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Avoiding Illness

Steps you can take to stay healthy all winter long

Fall brings cooler weather, shorter days, kids returning to school—and an increased chance of getting sick. Here are steps you can take to protect yourself and your family.

Prevention really is the best medicine



Wash your hands. This simple advice can be one of your most powerful tools in staying healthy. Wash with soap and water or use an antibacterial gel or wipe if hand washing is not available.



Keep things clean. Regularly disinfect commonly touched surfaces like counter tops, handles and doorknobs.



Practice healthy habits. A health-conscious diet, prioritizing sleep, staying hydrated and getting a little daily movement can do a lot to keep you feeling your best.

Get your annual flu shot

The annual flu shot is your best defense against catching the flu. Influenza, or “the flu”, is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs, and symptoms can range from mild to debilitating. In some cases, it can even be life threatening or cause serious complications. The flu shot is safe for most people. It may cause temporary side effects as your body produces protective antibodies, but these will fade in a few days.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend annual flu vaccination for everyone age 6 months or older, especially children age-12 months and younger, pregnant people, adults over age 65 and people with certain medical conditions.

! As an NWPP participant you can get your annual flu shot for free at any in-network pharmacy or provider. To learn more about your benefits and find an in-network provider, visit nwplumberstrust.com.

UPDATE ON COVID-19

Recently the CDC approved this year's COVID vaccine, but with new restrictions in place. Talk to your doctor about whether you qualify for the vaccine.



Eight On the Job Stretches

Lower your risk of injury with a few quick stretches

Staying safe on the job is more than wearing proper safety gear and following safety protocols. When your job includes repetitive motions, heavy lifting, working in awkward positions or being on your feet a lot, musculoskeletal (MSK) injuries can happen. Thankfully, with regular stretching you could avoid injuries, or stop a nagging pain from become a major one.

Easy stretches to avoid injuries

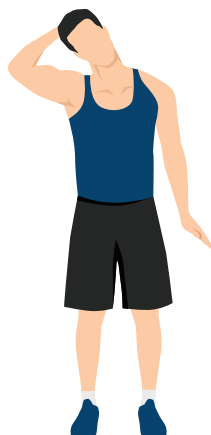
Stretching regularly keeps muscles flexible and strong and allows for your joints to maintain range of motion. Without it, your muscles and surrounding areas could become tight or even permanently damaged during work. Keep in mind that stretching should never be forced or feel painful. Rather, it should feel like a gentle pulling.

Here are eight easy stretches you can do several times a week at work, before work, or after work to help reduce back pain and avoid other injuries.



Side Bend

Start with your feet shoulder width apart and your arms at your side. Raise your right arm overhead and gently lean toward the left. Repeat on the other side.

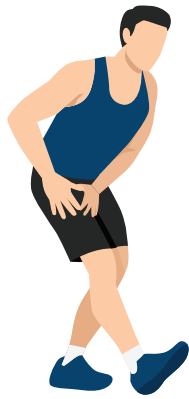


Neck Stretch

Slowly tilt your head to one side, bringing your ear toward your shoulder, while keeping your opposite shoulder down. You can use your hand to gently apply light pressure on the same side of your head. Hold and repeat on other side.

Hamstring Stretch

Face forward and raise your foot or on an elevated surface, at least a foot high. Slowly bend forward, stopping when you feel tension behind your thigh. Switch legs and repeat on the other side.



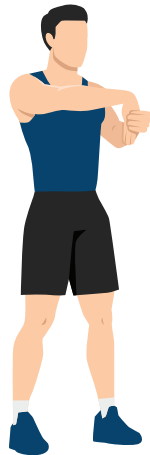
Chest Stretch

Stand with your feet about shoulders width apart. Take the right arm parallel to the floor and cross it over your body, bringing the upper arm into the chest. With your left hand gently, pulling it across your body. Hold then repeat other side.



Wrist Stretch

Place your forearms horizontally, with both palms facing the floor. Bend both wrists downward so that fingertips are pointing toward the floor. Then extend both of your wrists so your fingertips now face upward. Repeat.



Calf Stretch

Stand close to a wall with one foot in front of the other. Keep your front knee slightly bent. Place both hands on the wall in front of you and with your back knee straight, and heel on the ground, lean forward toward the wall. You should feel tension along the back of your calf.



