



New Year

New You

Monthly strategies for better living



January

Make physical activity
a daily priority



Are you working on your New Year's resolution to get more exercise? You can make your workout work for you. You don't need to spend hours at the gym each day to reap the health benefits of regular physical activity. The CDC recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week for adults. And, guess what? Ten minutes at a time is fine! When your schedule is packed you can squeeze in physical activity by breaking it into manageable 10-minute chunks throughout your day. For more information on the CDC's exercise recommendations, and tips to help keep you moving all day long, download our free Exercise Express e-book.

CALORIES BURNED DURING COMMON PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

MODERATE ACTIVITY

APPROXIMATE CALORIES BURNED BY A 154-lb. PERSON

hiking	370 per hour
light gardening or yard work	330 per hour
dancing	330 per hour
golfing (walking and carrying clubs)	330 per hour
bicycling (<10 mph)	290 per hour
walking (3.5 mph)	280 per hour

Following a walking schedule is a great way to stay active and ease into a regular exercise routine. And it’s cheap – all you need is a pair of comfortable shoes.

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF WALKING INCLUDE:

- Increased energy
- Stress reduction
- Improved muscle tone
- Increased ability to burn calories
- Improved stamina and fitness
- Bone and muscle strengthening
- Decreased risk of diseases like heart ailments and type 2 diabetes.

The walking chart below can help you get started on the path to better health. For more information on starting a walking program, or to download a walking guide poster, visit geha.com/walking.

BEGINNER’S WALKING SCHEDULE

WEEK	WALKS PER WEEK	MINUTES PER WALK	GOAL STEPS PER WALK
1	3	15	1000 -1500
2	3	20	1500 -2000
3	3	20*	2000 -2500
4	3 -4	25	2500 -3000
5	3 -4	25*	3000 -3500
6	3 -4	25	3500 -4000
7	3 -4	25*	4000 -4500
8	4	30	4500 -5000

*Increase your pace over previous week
Be sure to warm up and cool down a few minutes before and after your walk. During your walk, walk briskly but maintain a pace that still allows you to carry on a conversation.



February

Schedule preventive care exams

Preventive care exams can help you keep tabs on your overall health, catch potential health issues early and establish a relationship with your health care provider. The frequency and type of preventive screenings you require will vary based on gender, age and personal medical history. Talk with your health care provider to determine your screening needs.

