

HOUSE CALL

KelseyCare Advantage

April 2020

FREE! PREDIABETES DISEASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Did you know that Kelsey-Seybold Clinic offers KelseyCare Advantage members a free prediabetes disease management program administered by Kelsey-Seybold Registered Dietitians? The Workshops are currently available at the following clinic locations:

- Meyerland
- Tanglewood
- Fort Bend Diagnostic Center
- The Vintage
- Clear Lake
- Katy



The Workshop will consist of four separate classes. Each class will be given during one quarter of the calendar year in the locations listed. The classes will be repeated at least every two weeks during the quarter. The classes will be 1.5 hours in length, and the participant can begin the class sequence at any point throughout the year.

The goal of the Workshop is for the participants to lose at least 7% of your body weight by improving and applying practical eating habits and incorporating physical activity. Your weight and waist circumference will also be measured.

While there are four distinct classes comprising the Workshop, each class will include an introduction to the Workshop and a brief overview of prediabetes for new participants. Below are descriptions of the classes:

- First class: This class will explain prediabetes and type 2 diabetes with a focus on prevention. It is an interactive class that will cover healthy food choices, portion control, and the creation of a balanced plate.
- Second class: This class will focus on physical activity.
- Third class: This class will focus on healthy cooking and how to eat healthy when dining out.
- Fourth class: This class will focus on the psychosocial barriers to meaningful lifestyle changes.

Please talk to your Kelsey-Seybold physician about being referred to the Prediabetes Workshop. Once the referral is processed, the Contact Center or a dietician will reach out to you to schedule your class.

We are very excited about this new program and we thank our Kelsey-Seybold Registered Dietitians for their enthusiasm and expertise in designing this very engaging program for our patients with prediabetes.

BEWARE OF GENETIC TESTING FRAUD SCHEMES

GENETIC TESTING IS AN AREA OF GROWING INTEREST IN THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY AND IN THE GENERAL POPULATION.

There are many reasons for this, from finding the best treatment for certain diagnoses to satisfying individual curiosity.

Genetic testing is also an area of growing Medicare Fraud, where unscrupulous entities are trying to cash-in on this growing interest.

Fraudulent genetic testing schemes include offers to members for “free genetic testing” if the member will just provide their Medicare information. These offers typically are made through phone calls, email, door to door sales or postal delivery. The easy way to spot these schemes, is that the offer did not come from your treating physician and they were not initiated in response to a specific illness.

Genetic testing is covered by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), only in a few

circumstances. For genetic testing to be covered by Medicare, the patient must have a condition that would benefit from genetic testing. The treating physician is responsible for making this determination and the genetic test must be ordered by the physician who will be treating the patient. The order to the genetic testing lab must be accompanied by a consent form signed by the patient. The treating physician is required to keep a copy of the consent order in the patient record.

What should you do? If you get one of these offers, you should decline the offer and report the issue to your health plan. The more information you can provide about the event can help to identify and close-down that scheme.

More information on this topic can be found at www.stopmedicarefraud.org.



NEW

BLOOD PRESSURE GUIDELINES

DO YOU HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

In 2017 the American Heart Association in conjunction with the American College of Cardiology came up with new guidelines to diagnose and treat heart disease, lowering the diagnosis of high blood pressure to 130/80 (mm Hg) for all adults 18 years of age and older. This is a change from the previous standard of 140/90 (mm Hg) and the systolic number (top number) was allowed to go up to 150 (mm Hg) if the patient was over 60 years of age.

This means that people who were previously considered to have normal blood pressure, are now considered to have high blood pressure, or stage one hypertension.

According to the new blood pressure categories a normal blood pressure consists of the systolic (the upper number) less than 120 and the diastolic (the lower number) as less than 80. Which means there has been a 20-point drop in what was previously considered normal.

