

Think healthy. Act healthy. Stay healthy.

SoundLivingnews

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Self Care May Be the Best Medicine

Contrary to popular belief, you don't always need to go to the doctor every time you're sick. Self treatment or self care sometimes makes the most sense.

Unfortunately, everyone catches a cold, sprains an arm or develops a fever from time to time. And despite major advances in medicine, sometimes the most effective treatment is to stay at home and treat yourself. You can avoid unnecessary doctor visits and save money, while getting the care you need.

Self care is one aspect of being an accountable health care consumer. It includes everything from:

- Awareness.
- Prevention.
- Early detection.
- Personal safety.
- Self-treatment.

Self care is knowing just when and how quickly to:

- *Treat a minor ailment yourself*—be familiar with and recognize symptoms of common illnesses/injuries.
- *Contact your doctor*—if your condition isn't life threatening, try calling your doctor's office first or your plan's nurse advice line.
- *Seek emergency care*—if your condition is life threatening, call 911 immediately.

Think healthy

What's New?

For Regence BlueShield Participants:

- CareEnhance nurse advice line
- CareAssist case management services



Where to Begin

There are self care steps you can take for your own health and well-being.

Seek out information

Self care books can be a valuable resource. They describe hundreds of common symptoms and, when appropriate, tell you how to treat yourself quickly and easily at home—or when to seek professional care. Self care books might also include general recommendations for healthy living. You have access to many self care, self-help and online references. The Sound Partnership has compiled some online resources for your convenience, at www.tsp-soundliving.com, select *Self Care*.

Are You at Risk?

Consult with your doctor about your risk factors. If you want more information about a potential health risk before you make your appointment, take the Health Risk Assessment (HRA).

- It's easy to do.
- It's confidential.
- It's free.
- It's rewarding.
- You can take it anytime and receive a one-time \$25 adjustment to the cost of your health insurance plan when you complete the HRA.

Visit www.tsp-soundliving.com and take the HRA online or contact The Sound Partnership at (253) 571-1240 to receive a paper copy of the HRA. Take your HRA results to your next doctor's appointment. You'll be glad you did.

Use common sense

When in doubt, or if your health is not improving, call your doctor to see whether or when he or she recommends an office visit, or call the nurse advice line.

Self care isn't something you only do after an injury or illness; it's something you can also do to help prevent that injury or illness from happening. Sometimes it's as simple as having a well-stocked first aid kit at home and in your car. You may not realize that you already practice self care just by:

- Eating a balanced diet.
- Exercising regularly.
- Getting plenty of rest.
- Limiting your exposure to stress.
- Washing your hands with soap and water frequently.
- Avoiding tobacco and drugs.
- Limiting alcohol consumption.
- Wearing your seat belt; sunscreen; a helmet when biking or playing sports.

Good to Know

Keep your important emergency phone numbers (for example, for your local poison control) handy. Download an emergency contact list from www.tsp-soundliving.com Select *Library*, then *Emergency Phone Numbers*.

The image shows a screenshot of a form titled "SoundLiving Emergency Contact List". The form is designed to be filled out with emergency contact information. It includes fields for: Emergency (9-1-1), Name advice line, In case of fire (Baby sitter), In case of theft (Emergency veterinarian), Car insurance company (Auto year, make and model), Land/Commercial property, Life insurance company, My personal information, Health insurance company, My emergency contact, Credit and company, Work phone number, Debt card company, Home phone number, Poison Control, Paper phone number, Local Police/Sheriff Department (non-emergency), My place of employment, In case of power outage, Work phone number, In case of gas leak, Home phone number, Emergency plumber, Paper phone number, Water utility, and Other. The form also features the SoundLiving logo and the Sound Partnership logo at the bottom right.

Take Care of Yourself

Many of the top health threats in this country—and among members of The Sound Partnership—are related to lifestyle. You can reduce your risk for certain conditions—like cancer, diabetes or heart disease—through healthy habits, like eating a balanced diet or exercising. This section highlights just some of the health threats that are common to

Tacoma School District employees and what you can do to prevent them, or at least reduce your risk for developing them. For details about these and other conditions and to find out where to get more information, go to the *Sound Living* website at www.tsp-soundliving.com and select *Self Care*, then *FAQs About Chronic Conditions*.

Chronic condition	What is it	Symptoms to look for	Who's at risk*	Reduce your risk/prevention
Coronary artery disease	Most common type of heart disease caused by thickening of the walls of the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle. Blocked arteries do not allow the heart enough oxygen and it can become damaged.	Unfortunately, it develops so slowly that there are no symptoms until a person has a heart attack.	You may be at risk if you have family history of heart disease, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, obesity and physical inactivity.	Don't smoke; reduce cholesterol and blood pressure levels. Exercise and manage your weight. Eat foods that help protect against heart disease.
Digestive disorders	These disorders range from the occasional upset stomach to more life threatening conditions like colon cancer.	Most digestive diseases are very complex, with slight symptoms, and the causes of many remain unknown.	People of any age, more common among older people. Be aware if you suffer stress, fatigue, bad diet, smoke or have family history of digestive disorders or alcohol abuse.	Eat a diet high in fiber. It's important to increase fiber levels in your diet gradually and to increase your fluid intake as you increase fiber. Quit smoking, limit your consumption of alcohol and manage your stress.
Overweight and obesity	A pattern of exceeding the amount of calories needed by the body, even by a small amount, over a prolonged period of time. The excess calories are stored in the body cells in the form of fat and sugar.	Although obesity doesn't have specific symptoms, it contributes to other major health problems such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallbladder disease, etc.	People who are overweight are at increased risk for cancer, diabetes (type 2 in children and adults), high blood pressure and early, preventable death.	To lose weight, you need to burn off more calories than you eat. You can do this by eating fewer calories, becoming more physically active or a combination of both. A loss of one-half to two pounds a week is generally considered safe.

