer every 1-2 years, and every year at age 50. Age 50 is also when women need to be screened for colorectal cancer.

These are all minimum guidelines. Your GVHP Provider may recommend screening more frequently based on your health risk, including family history. At GVHP we're here to help you stay healthy.

GVHP's Women's Wellness Center

A unique service for GVHP Members is the Women's Wellness Center. We understand that it may be difficult for women to access preventative care during normal business hours. That's why the **Women's Wellness Center is open for Saturday appointments.**

The Women's Wellness Center is staffed exclusively by female practitioners. Services that are available include pap-smears, clinical breast examinations, pelvic examinations, lymph node examinations, and other pertinent physical exams as determined by your GVHP Practitioner. Mammography and cholesterol screenings are also available when needed. Women must be under 50 years of age and meet certain criteria in order to be referred. *Call your health center today to schedule an appointment.*



Barbara Duchemin
B.S., P.A.-C.—Certified



Susanne Pettigrew
B.S., P.A.-C.—Certified



Cheryl Schmitt
B.S., P.A.-C.—Certified



Sceone Sloan
B.S., PA-C. Certified

“I lost 122 pounds in 4.5 months!”



Don — GVHP Wyoming Member

Don has struggled with his weight for over 20 years. He has a love for peanuts, peanut butter, pizza, and anything salty. He had tried every diet out there with no success. Shortly after joining Grand Valley Health Plan, he was informed that he was pre-diabetic. Despite the risks, Don wasn't ready to commit to changing his lifestyle at that time.

On October 30, 2008, Don realized that it was time to get serious about his health. His condition had progressed into diabetes and he was concerned about the number of medications he was required to take. To complicate matters, Don's blood pressure had skyrocketed and he weighed more than he ever had before.

Don went to his Grand Valley Family Health Center for help. His provider referred him to Wendy Brookhouse and Lisa Verschueren, two GVHP Health Coaches. Wendy and Lisa are both Registered Dietitians who helped Don set realistic goals, and met with him weekly to track his progress. With their assistance and encouragement, Don began to see the pounds drop.

A regular exercise regimen was not in the cards for Don, so Wendy and Lisa suggested some creative ways to reduce calories from his diet. “Most importantly,” says Don, “I kept a food journal. I had no idea how much I was eating until I started writing it down”.

Don was also referred to the L.E.A.R.N. Program by his Health Coaches. He is still enrolled and continues to go to class each week. “I've learned a lot in this program. Education is half the battle,” says Don.

L.E.A.R.N. Program

L.E.A.R.N. stands for Lifestyle, Exercise, Attitudes, Relationships, and Nutrition. The L.E.A.R.N. Program teaches essential skills necessary to live and maintain a healthy body weight amid the pressure of today's “toxic” environment of high-fat, high-calorie foods, and often-unrealistic body image ideals.

In the L.E.A.R.N. Program, participants are taught to examine their own behaviors and attitudes toward food. The program teaches how habits are formed, and more importantly, how to incorporate healthier habits into daily life. The L.E.A.R.N. Program also provides key weight management principles and helps program participants apply them in the real world. L.E.A.R.N. is not another fad diet, rather it focuses on encouraging permanent lifestyle changes that result in lasting success.

Some of the strategies that Don acquired from working with GVHP Health Coaches and attending the LEARN Program, include:

- Keep a food journal
- Add more fruits and vegetables to your diet
- Find lower calorie alternatives for the foods you eat the most
- Weigh food portions to better control serving sizes
- Cut down on Carbohydrates
- Use food substitutes, such as non-fat cooking-spray instead of butter
- Limit dining in restaurants

Since beginning his lifestyle changes, Don has lost 122 pounds. His goal is to lose a total of 200 pounds by this summer. Don credits regular visits with his GVHP Health Coaches for encouragement and ideas for success of his lifestyle changes. He is looking forward to celebrating his success with an Alaskan Cruise vacation! When asked what advice he'd give others who are struggling with their weight, Don replied, “Don't get discouraged if you have a bad day or week. There's always tomorrow. Pick yourself up and start again”.

Congratulations Don!

For more information on GVHP's Health Coaches or programs offered, you can contact your Grand Valley Health Care Provider, call Customer Service at (616) 949-2410 or log onto www.gvhp.com.

What can a Registered Dietitian do for you?



Lisa is one of Grand Valley Health Plan's Registered Dietitian, also known as a GVHP Health Coach.

What do you think of when you hear the phrase “registered dietitian?” Is it calorie counting, food calculators and journals? Or maybe you think of diets for diseases like diabetes and heart disease? While a registered dietitian (RD) may be involved in all of these activities at some point. This is certainly not an inclusive list of the services an RD has to offer. See if you can identify with any of the women’s stories in this article, and you may find that seeing an RD may be just right for you!

Mary, a 44 year old mother of three, is finally ready to lose the “baby weight” that’s been around for years. But as she starts reading through magazines, newspapers and the Internet, she is confused by all the contradicting information. The constant influx of nutrition “breakthroughs” and fads in the media makes nutrition a tough topic to navigate on your own. An RD can help clear the waters when it comes to weight loss pills, supplements and fad diets. Dietitians are constantly researching new and improved nutrition facts, recommendations and can assist you in knowing what information to believe, and what you need to look past. All RD’s can help you learn how to make the healthiest choices possible within a healthy calorie level, and give you plenty of ways to work good nutrition into your lifestyle.