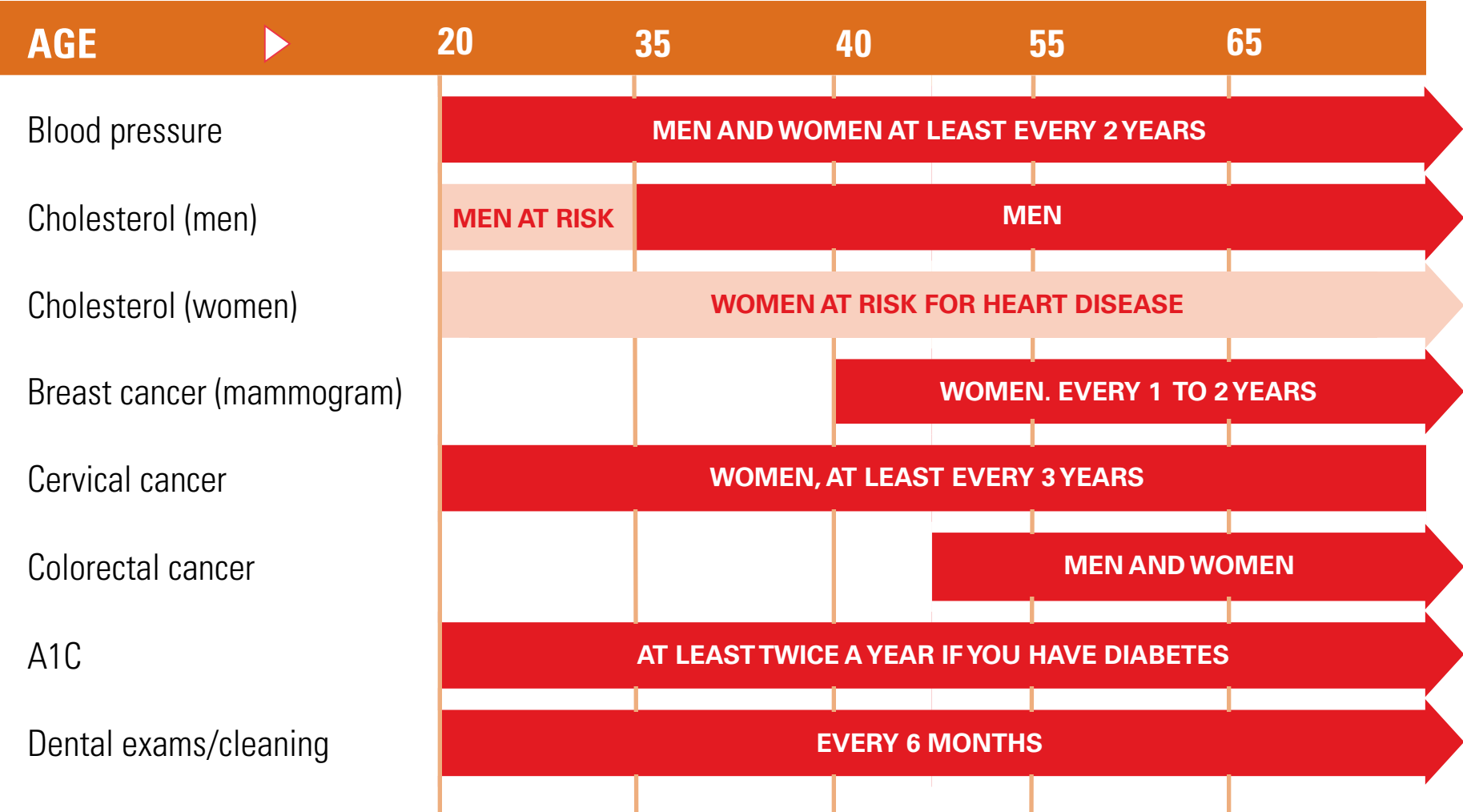
If you have trouble remembering to find time for your preventive care, or if you're just reluctant to visit the doctor, it's a good idea to schedule your recommended exams at the same time, preferably early in the year. They will be less likely to fall off your radar, and you'll have the peace of mind that comes with knowing you are keeping tabs on your health. GEHA health plans cover several in-network preventive care screenings and exams at 100%.

IF YOU'RE A GEHA HEALTH PLAN MEMBER, DON'T FORGET TO COMPLETE YOUR ANNUAL ONLINE HEALTH ASSESSMENT

It's quick and easy – it only takes about 20 minutes to complete – and, in 2015, you'll receive a \$75 gift card just for filling it out. After you've completed the assessment, you'll also receive a personalized health report, which will offer feedback on what you're doing right and suggest areas for improving your health. Visit geha.com/rewards to complete your Health Assessment and start earning rewards today.

RECOMMENDED PREVENTIVE SCREENINGS FOR ADULTS

based on guidelines from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force



These recommendations are intended as general guidelines only. Please consult your health care provider to determine which screenings you need. For additional preventive care guidelines, visit the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force website.

If you have been diagnosed with hypertension, it is important to closely monitor your blood pressure to ensure it stays below 140/90. Visit your doctor regularly to have your blood pressure rechecked.

If you're a GEHA health plan member, you can complete a free biometric screening in the comfort of your own home, office or at an in-network lab facility of your choice to earn 100 Health Rewards points (equivalent to \$100) to be redeemed for your choice of health and wellness merchandise. To learn more about the Health Rewards program, and the free biometric screening, visit geha.com/rewards.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT DISEASE AND BE HEALTHY ARE:

- Be tobacco free
- Be physically active
- Eat a healthy diet



March

Know your
health care options

Knowing your health care options is an important part of controlling your out-of-pocket health care costs. Establishing a relationship with a primary care provider will ensure that your care provider is familiar with your health history and your communication style. When your primary care provider isn't available to you, take control of your health care by researching and knowing the best place to receive care for your specific needs.

