It is finally summer and that means it is time to get outside and get on the path to a healthy heart! According to the American Heart Association, walking 30 minutes each day helps keep your heart healthy!

Exercise will help:
• Lower your blood pressure
• Increase your HDL (good cholesterol)
• Improve your circulation
• Help manage stress

And the best part: Walking doesn’t cost a thing except 30 minutes of your own time!

Start out slow and easy, working your way up to 30 minutes. As always, talk to your Primary Care Provider (PCP) before beginning any exercise program.

Managing Diabetes

Did you know that over 25 million children and adults in the U.S. have diabetes?

By making easy lifestyle changes, you can manage and possibly even reverse this disease. The following steps can help you live a healthy life:

• Be active for at least 30 minutes each day
• Stay active. The more you exercise and watch your weight, the better you can control your diabetes
• Watch what you eat. This is the key to controlling your blood sugar level
• Eat whole grains
• Add more fruits and vegetables to your meals
• Avoid red meat

Remember, COPD does not have to be the end of your travel dreams. With proper management, regular visits to your PCP and lifestyle changes, you can slow the advancement of the disease and still enjoy your life. Enjoy your vacation while making healthy choices!

Taking your medicine the right way can help prevent flare-ups or keep a flare-up from getting worse.
KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

If you have diabetes, your HbA1c level is a very important number to know. Your A1c number tells you and your PCP how well controlled your blood glucose levels have been for the last two to three months.

The American Diabetes Association recommends that your A1c be checked at least twice each year. In certain situations, you may need to test more often, such as:

- When you start a new diabetes drug
- When your daily blood glucose levels are not in control

A1c tests do not replace daily glucose checks. You still need to follow your PCP’s orders. Discuss your A1c with your PCP. Get to know your A1c number and take charge of your diabetes.

MHP Smoking Cessation

It is never too late to quit smoking or quit using tobacco products. Tobacco addiction is a chronic (ongoing) disease that kills more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, murder and illegal drugs combined.

Secondhand smoke is just as dangerous as smoking. Secondhand smoke can cause many health problems, like:

- SIDS in babies
- Ear infections
- Asthma
- Heart disease
- Lung cancer

If you want to quit smoking, it’s not too late! Meridian Health Plan is here to help! If you are thinking about quitting or if you are ready to quit smoking or using tobacco call the Iowa Tobacco Quitline at 800-784-8669.

A Weight Watchers® Success Story!

Gerald Wilson, a Meridian Health Plan member, was enrolled in Weight Watchers® in November 2011. Before starting Weight Watchers®, Gerald was unsure if the program would work for him.

After talking with the Nutrition Team at Meridian Health Plan and learning more about the program, Gerald agreed to try Weight Watchers®. When asked about the PointsPlus® program Gerald said, "It took me about one week to get adjusted. At first I thought it was going to be hard but actually it’s easy. It doesn’t even seem like you’re dieting at all!"

“IT DOESN'T EVEN SEEM LIKE YOU’RE DIETING AT ALL!”

Gerald began going to Weight Watchers® meetings once a week and was surprised by how helpful they were. Gerald said, "I enjoyed attending the meetings a lot, they really helped encourage me to keep going. Everyone congratulated me as I lost weight and it was very uplifting and kept me motivated."

As Gerald kept up with Weight Watchers®, the Nutrition Team followed-up with him every two weeks to help him stay on track with his weight loss.

Since the start of the program Gerald has lost over 50 pounds!

Gerald said “I used to be out of breath a lot when I would walk around the store, since losing weight I don’t get out of breath like I used to. I have a lot more energy and feel a lot better.”

He has also made other changes in his life. Gerald exercises and eats better. He has now reached his 10% weight loss goal and received a ribbon, magnet and key chain from Weight Watchers®. Gerald is continuing with the program and hopes to achieve his weight loss goals.

Gerald encourages others to join Weight Watchers®. He says, "this is the best program I have ever seen! Take the Weight Watchers® program because it works! I never thought it would but it does, it works!"

If you are interested in losing weight, please call the Meridian Health Plan Nutrition Team at 877-204-9132 x2030 to learn more.

Weight Watchers® is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers International, Inc.
Fresh fruits and vegetables cost less in the months when they are in season. When a fruit or vegetable is “in season,” that means it ripens best at that time of year. Farmers’ markets are a great way to get low-cost produce.

Most farmers’ markets accept Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by using the electronic benefit transfer cards (EBT cards). These are better known as the bridge card, link card or food stamps depending where you live. Your local farmers’ market may also have other incentive programs using SNAP EBT cards.

Contact your local farmers’ market for more information about SNAP benefits.

QUIZ: What do you know about Diabetes?

1. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO WATCH WHEN FOLLOWING A DIABETIC DIET?
   a) Calories  
   b) Fat  
   c) Carbohydrates  
   d) Sugar

   Answer: c) Carbohydrates. Carbohydrates have the largest impact on your blood sugar levels. Sugar is also important, but sugar is a part of the total amount of carbohydrates in a food. Calories and fat are also important when trying to lose weight.

2. WHICH FOODS HAVE CARBOHYDRATES?
   a) Breads and Pasta  
   b) Milk and Yogurt  
   c) Fruit and Fruit Juice  
   d) All of the above

   Answer: d) All of the above. While the serving size of these foods vary, all of these foods have carbohydrates. Watching how much of these foods you eat is important when following a diabetic diet.

3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS TRUE?
   a) It’s best to eat salads for every meal with nothing else
   b) There are no carbohydrates in potatoes, corn or peas. You can eat as much as you want
   c) It’s best to eat regular meals throughout the day
   d) All of the above

   Answer: c) It is best to eat regular meals throughout the day. When you do this, you avoid highs and lows in blood sugar levels. It is important to eat carbohydrates at every meal. A registered dietitian or your PCP can tell you a specific number of carbohydrates to eat each day.

Meridian Health Plan (MHP) covers diabetic education classes for newly diagnosed diabetics and people who are living with diabetes. If you feel that you need more help managing your diabetes, contact the MHP Member Services at 877-204-9132.
Even if you do not have asthma flare-ups, visit your PCP regularly so they can keep track of your asthma. When you visit your PCP you should talk about:

• Making an Asthma Action Plan
• Your medicine
• Things you can do to control your asthma

This will allow you to do more things you enjoy.

Parents should ask for an extra copy of the action plan to give to their child’s school or daycare.

There are two main types of medicine for treating asthma:

1. Quick Relief (or Rescue) medicine
2. Controller medicine

Rescue medicines are taken only when you have symptoms. They work fast to help you breathe. Controller medicines are taken every day to help prevent asthma flare-ups, even if you feel fine.

Asthma medicines can include:

• Inhalers
• Pills
• Liquids
• Or nebulizer treatments

Taking your medicine the right way can help prevent flare-ups or keep a flare-up from getting worse.

No matter how severe your asthma is, our goal is for you to have a normal, active life by helping you take control of your asthma.