

Winter Safety Tips

Avoid slips and falls

It can be easy for anyone to slip and fall on icy, snowy sidewalks and roads. Falls can cause major injuries such as hip and wrist fractures, head trauma, and major cuts and bruises.

If you can, stay inside on snowy, icy days until the roads, steps, and walkways are clear and lightly salted. Avoid going out after dark because melted snow or ice can freeze again when the temperatures drop at night.

Proper footwear reduces your risk of falling. Make sure your winter shoes fit well and have good traction and non-skid soles. If you use a cane or walker, replace any worn tips to give you better traction.

When you come indoors from wintry wet weather, remove shoes and boots at the door so you don't spread snow and ice around your home that can melt into slippery puddles.

Stay warm

Cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia, which happen when your body temperature dips too low. Hypothermia occurs when your body temperature drops below 95 degrees. You don't even have to be outside to develop hypothermia.

This deadly condition can occur right in your own home. Adults over sixty and children under five tend to lose body heat quickly. Hypothermia can set in gradually

or very quickly, and you may be unaware that it is happening. It is especially dangerous because it affects your ability to think clearly—which makes you less likely to reach out for help.

Symptoms of hypothermia include excessive shivering, slurred speech, clumsiness, weak pulse, memory loss, dizziness, redness of the skin, and loss of consciousness. Hypothermia is a medical emergency and needs immediate medical attention.

To avoid hypothermia while in your home:

- Keep the thermostat always set to at least 68 degrees
- Dress in warm layers around the house
- Wear thick dry socks and slippers with non-slip soles



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The symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure include shortness of breath, nausea or dizziness, headaches, and a feeling of confusion. If you have these symptoms, immediately go outside into fresh air and call 911.

Make sure you have working flashlights, warm blankets, and, if available, a charged cell phone in case you lose power. Long power outages can spoil food in your refrigerator and freezer so keep a supply of non-perishable foods on hand that can be eaten without heating.

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- Avoid alcoholic beverages because the alcohol can cause you to lose body heat

When heading outdoors, wear warm socks, dry footwear, a heavy coat over layered clothing, a warm hat, gloves, and a scarf. In very cold temperatures, you should cover all exposed skin. Use your scarf to cover your mouth and face and a hat to protect your head and ears.

Prepare for cold weather and power outages

Space heaters can help warm small rooms when paired with other types of home heat sources. These heaters should be located clear of clutter and not left unattended. Many fires have been caused by improper use of these heaters.

Using a fireplace, gas or kerosene heater, or lanterns can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning if not used correctly. Ensure your safety by following the manufacturer's directions for use.

Check the batteries on your carbon monoxide detector and make sure the unit isn't expired. Purchase an updated detector if needed or ask your landlord to replace expired units. Test your carbon monoxide detector once a month during the winter.

One of the most important tips when your power goes out is to call someone to let them know that you are without power and may need help.

Ask for help

During these cold months, ask for help when you need it. Whether you need to clear your steps of snow and ice, or stock up on nourishing groceries, feel free to ask a family member, friend, neighbor or hire a professional.

Wintertime certainly poses challenges for all, but with a bit of planning and awareness, you can stay safe and experience the joy of wellness during this season.



Reducing Emergency Room Visits

The emergency room is a vital resource for life-threatening or severe health conditions. However, there is a staggering number of emergency room visits made by patients each year that are non-urgent. In 2022, over sixty percent of the emergency room visits could have been treated by a Primary Care Physician or Urgent Care Facility.

There are several reasons why an unnecessary trip to the emergency room may negatively impact patients and their health outcomes. Emergency rooms are typically very busy and overcrowded which can lead to patient stress, lengthy wait times, and exposure to respiratory and other contagious illnesses.

Tips to stay healthy and avoid ER visits:

- Be proactive and complete preventative health care screenings and obtain vaccinations as recommended. Getting routine preventive care can help you stay well and catch problems early, helping you live a longer, healthier life.
- Regular checkups with health care providers to reduce the chances of developing chronic disease
- Take medications as directed. If any side effects are experienced, communicate with your PCP immediately. Do not stop medications abruptly.
- Learn the warning signs and symptoms of worsening chronic health conditions such as Diabetes, COPD, Heart or Kidney disease. Discuss any new or worsening symptoms with your Primary Care Physician or Health Plan care team immediately.
- Avoid falls by always using necessary assistive devices. Remove throw rugs, trip hazards, and clutter from pathways.

What if I become sick or incur a minor injury?

- 1) Call your Primary Care Physician for an appointment and/or recommendation.
- 2) If an appointment is not immediately available for non-life threatening conditions, seek treatment at a local Urgent Care Facility.