WHEN TO SEEK CARE AT A WALK-IN CLINIC

Walk-in clinics do not require an appointment, and they are often open in the evenings and on weekends. Care at a walk-in clinic costs significantly less than similar care at an emergency room. An urgent care clinic can better meet your needs for symptoms like minor burns or injuries, sprains, coughs, sore throats, ear infections, fever or flu, skin irritations, mild asthma, animal bites, stitches, or nausea.

WHEN TO SEEK CARE AT AN EMERGENCY ROOM

The emergency room (ER) is the best place to go for anything life-threatening, including chest pain, difficulty breathing, severe bleeding or head trauma, loss of consciousness, sudden loss of vision or blurred vision.

GEHA HEALTH PLAN MEMBERS HAVE ACCESS TO OUR FREE HEALTH ADVICE LINE

You can speak with a registered nurse who can help you evaluate your symptoms and determine the appropriate care for your needs. The Health Advice Line is available any time, 24 hours a day. Call (888) 257-4342 and have your member ID ready. Outside the United States? Call collect at (709) 835-8243.



April

Improve
your nutrition.

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables is an excellent way to support good health, ensure your body functions at maximum capacity, and help prevent diseases like cancer, heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. Filling up on low calorie fruits and veggies can also help you avoid overindulging in more calorie-dense foods.

Most Americans don't eat enough fruits and vegetables. Better nutrition begins with being mindful about what you put on your plate. About half of your plate should be filled with healthy fruits and veggies. Frozen or canned vegetables and fruits are fine; they don't have to be fresh to be nutritious. Just be mindful of added sugars or salt, especially in canned goods.

IN SEASON FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:

The list below offers a small sampling of seasonal produce. You can learn more at fruitsandveggiesmatter.org.

WINTER: Brussels sprouts, grapefruits, kale, clementines, turnips, dates, oranges

SPRING: artichokes, asparagus, green beans, mangoes, strawberries, peas, honeydew

SUMMER: blueberries, cucumbers, eggplant, tomatoes, zucchinis, corn, peaches, cherries

FALL: sweet potato, butternut squash, cranberries, pears, pumpkin, pomegranate, broccoli

YEAR-ROUND: apples, bananas, bell peppers, mushrooms, lemons, onions, potatoes

Source: "What fruits and vegetables are in season?" Fruits and Veggies More Matters. Produce for Better Health Foundation.

TRY THESE FRUIT AND VEGGIE-PACKED RECIPES THIS MONTH:

California Citrus and Greens Salad with Garlic Dressing

Reprinted courtesy of the American Institute for Cancer Research, for more information visit aicr.org.

Dressing

4 large cloves fresh garlic, peeled
1/2 tsp. olive oil
1/3 cup orange juice
1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1/2 tsp. dried thyme
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Salad

1 quart boiling water
1 cup small broccoli florets
1 bag (8oz.) pre-washed baby salad greens
1 navel orange, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces
1 cup chopped red bell pepper

Directions

In blender, combine first five dressing ingredients. Puree until smooth. Add thyme, salt and pepper. Add broccoli and blanch for 1 minute. Drain well and let cool. In serving bowl, toss broccoli with remaining ingredients. Add dressing and toss again. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition Facts

Per Serving: 155 calories, 8 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 20 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 99 mg sodium.

Frittata Primavera

Reprinted courtesy of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, for more information visit health.gov.

3 tsp. olive oil
¼ cup onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
½ cup fresh asparagus pieces
½ cup canned or frozen artichoke hearts, chopped
½ cup sugar snap peas, strings pulled and cut in ½-inch pieces
¼ tsp. dried basil
salt and pepper to taste
¾ cup egg substitute or 3 eggs
1 Tbsp. plain yogurt, low-fat
1 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese, grated

Directions

1. Heat 1 teaspoon of the oil in a skillet and cook the onion 2 or 3 minutes or until soft.
2. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute more.
3. Stir in the asparagus, artichoke hearts, peas, basil, and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally until tender but still slightly crisp, 3-5 minutes. Set aside.
4. Preheat the broiler.
5. Beat the egg substitute or eggs with the yogurt and another pinch of pepper.
6. Heat the remaining oil in a heavy-bottom skillet. Pour in the egg mixture and cook until just set on the bottom but still wet on the top, 1 minute.
7. Scatter the vegetables over the top and set into the oven to finish cooking, 2 minutes.
8. Dust the top with the Parmesan cheese, cut into wedges, and serve.