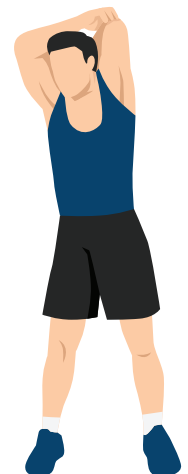
Knee-to-Chest Stretch

Stand with feet hip-width apart, then lift one knee and pull it towards your chest using your hands, keeping your back straight and core engaged for 20–40 seconds before switching legs.



Overhead Triceps Stretch

Stand or sit tall, raise one arm overhead, and bend the elbow so your hand reaches down your upper back. Use your opposite hand to gently grasp the bent elbow and pull it slightly inward and downward to feel a stretch in the triceps muscle. Hold and repeat on other side.



If you are experiencing muscle aches, stiffness, fatigue or twitches, sleep disturbances, and/or if pain interferes with your daily activities, speak with your healthcare provider. If you have severe pain from a sudden injury, please seek immediate medical help.

Comagine Health

Your source for case management services

NWPP partners with Comagine Health to offer you case management services as part of your medical benefits. This service is completely voluntary and offered to you and your family at no cost.



What is case management?

Case management is a program that provides coordination of care with your healthcare team for cases of serious illness (such as cancer) or catastrophic injury (such as a serious car accident). Comagine provides essential support, encouragement and care coordination, and works with you and your healthcare team to help you determine what treatment options could be the most beneficial and cost-effective. The program is designed to work for you, the patient, and makes sure that your specific health needs are factored in at every step of the way.

Why is NWPP offering this service?

Medical problems and illnesses are stressful to everyone involved, and healthcare choices and decisions can be overwhelming. NWPP partnered with Comagine to help you and your family navigate the complex health care system, and make sure you have the care and support you need if facing a catastrophic injury, illness, or complex medical condition.

What services do Comagine Health case managers offer?

Case managers offer a variety of services based on the needs of the patient and family, including the following:

- ✓ Gather information to help you make the best health care choices possible within your NWPP medical benefits plan
- ✓ Serve as a resource for your health care team
- ✓ Coordinate referrals and assist in obtaining health care services
- ✓ Keep everything and everyone on track
- ✓ With your permission, assist those involved with your health care—your family, your health care team, and your insurance carrier—to understand your health care needs



If you would like to learn more about Comagine Health's case management program or see if you qualify, please contact the NWPP Administrator WPAS at **(866) 417-4240**.

Looking For a Health Care Provider?

With NWPP, you have options.

Navigating health care options can feel overwhelming, but with your NWPP benefits finding quality, affordable in network providers is straightforward and easy.



1 Tap into the BlueCard® PPO network

NWPP participants have access to the expansive Premera BlueCard® PPO network—one of the nation's largest. Choosing an in network provider ensures the highest level of benefits and the lowest out of pocket costs. At premera.com you can search for virtual or in-person primary care, specialty, behavioral health providers, and more. Or call **(800) 810-BLUE (2583)**, referencing prefix **FIT** to locate in-network doctors and hospitals.



2 Use Kinwell clinics for convenient care

As part of your NWPP benefits, you have no cost access to Kinwell clinic locations across Washington. These clinics offer quality care with longer appointments, short wait times, and flexible options including virtual or phone visits. Find a Kinwell clinic near you: kinwellhealth.com/clinics.



3 Access a large network of dental and vision providers

For dental care, NWPP participants are part of Delta Dental of Washington's PPO plan, which includes about 90% of dentists in the state. Searching for an in network dentist or checking dental claims can be done at deltadental.com or by calling **(800) 554-1907**.

Vision services operate on a reimbursement basis: you may visit any provider you like, then submit a vision claim form to NWPP based on set allowances. Visit nwplumberstrust.com to learn more and download a claim form.



Scan the QR Code to learn more about your care options.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Don't let the winter blues catch you off guard

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs during the winter months when there are fewer hours of daylight. SAD can lead to a depressed mood, sleep changes, irritability, fatigue and more.

If the winter blues start to get to you, here are a few tools that can help:



Talk to your doctor.

There are many supplements (such as Vitamin D) and medications that can help lift your mood and improve your sleep. Talk to your provider about what might be right for you.



Get sunlight or bright light when you can.

Even a short walk or a little time outside can do a lot for your mental health. If going outside isn't an option, consider an indoor light box.



Download the Uprise Health app.

As a NWPP participant you have no cost access to the extensive online resources from Uprise. With the app you can confidentially video or text chat with a care professional or coach, find an in-person therapist, and more. Visit app.uprisehealth.com or download the Uprise Health app on **Google Play** or **Apple App Store**. Create an account with your email and the assigned employer code **NWPPMAP**.