* If you believe you are at risk, consult with your doctor.

Nurse Advice Lines

Has any of the following ever happened to you?

- Your child gets sick in the middle of the night.
- You get sick while traveling out-of-state.
- You have new symptoms that worry you, but you're not sure whether to go to your doctor.

Issues and questions about health come up on their own time—not when it's convenient for you. That's why all medical plans offered by The Sound Partnership have a nurse advice line you can call, toll-free anytime—day or night. If you are a PacifiCare or Group Health Cooperative (GHC) member, you've had access to a nurse advice line for a few years now. For Regence BlueShield members, the nurse advice line is a brand new offering since April of this year.

New! Regence BlueShield—CareEnhance

CareEnhance is a health information service that includes the following:

- **Nurse Advice Line—(800) 267-6729.** A 24-hour toll-free service, staffed by registered nurses. Immediate access to confidential health advice and information, 7 days a week/365 days a year. Experienced nurses are specially trained to give you prompt health information that can help you make informed decisions about your health care.
- **CareEnhance AudioHealth Library®**, prerecorded general health information on nearly 1,200 topics. If you don't need to talk to a nurse, this is a good alternative.
- **Online Services**, <http://waregence.ca/reenhance.com/portal> gives you quick e-mail access to nurse advice, an Internet access to a health information library (also available on RealAudio), and health, lifestyle and medication information. You can also securely track your own health information online. There is a *Symptom Advisor* feature, that can help evaluate your symptoms and advise you of your next steps.

Regence BlueShield members should have received a welcome packet in April that includes detailed information about these services. If you haven't received a packet and you are enrolled in Regence BlueShield, contact Regence BlueShield customer service at (800) 472-2270.

Act healthy.

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Take the Nurse Advice Line Challenge

If you've never used the nurse advice line, or it's been more than a year since you have, take a few minutes to call the nurse advice line to check it out in the next 10 days. If you need a reason to call, here's a few to get you started:

1. There's no cost to use the nurse advice line.
2. Calling may save you time and money.
3. You can learn how to apply self care safely.

For more ideas, you can review the *10 Reasons to Use a Nurse Advice Line* article posted on the *Sound Living* website at www.tsp-soundliving.com or from The Sound Partnership website at www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/sound (look for the *Sound Living* logo) and select *Self Care*.

You've got nothing to lose if you call your nurse advice line and you may find it a useful experience. Plus, if there comes a time when you really need the nurse advice line, you'll be more likely to remember it's there if you've used it before.

Nurse advice lines are not designed to be an emergency or urgent care service or a substitute for medical care.

Good to Know

When you call your plan's nurse advice line you will be asked for your member ID number, so it's a good idea to have it readily available.

Issues and questions about health come up on their own time—not when it's convenient for you.

The Sound Partnership Nurse Advice Lines

The Sound Partnership Nurse Advice Lines:

- **Group Health Cooperative (GHC)**, consulting nurse—(800) 297-6877.
- **PacifiCare**, CareWise health care information—(866) 747-4325.
- **Regence BlueShield**, CareEnhance Nurse Advice Line—(800) 267-6729.

Case Management Services

Case management services are provided when you have a medical condition that requires intensive or complicated medical treatment, or long or multiple inpatient stays related to an acute injury or illness such as head trauma and spinal cord injuries or a mental health, chemical dependency or HIV diagnosis.

Case managers—usually registered nurses—work with the patient, family, attending physician and other involved parties, such as home health care providers, to make sure the patient is receiving care that’s medically necessary and appropriate throughout the course of treatment. Participation in a case management program is completely voluntary and confidential.

All medical plans offered by The Sound Partnership have free case management services.

For details about case management services connect to your plan’s website through *Sound Living* at www.tsp-soundliving.com. Select *Benefit Ins and Outs* and then *About Case Management*.

New! Regence BlueShield—CareAssist

If you are a Regence BlueShield member, CareAssist is your new case management program. CareAssist provides services to help you and your family cope with major illness and injuries by connecting you with a CareAssist nurse. Your nurse will:

- Coordinate coverage with your physician and other providers.
- Facilitate care covered by your health plan.
- Provide information about the condition, illness or injury.
- Answer questions about treatment options and your covered benefits.
- Suggest ways to minimize out-of-pocket costs and use benefits efficiently.
- Be your advocate in the health care system.

For more information about this new service from Regence BlueShield call **(800) 367-2766**.

GHC Case Management

If you are a GHC member, your plan provides case management resources to help you handle your disease. Contact your plan at **(800) 562-6300**, for more information. GHC case managers can provide:

- Emotional support.
- Information about insurance and housing
- Assistance in obtaining answers to work and legal questions relating to HIV status.
- Assistance in or referrals for getting supplies and equipment.
- Help finding financial aid resources.
- Assistance with resource information for home care.

PacifiCare Case Management

If you are a PacifiCare member, your case management programs are designed to enhance care, improve outcomes and ultimately help you to manage related health care costs. In some cases, your physician will coordinate case management services for you, or you may contact your plan at **(800) 932-3004**.