Makes 2 servings.

Nutrition Facts

Per Serving: 126 calories, 3 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 11 g carbohydrate, 2 g dietary fiber, 388 mg sodium.

For additional healthy recipes, subscribe to our monthly newsletter, Health e-Report.

May

Break an unhealthy habit



You have the power to kick your bad habit and be well. Whether you want to quit smoking, ditch your overindulgent sweet tooth, start exercising, or better manage your chronic health condition, you can make it happen with some planning and patience.

Identify and recognize the habit. It is important to admit to yourself that the habit exists – and poses a problem for your health and wellness.

Make a plan. Having a plan allows you to establish milestones, recognize your progress and feel prepared to handle whatever complications come your way.

Get support. Enlisting support from family and friends can help you gain the confidence and strength you need to improve your health. Communicate your goal, and ask for assistance.

Speak with your doctor. Some bad habits, like nicotine-dependence, may require medical assistance or guidance to break. Talk with your doctor about your health concerns.

Avoid temptation. If you have cravings at certain times of day, or if particular people or places tempt you to indulge, avoid those triggers while you establish new healthy habits.

Realize you're human. No one is perfect. If you slip up in your quest to break your bad habit, remember, a minor setback does not have to mean defeat.

Is smoking your unhealthy habit? GEHA health plans offer smoking cessation coverage, including counseling and prescription medications. Find more information at geha.com.

June

Take care of your skin

Kee your skin safe from the summer sun. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. It doesn't take much overexposure to the sun's rays to do permanent damage to your skin.

Sun protection is important and essential year-round -- not just in the summer sunshine. Take precautions to protect yourself from skin cancer, wrinkles and discoloration caused by excessive sun exposure.

FOLLOW THESE PRACTICES FOR SUN SAFETY

Reprinted courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Wear protective clothing, including wide-brimmed hats and long-sleeved t-shirts and pants, when possible.

Seek out the shade. When you are outside for extended periods of time, try to find a tree, umbrella or awning to provide relief from the sun.

Don't forget your sunglasses. Protect your eyes from the damaging effects UVA and UVB rays; don't leave the house without a pair of protective sunglasses.

Slather on the sunscreen. You should apply sunscreen every day, even when it's cloudy outside. Make sure to apply a generous layer to all areas of exposed skin.

July

Get moving
(with your kids)



Staying active can be a family affair! There are lots of ways to sneak exercise into family bonding time. Try taking a walk or bike ride together, holding an impromptu dance party in the living room, going for a dip at your local pool, or scheduling active volunteer activities like building houses, cleaning up parks, or walking dogs at the local shelter.

According to the CDC, over the past 30 years, the rate of obesity has doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents. Kids who are obese are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, joint problems and issues with self-esteem. The CDC recommends that children and adolescents get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day and limit screen time to fewer than 2 hours per day. Encouraging your children to stay active can help them establish healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD STAY ACTIVE?

Reprinted courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Set a positive example by leading an active lifestyle yourself.

Make physical activity part of your family's daily routine.

Give your children equipment that encourages physical activity.

Take children to places where they can be active, such as public parks.

Be positive about the physical activities in which your child participates.

Make physical activity fun.

August

Stay hydrated



Water makes up about 60 percent of your total body weight (mayo). It lubricates your joints, helps eliminate bodily waste, keeps your cells and tissues nourished and protected, and helps regulate your body temperature. Drinking an adequate amount of water every day is important for keeping your body and brain functioning at peak performance.

The amount of water you need every day will vary based on your level of physical activity, your size, the local weather and your personal health condition. The Institute of Medicine recommends that women consume 2.2 liters each day and men consume 3 liters each day through food and/or drink. Some of your daily hydration will come from other beverages or food, but the best way to ensure you stay adequately hydrated is by making water your go-to beverage.

TIPS FOR INCREASING YOUR FLUID INTAKE BY DRINKING MORE WATER

Reprinted courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Carry a water bottle for easy access when you are at work or running errands.

Freeze some freezer-safe water bottles. Take one with you for ice-cold water all day long.

Choose water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. This can also help with weight management.

Substituting water for one 20-ounce sugar-sweetened soda will save you about 240 calories.