Our member's health and well-being are our highest priority. Your Care Manager or other Health Plan Representative are here to help you coordinate your health care services. If any assistance is needed with arranging preventative health care screenings, vaccinations, or coordinating care with medical providers, contact the health plan for assistance.

Beat the Winter Blues

Winter blues, or Seasonal Affective Disorder, is a phenomenon that strikes people of all ages; it can cause depression and a lack of energy or interest that could last all winter long. This problem is especially difficult for a homebound individuals who spend most of their time inside during the winter months.

Keep the Mind Active

Although physical activity may decrease due to poor weather, you can keep your mind active by participating in mental exercises. Games such as crossword puzzles or Sudoku can keep your mind active. Jigsaw puzzles and or other hobby items can keep you entertained and make you think.

Winter is also a good time of the year to learn a new skill or try a new interest. You will have something to look forward to and share with others. It can make the winter months seem like they are going by faster when you have something to work on each day.

Stay Mobile

Even if you cannot get outside, you can find ways to be active in your home. The internet can be a great place to watch and participate in a fitness video. On days when it is warmer, you can go for a walk with a caregiver. A stationary bike also provides opportunity for exercise in the home.

Eat Healthy

Foods with too much sugar or caffeine can make you feel jittery or alter your mood. Many of these foods will provide a fast rush of energy and then a quick drop, leaving you feeling worse than before. Foods such as pasta and other carbohydrates often leave a person feeling tired and sluggish, which adds to the winter blues.

New Providers December–February

Please join us in welcoming the newest members of our provider network. A complete list of providers is available by calling (888) 477-4663 or by visiting nascentiahealthoptions.org/member-materials.



Provider	Service	Counties Served	Address/Phone
God's Love We Deliver	Home Delivered Meals	All 48 Counties	166 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10013 212-294-8187
Evergreen Choice LLC dba FreedomCare LLC	LHCSA	Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, and Washington	401 New Karner Road Suite 301 Albany, NY 12205 347-929-9146
Katherine Luther Residential Health Care & Rehabilitation Center	Outpatient Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech Therapy; Skilled Nursing Facility	Oneida	110 Utica Road Clinton, NY 13323 315-853-5515
Effortlessly Healthy, LLC	Medical Adult Day Health Care	Oneida	4290 Middle Settlement Road New Hartford, NY 13413 315-797-7500

Member Rights: Voluntary Dis-enrollment

Nascentia Health Options has a robust grievance process in place that is designed to investigate and resolve your concerns. That said, there may be issues that cannot be resolved to your satisfaction. You may also decide that our plan simply isn't a good fit for you. If you wish to dis-enroll from the plan, you may do so at any time and for any reason by providing oral or written notification to Nascentia Health Options (we will provide written confirmation upon receipt of an oral request).

Your Care Manager/Coordinator will begin coordinating services for your transition upon receipt of your notice, and your dis-enrollment will take effect no later than the first day of the second month following the month you submitted your request. Should you wish to initiate dis-enrollment, you will be asked to sign a voluntary dis-enrollment form. If you choose to dis-enroll to another MLTC plan, you must still qualify to maintain coverage in an MLTC. This includes the need for community based long-term care services for more than 120 days.

If you have any questions about the dis-enrollment process, please contact your Care Manager/Coordinator or Member Services at 1.888.477.HOME (4663).

Preventing Falls

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year, one in every three adults, age 65 and older, suffers a fall. Falls can cause moderate to severe injuries, such as hip fractures and head injuries, and even increase the risk of early death. At Nascentia Health Options, we want to help you reduce the risk of a fall, or if you have already fallen, get you back on your feet as soon as possible.

These simple tips can help prevent a fall:

Install non-slip mats: Put non-slip mats in the bathtub and on the shower floor.

Remove small rugs: Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.

Install grab bars: Have grab bars put in next to your toilet, tub or shower.

Wear proper footwear: Make sure shoes and slippers have good support and non-slip soles.

Reorganize cabinets: Keep the items you use most often on shelves that are easy to reach, so you can avoid using a step stool.

Discuss prior falls, if any: Tell your Care Manager and doctor if you have fallen and describe how the fall(s) happened.

Discuss ALL medications: Be sure to tell your Care Manager and doctor about every medication that you are taking, including over-the-counter medications, vitamins and herbal remedies.

By making your home safer and communicating with your Nascentia Health Options health care professionals, you can easily lower your chance of a fall.



Urinary Tract Infections

Causes, Risks, and Prevention

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are one of the top reasons that our members visit the emergency room and are hospitalized. Most UTIs are caused by an infection from bacteria that get into the urinary tract system.

UTIs can cause pain and difficulty with urination. You may feel pressure or aching in your bladder or lower pelvic area, or low back and side pain. It may hurt, sting, or burn when you urinate. Your urine may appear cloudy, have blood in it, or develop a foul or strong odor. You may feel like you need to urinate very frequently but only small amounts of urine come out at a time.