Along with the categories that were developed to help better diagnose high blood pressure, new treatment recommendations were also created. For many patients who now fall into the Elevated or High Blood Pressure categories, nonpharmacological therapy is the first recommendation such as:

- Weight loss
- Healthy diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products with reduced saturated and total fat

- Reduced dietary sodium intake
- A diet rich in potassium with a goal of 3500-5000 mg/d
- Physical activity for a minimum accumulation of 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous physical activity
- Moderation in alcohol consumption with a recommendation of no more than two drinks daily for men and one drink per day for women.
- All adults who use tobacco are advised to quit

By lowering the blood pressure categories, the goal is to detect blood pressure issues early on for patients who now fall into the Elevated or Stage 1 Hypertension category and to start treatment with lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise alone, or medication in addition to lifestyle changes.

People who are concerned about their blood pressure are encouraged to consult your primary care physician and to check it on a regular basis. The first step to check your own blood pressure is to buy a blood pressure monitor and the type that wraps around the upper arm is considered to be the most precise.

Before taking your blood pressure you should try to:

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol 30 minutes beforehand



Dr. Victor Simms,
Internal Medicine

- Sit quietly for 5 minutes with your back supported and with uncrossed legs, as crossed legs at the knee may increase the measurement
- Don't talk during the measurement
- Keep a log of your blood pressure readings and the time of day
- Your Kelsey-Seybold physician may recommend leaving the cuff in place and taking multiple readings, then averaging them together.

No matter your age, it is important to get your blood pressure checked on a regular basis to see what category you fall into and discuss treatment options with your provider to stay healthy and to continue to feel your best.

UNDERSTANDING PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

More than 20 million Americans suffer from a condition known as peripheral neuropathy.



Peripheral neuropathy is when the nerves in your feet and legs or hands and arms have been damaged or destroyed – often from diabetes, traumatic injuries, infections, alcoholism, exposure to toxins and other causes. As a result, those nerves, which communicate with the brain, might send signals of pain when nothing is actually causing pain. Or they might not send a pain signal at all when something is harming you. There are many different types of peripheral neuropathy, and people over 50 are at higher risk.

Patients with peripheral neuropathy generally experience pain that they describe as stabbing, burning or tingling (a “pins and needles” sensation) that can

spread through one’s arms and legs. Some patients complain of numbness or weakness. The symptoms, especially those of burning or shooting pain, are often worse at night. Eventually the pain goes away, but the person is left with a chronic feeling of numbness or coldness in their feet.

Seek medical care right away if you notice unusual tingling, weakness or pain in your hands or feet. Early diagnosis and treatment offer the best chance for controlling your symptoms and preventing further damage to your peripheral nerves.



SilverSneakers[®]

GO[™] APP



Do you know that as a KelseyCare Advantage member that you have access to SilverSneakers at no additional cost to you? This means you can visit national gym chains such as 24 Hour Fitness, LA Fitness, and the YMCA and you can use the facility just as any other member would, including the fitness equipment and classes.

All you need to do is give your SilverSneakers ID number at any participating location and they will help you get registered at their facility. You can also visit multiple gyms if different locations offer different amenities or classes that you like.

You can visit [SilverSneakers.com](https://www.silversneakers.com) to get your ID number and to find a gym near you. Or, download the SilverSneakers GO[™] app at: <https://go.silversneakers.com/go> for adjustable workout programs tailored to your fitness level, schedule reminders for your favorite activities, and find convenient locations on the app as well! Here are some examples of the exercises featured on the app that you can do at home if you can't make it to a gym:



STANDING CAT/COW POSE:

This exercise creates mobility in your spine.

1. Place feet hip-width apart, or slightly wider and bend your knees.
2. With your hands on your hips, inhale to lift the chest, pulling your elbows back.
3. Exhale, pulling your abdominals in, rounding your spine, stretching through your back.
4. As you inhale, allow your chin to lift slightly. As you exhale, draw your chin down.



STANDING SHOULDER ROLLS:

This exercise expands your shoulder range of motion with easy shoulder rolls.

1. Standing tall, with knees slightly bent, lift your shoulders toward your ears and pause.
2. Pull your shoulders back, squeezing through the shoulder blades and pause.