Choose water instead of other beverages when eating out. Generally, you'll save money and calories.

Give your water a little pizzazz by adding a wedge of lime or lemon.

September

Get up-to-date
on immunizations



It's back to school time – time to evaluate whether your family is up-to-date on vaccinations. Immunizations help protect you and your children from vaccine-preventable illnesses that can cause serious illness, injury and death. Making sure you and your children are properly vaccinated is important for maintaining your own good health, and the health of everyone you come into contact with.

REASONS TO VACCINATE YOUR CHILD

Reprinted courtesy of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Immunizations can save your child's life. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children, have been eliminated completely and others are close to extinction— primarily due to safe and effective vaccines.

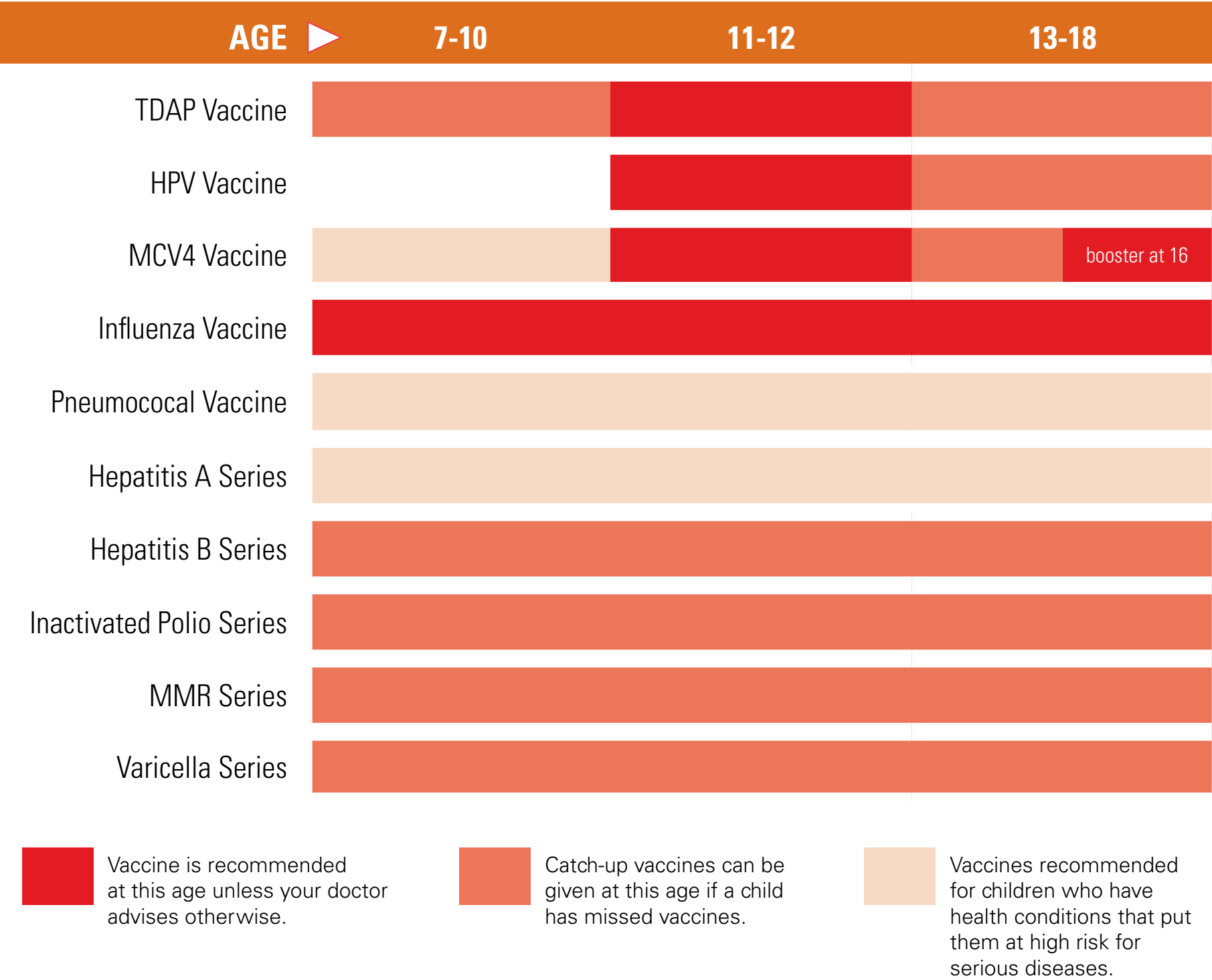
Vaccination is very safe and effective. Vaccines are only given to children after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and healthcare professionals. Serious side effects following vaccination, such as severe allergic reaction, are very rare.

