

## HEALTH AWARENESS

# Making a better decision-one you don't have to make alone

Information is powerful-especially when it comes to making a medical decision.

But where can you get reliable information and support?

Sometimes it can be tough to get enough time with your doctor to learn about all your treatment choices and the pros and cons of each.

Fortunately, there are ways to find enough information to help you-and your doctor-make a decision that is right for you.

For example, if your doctor suggests surgery for a non-life-threatening condition and there is a less invasive treatment, you might want to know about it.

You might decide to have the surgery after all, but it can ease your mind to know you have made the best, most informed decision.

Health plans such as Health Net offer various kinds of information to

help you navigate today's complicated world of medicine. This information is dispensed in several helpful ways:

- **Health Coaches:** Health coaches are specially trained health professionals, such as nurses, dietitians and respiratory therapists.

Offering expertise and support, they help patients work more closely with their doctors, follow up on their conditions and even help develop everyday action plans to support a doctor's prescribed treatments.

Of those who have worked with health coaches, 80 percent report a higher level of confidence in dealing with their health and medical concerns.

- **Support Videos:** How

can you make a confident health care decision if you are facing major surgery or are at a crossroad in your course of treatment?

Sometimes the most reassuring voice can be the voice of experience, which can also help you to see what choices other patients in your situation have made.

Support videos feature doctors and patients describing the pros and cons of the treatment choices in a straightforward, unbiased format. Viewers see how individuals make completely different treatment selections for the same condition-and why.

- **Monitoring Your Health:** Online tools and resources can help you track and manage a health condition.

Online, you can assess your health by taking a survey and receive recommendations. You can track and monitor your medical condition in a symptom diary.

You can track prescription medications in a medication log. You can find out how much a drug costs under your plan coverage before you visit the pharmacy and learn more about affordable alternatives. A report evaluates hospitals so you can find one that best meets your needs, and a medical group comparison report compares network physicians on their performance in key areas.

Having access to reliable information about a chronic condition can support you in managing it and preventing problems. ■

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## HAIR TODAY

## Caring for your scalp can have beautiful results

If you want to get to the root of what it takes to have healthy, beautiful hair-start at the scalp.

Surprising 50 percent of Americans experience dandruff at some point in their life and, of these, 26 percent have severe dandruff. Dandruff-whether it's just a few flakes or severe-can diminish a person's self-confidence, even if he or she spends a fortune on beauty products.

Some people have very mild itching with

occasional flakes while others naturally have more intense symptoms due to their body's reaction to the causes of dandruff. The symptoms-dryness, tightness, flakes-remain the same, but the degree of irritation is different.

Seborrheic dermatitis, more commonly known as severe dandruff, has some of the same symptoms, but people who experience severe dandruff have persistent irritation and highly visible flakes. Dandruff can also affect the way hair looks and requires a regimen that addresses both hair and scalp care. Studies show that itch and irritation-which are associated with dandruff-lead to increased scratching and touching of the hair and scalp. Severe scratching can lead to secondary infec-

tions or even scarring and can damage hair cuticles, leaving hair dull and lifeless.

"Severe dandruff is more than merely unsightly," says dermatologist Dr. Barbara Schell. "It can become a long-term scalp problem. Fortunately, it can be treated. When dandruff is treated, scratching decreases and allows the scalp's moisture barrier to be restored. The end result is less hair cuticle damage, less hair breakage and less scalp inflammation."

Adds Dr. Schell, lead dermatologist at Ageless in Seattle, Washington, "Shampoos containing pyrithione zinc, in particular, can go a long way toward treating dandruff and helping hair look healthy."

For example, Head & Shoulders Intensive Solutions

formula contains 2-percent pyrithione zinc (ZPT), the maximum strength allowed by the FDA. The formula enhances the bioavailability of zinc, making it effective at targeting the scalp, and starts working against a cause of dandruff from the first wash.

This helps restore a healthy scalp and relieve symptoms.

The formula delivers healthy hair that is touchably soft and manageable. It's even mild enough to use on color-treated hair.

Premium anti-dandruff shampoos such as Head & Shoulders Intensive Solutions reduce visible and invisible dandruff symptoms. ■

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