If you have questions, visit [SilverSneakers.com](https://www.silversneakers.com) or call 1-888-423-4632 (TTY: 711), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET. **Always talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.**

Guide to Splitting Pills Safely

ASK DENISE *(Rx plans)*

Pill splitting is referred to as the action of breaking a pill into a smaller amount (typically in half) of the whole pill. The most common reason for pill splitting includes taking a dosage of a drug that is not available on the market. Be sure to follow the instructions carefully on the prescription bottle if a pill needs to be split.

It is very important to always discuss with your pharmacist or doctor before splitting a pill because not all pills can safely be split. A general rule of thumb to safely split pills is to check the package insert to determine if a drug is FDA approved for pill splitting or the pill may be “scored” or split down the middle. Pills that should not be split are those with a hard-outer coat, extended release formulation, capsules, or a small or uneven shape.

If your pharmacist or doctor determines pill splitting is appropriate for you, use a pill cutter instead of a knife to ensure the pills are split more evenly. A pill cutter is relatively inexpensive and can be purchased at your local pharmacy. The pill should be cut right before taking the pill and avoid cutting all your pills at the same time to prevent the exposure of the pill to air, heat or humidity that may affect the potency of the pill.

If you have any trouble remembering to split the pills on an ongoing basis, using your hands, or memory problems and do not have someone to help you, then pill splitting may not be a safe option for you. Always verify with your pharmacist or doctor if you are not sure about the prescription dosage or have any questions about pill splitting.



Denise M. Jonathan,
Pharm. D., R.Ph.



DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR DENISE?

With each quarterly newsletter, Denise answers questions that are submitted by KelseyCare Advantage members. If you have a general pharmacy or prescription question, please submit them to HouseCall@KelseyCareAdvantage.com.

Advice provided by Denise is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice or a guaranty of treatment, outcome, or cure.

MANAGING DRUG SHORTAGES

Drug shortages can be caused by various reasons, due to recalls or safety concerns, a manufacturer's underestimation of the medication demands, and sometimes even natural disasters that may cause delays in production due to facility damage.

Serious drug shortages are often publicly noted in the news or could be communicated with you through your local pharmacy or your health plan. If you do receive news that one or more of your medications have been impacted by a local or national shortage, remember:

DO NOT WORRY

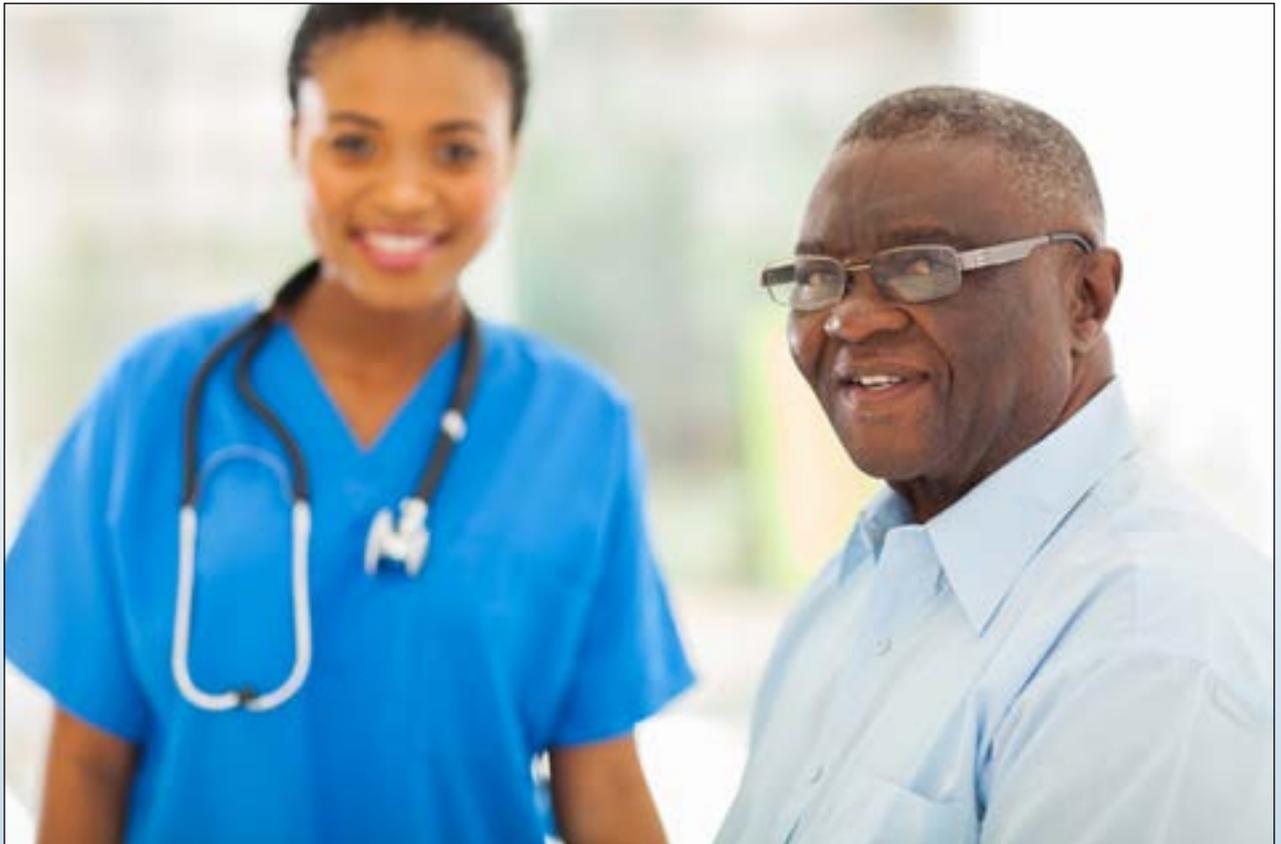
- Drug shortages are very common and often resolve quickly without even impacting patients. If a drug shortage is severe enough to cause harm to any patients, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has a structured multi-step plan to resolve the issue in a timely manner.
- Similarly, most drug manufacturers have processes in place that would help expedite their response to a severe drug shortage that could impact patient safety.

DO NOT DISCONTINUE OR RATION YOUR MEDICATIONS

- Abruptly stopping your medications or taking them in any way other than how it was prescribed by your provider could cause serious harm. If you need to stop taking your medications, or are temporarily unable to find a new supply, call your provider immediately to see what next steps you should take.

TRUST YOUR PHARMACY TEAM

- Most pharmacies closely monitor for any unusual trends that may lead to drug shortages and do their best to inform patients who may be affected by a lack of access to particular drugs. At this time, pharmacies would have the most accurate information about which suitable alternatives can be used instead of the medication in shortage.
- Before your provider writes you a new prescription, make sure that they consult with your local pharmacist about alternate medications and their availability in the market.



KelseyCare Advantage Concierge Team

We are your health care plan experts. The next time you need assistance or just want help obtaining an earlier appointment please contact your **KelseyCare Advantage Concierge Representative at 713-442-9540.**

The Concierge team was created as a trusted point of contact and information source for KelseyCare Advantage members to help them navigate the healthcare experience. The Concierge team is exclusively available to patients who are enrolled in the KelseyCare Advantage plan. Think of your Concierge Representative as a personal healthcare assistant and benefits advocate all rolled into one.

The Concierge team prides itself on trying to assist members at the first point of contact because we know your time is valuable. One of the reasons we are successful in helping patients is because of the Concierge's connection with the physicians and support staff who provide your medical care. Concierge Representatives have access to the same computer system used by Kelsey-Seybold Clinic so we can see appointment history, referral requests, and we are knowledgeable about what services are covered by your health plan.

Concierge Representatives can assist you with appointment access, finding physicians, resolving complex billing and eligibility issues and answering questions about your health care benefits. The Concierge Representatives are experts on what services are provided at the various clinic locations and offer personalized assistance with coordinating appointments to make it easier for you.

Important Plan Information

11511 Shadow Creek Parkway | Pearland, TX 77584

KelseyCare Advantage