Immunization protects others you care about. Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. To help keep them safe, it is important that you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized.

Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be denied attendance at schools or child care facilities. Some vaccine-preventable diseases can result in prolonged disabilities that take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills and long-term care.

RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



GEHA health plans cover routine immunizations at 100%, in-network.

For infant and adult immunization recommendations, visit the Wellness Center at geha.com.

October

Get a flu shot



Flu season is here! Although flu season typically peaks from October through February, it can run as late as May. A yearly flu shot is the best form of flu prevention. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get an annual flu vaccination.

The flu shot has been proven to be a safe and effective way to help prevent the spread of the flu virus. If you have had Guillain-Barré Syndrome, if you are allergic to the ingredients in the flu shot, or if you are already ill, you may not be eligible to receive a flu vaccination. Talk to your health care provider about your health concerns.

For GEHA health plan members, annual flu shots at in-network providers are covered at 100%. Visit geha.com/search to find a provider or clinic location near you.

STEPS TO TAKE TO AVOID THE FLU

reprinted courtesy of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.

Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

Practice good health habits. Get lots of sleep and exercise, manage stress, and drink fluids.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

A close-up photograph of a man with dark hair, smiling slightly, holding a bright red mug with both hands. In the background, a warm, glowing fire burns in a fireplace, creating a cozy atmosphere. The image is partially overlaid by an orange banner on the left side.

November

Learn how to cope with stress

Prolonged elevated stress levels can lead to heart disease, digestive problems and depression. People under stress may be tempted into unhealthy behaviors to relieve their tension. Becoming mindful of your stress level and identifying coping strategies is essential to keeping your health in balance. GEHA health plan members who enroll in our free Health Rewards program have access to online wellness courses that cover a variety of topics – including stress management. Health Rewards program participants can earn gift cards and merchandise up to \$250 in value. To learn more, visit geha.com/rewards.

TRY THESE TIPS TO HELP YOU STRESS LESS

Be quiet. When tensions start to overwhelm, try closing your eyes and practicing deep breathing to achieve calm in the chaos.

Write it out. Keeping a daily journal can be an effective way to help you identify your stressors.

Get moving. Feeling tense at work? Stand and stretch to wake up your muscles and relax.

Be social. Shake things up. Try something new, and get out of that stress-induced mental rut.

Sleep. It's a good rule of thumb to shoot for 8 hours a night. A good night's rest can give your ability to handle stress a major boost.

Get fresh air. Time in nature can calm your mind, reduce stress, and lower your cholesterol and blood pressure.

Be social. Spending time with people you care about and enjoy can pull you out of your own head and refocus your mental energy.

A photograph of a man and a woman with long blonde hair sleeping peacefully on a light-colored sofa. A golden retriever dog is curled up next to them, also sleeping. The scene is cozy and intimate, with soft lighting. A red banner is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word 'December' in white text.

December

Sleep well

Do you get enough shut-eye each night? Lack of sleep can have a significant effect on both your physical and mental health.

Missing out on a good night's rest can have a detrimental effect on cardiovascular health, mood, blood pressure and appetite.

Technology, tight schedules and too many tasks contribute to the lack of sleep. According to the CDC, adults need 7-8 hours of sleep each night, but a 2009 survey found that 30% percent of adults reported that they sleep less than 6 hours per night, on average.

TRY THESE TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR CHANCE OF GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S REST:

Reprinted courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Go to bed at the same time each night, and rise at the same time.

Sleep in a quiet, dark, and relaxing environment, which is neither too hot nor too cold.

Remove all TVs, computers, and other "gadgets" from the bedroom.

Make your bed comfortable and use it only for sleeping and not for activities such as reading or watching TV.

Avoid large meals before bedtime.



The Benefits of Better Health

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