Certain risk factors may increase your likelihood of developing a UTI. If you have any of the risk factors listed below, tell your doctor about them and discuss your concerns.

UTI Risk Factors

- Being immobile or not moving much
- Neurological conditions that affect the bladder's nerve conduction, including diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and spinal cord injuries
- Using a catheter (a tube placed in the body that drains the urine from the bladder to a collection bag)
- Having a urine blockage, such as from a kidney stone, narrowed urethra, tumor, or enlarged prostate gland
- Bowel incontinence (the inability to control when you have a bowel movement)
- Not drinking enough liquids
- Men that are not circumcised
- Diabetes and other diseases that can impair the immune system—the body's defense against germs

To Prevent UTIs

- Drink plenty of fluids, as directed by your physician, especially water. This helps keep bladder tissue hydrated and healthy.
- Avoid holding your urine. Make sure you go to the bathroom when you feel the urge to go. Holding your urine can encourage bacterial growth. Don't wait more than 4 hours to go to the bathroom.
- Avoid taking baths. If possible, take showers instead of baths. Sitting in dirty tub water increases your risk of getting a UTI.
- Increase your intake of cranberries. Pure cranberry juice or fresh, frozen, or sugar-free dried cranberries are the best options. You can also take cranberry tablets. Scientists think that cranberries contain a substance that helps prevent bacteria from sticking to the bladder wall so that they are flushed out of your system when you urinate.
- Women should wipe from the front toward the back after using the bathroom to avoid spreading bacteria into their bladder.

If you think you have a UTI, it is important to see your doctor so they do a urine test and prescribe a treatment. Ignoring these symptoms could result in further complications, including hospitalization.



Eating cranberries can help prevent UTIs. Look for no or low-added sugar options.

What Are Advance Directives and Why They Matter

An advance directive is your life on your terms. Whether you're 18 or 80, documenting your wishes today ensures that your future care aligns with your personal values and reduces stress for your family during critical decision-making moments.

During an emergency or at the end of life, you may face questions about your medical treatment and not be able to answer them. You may assume your loved ones know what you would want, but that's not always true.

Advance Directives (ADs) are legal documents where you record your future medical wishes, such as whether you want life support or feeding tubes, and designate someone to make decisions for you if you can't speak for yourself due to serious illness or unconsciousness, ensuring your care aligns with your values and gives loved ones peace of mind.

Examples of Advance Directives:

Health Care Proxy

You name a health agent (person) to make health care decisions for you if you become unable to make your own decisions. It should be updated every few years and during major life events.

Living Will

It is a written statement of your specific health care wishes in the event you become unable to decide for yourself.

Non-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order

If someone has a non-hospital DNR order, and they stop breathing or their heart stops beating, CPR will not be started.

MOLST

The MOLST form is a medical order document used in New York State to record patient preferences for life-sustaining interventions, including resuscitation, intubation, and artificial nutrition. It is intended for you to clearly document your preferences for certain

life-sustaining treatments and translate these preferences into legally valid medical orders recognized across all care settings.

What Happens if I Do Not Have an Advance Directive?

If you do not have an advanced directive and you are unable to make decisions on your own, decisions regarding your care may fall upon your spouse, your parents, or your children if they are adults. If you are unmarried and have not named your partner as your proxy, it's possible they would be excluded from decision-making.

How to talk about what matters to you and have a say in your health care.

After you've had a conversation with your loved ones, the next step is talking to your health care team about your wishes. Don't wait for a medical crisis; talking with your doctor or nurse now makes it easier to make medical decisions when the time comes.

If you have questions about Advance Directives, please call us at 315-477-4663.

Scan the QR Code below to complete our Advance Directives survey!

Need help scanning the QR code? Follow the directions below!

1. Open your camera: launch the default camera app on your smartphone.
2. Point at QR Code: hold your phone so the QR code appears clearly in the frame, ensuring it's well-lit and in focus.
3. Tap notification: a banner or pop-up with a link will appear; tap it to open the content.



Nascentia Health OPTIONS

1050 West Genesee St.

Syracuse, NY 13204

nascentiahealthoptions.org

(888) 477-4663



Member Advisory Committee



Did you know that Nascentia Health Options has a Member Advisory Committee that meets twice a year? This committee gives our members a voice and an opportunity to meet with other MLTC members and leadership to discuss the current status of the health plan and share your thoughts about being a member of Nascentia. We are a strong, growing plan and your feedback is important to us!

The next Member Advisory Committee is Wednesday, March 25, from 3–4pm both in person and via phone. We hope you will join us!

If you or your family member or representative are interested in joining the Member Advisory Committee meeting, please contact June Misnik at (315) 477-9278 or jmisnik@nascentiahealth.org.