At 61 years old, Brenda is starting to think about taking a bigger role in her health. After all, if she doesn’t take care of herself, who will? She has had high cholesterol for the last decade but did not feel the need to make changes, until now. She started thinking about heart disease, diabetes

and cancer, and wanted to know what steps she should take to prevent these diseases. She especially wanted to reduce her cholesterol. Brenda met with a dietitian who was able to recommend strategies to help reduce her risks by modifying her diet and increasing her level of physical activity. She left feeling motivated, equipped, and ready to make changes.

As newlyweds, Mark and Jennifer are beginning to plan their future, which includes the pattering of little feet. Although she isn’t pregnant yet, Jennifer is itching to know all she could about proper nutrition for her future infant. Upon meeting with an RD, she was surprised to get information on her own nutrition before and during pregnancy, as well as recommendations for breastfeeding her new baby. She felt at ease knowing she was receiving reliable information from a health professional.

As these examples illustrate, registered dietitians are more than just the “food police.” They see people of all ages, and all levels of fitness. Whether you are a member with diabetes who needs a carbohydrate counting review or an avid runner needing new ideas for including more protein in your diet, an RD can assess your needs and provide useful information that applies to your life. You can discuss disease prevention, diabetes management, cancer risk reduction, weight loss, vegetarianism, exercise plans, healthy cooking techniques, family meal ideas, grocery store navigation, or those burning questions you’ve had about diet and food. If any of these topics hit home with you or peak your interest, seeing a Grand Valley dietitian may be just what you need to be on your way to better health.



Wendy is one of Grand Valley Health Plan's Registered Dietitian, also known as a GVHP Health Coach.

Coming Soon!

MIChild

Grand Valley Family Health Centers are proud to partner with the Michigan Department of Community Health in offering comprehensive coverage and services through MIChild.

According to the Michigan Department of Community Health, nearly 12,000 children in Kent County are without health insurance and an additional 30,000 may be eligible for MIChild.

A change in work status, can mean losing affordable health care coverage not only for workers, but also for their family. Premiums for COBRA health insurance average almost \$700 a month for family coverage and \$250 a month for individual coverage. A very high price given the average unemployment check is \$1,100 a month. This cost is out of reach for the majority of people.

Health care for children is critical to assuring their quality of life. The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is a federal/state partnership that provides health care coverage to qualified children under the age of 19. The SCHIP program in Michigan is called MIChild. Families who qualify pay a monthly premium of just \$10, even if they have more than one child.

The MIChild program provides comprehensive benefits, including dental, vision, and mental health services. Some of the services provided by MIChild through GVHP include:

- **Regular Checkups**
- **Urgent & Emergency Care**
- **Immunizations**
- **Prescription Medications**

We cover other services too. For more information on MIChild, log onto www.michigan.gov/michild or contact a GVHP Customer Service Representative at (616) 949-2410.



Medicare Part B



Are you turning 65 years old? Are you under the age of 65, but qualify for Medicare? If yes, you no longer have to change your health care provider!

Grand Valley Health Plan is now accepting patients with traditional Medicare Part B at all Family Health Centers.

The core of Grand Valley Family Health Centers approach to care is based on the relationships that develop between our medical professionals and their patients. Sometimes those relationships are interrupted by a change in a Member's employment or Insurance coverage.

Partnering with Medicare gives us an opportunity to continue relationships with Members who have made a transition from GVHP health care coverage to Medicare Part B as their primary source of health benefits.

Medicare has also opened the doors for us to accept new Members. We are often approached with requests by

patients asking if we would be willing to see their parents or friends. We can now schedule appointments for patients covered under Medicare, even if they have never been Grand Valley Members. Accepting Medicare Part B patients is just one more way that Grand Valley Family Health Centers are maximizing the health of our community. Taking care of each other and promoting better health has always been what Grand Valley Health Plan is all about.

To make things easier, Grand Valley Health Plan bills Medicare directly, so you do not have the hassle of paperwork.

We look forward to continuing your care and meeting the people you are close to! For more information, please call Customer Service at (616) 949-2410 or log onto www.gvhp.com.

How to sign-up

- Simply call a Customer Service Representative at **(616) 949-2410**. They will provide you with a Patient Handbook and Registration Form.
- Schedule an appointment at the Grand Valley Family Health Center of your choice.
- When going to your appointment, please bring your Registration Form and Medicare Identification Card. *We can help you fill out your form or fill it out for you.*

WOMEN'S HEALTH QUIZ

Circle or fill in the correct answer below. Please clip and mail this questionnaire with your name and phone number to: GVHP, Attn: Kristen, 829 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 by May 5. If all your answers are correct, your name will be entered into a prize drawing.

1. HRA stands for: _____
2. What does biometric testing include? _____
3. What are the two leading causes of death in women? _____
4. At what age should all women complete an HRA? _____
5. Starting at age 40, women should be screened for breast cancer every 1-2 years and every year at age 50. **True or False**
6. What was the most important action Don took when losing weight? _____
7. How could a GVHP Health Coach benefit you? _____
8. What does SCHIP stand for? _____
9. How many children in the United States are uninsured? _____
10. All Grand Valley Family Health Centers are accepting new patients with Medicare Part B, even if the person is not a GVHP Member. **True or False**

Name: _____ Daytime Phone #: _____

Address: _____ Family Health Center: _____



Grand Valley Health Plan
829 Forest Hill Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED