

Transition Guide

How to get a good start on the outside.







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How to get a good start on the outside.

The transition back to the community may be hard. This guide is for people who have just left prison and are ready to start over. It can help if you:

- need identification (ID) to get services.
- do not know where to go when you first get out.
- want to find food or need help to pay for food.
- need help finding housing.
- want job training or help finding a job.
- do not have a doctor.
- have chronic health problems and need health care.
- want to get a test for HIV, for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), or for other diseases that can be passed from person to person.
- want to get into a program to stay free from alcohol and drugs.
- need help with depression or other emotional health problems.

This guide gives you information and resources to help you get a good start on the outside. It tells you about agencies and programs that can give you support. Keep this guide with you at all times so that you can read it when you need a phone number or information about how to take care of your health and safety.

Table of Contents

TAKING CARE OF YOUR IMMEDIATE NEEDS ... 4

- Finding a Safe Place to Stay
- Finding Food
- Staying Drug Free
- Preventing Diseases that Can Be Spread During Sex

GETTING IDENTIFICATION (ID) 12

- Release ID
- Non-Driver's ID or Driver's License
- Social Security Card
- Birth Certificate
- Medicaid Benefit Card

TAKING CARE OF YOUR HEALTH 18

- Finding a Doctor or Clinic
- Paying for Health Care
- Regular Check-ups
- Dental Health
- Tips for Staying Healthy

FINDING A JOB 25

- Writing a Resumé
- The Job Interview
- Getting Help with your Job Search
- What to Do if You Think That You Have Been Discriminated Against in Your Job Search

AVOIDING DRUGS AND ALCOHOL 30

- Tips for Staying Off Drugs and Alcohol
- Quitting Heroin
- Safe Injection Practices
- Opioid Overdose Prevention
- Safe Disposal of Used Needles/Syringes
- Quitting Smoking

**PROTECTING YOURSELF & OTHERS
FROM DISEASES35**

HIV and AIDS

Other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Hepatitis A, B & C

Tuberculosis (TB)

LIVING WITH HIV OR AIDS 42

Finding a Doctor and Health Care Services

Getting Treatment

Housing for People Living with HIV/AIDS

Letting Partners Know They May Have Been Exposed
to HIV

HIV/AIDS Discrimination

CHRONIC DISEASES 49

Diabetes

Coronary Heart Disease

Asthma

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING 53

Finding Help

FAMILY AND PARENTING 56

Pregnancy

Domestic Violence

Family Reunification

Family Planning Benefits Program

FINDING A SAFE PLACE TO STAY

You may not have a home or a place to stay when you first get out. Finding a safe place to stay is very important. Emergency housing or shelters can give you a temporary place to stay right away and give you some time to find more secure housing.

An emergency shelter can give you a place to sleep, food, and in some shelters, use of a phone. Emergency shelters have shared sleeping space, bathrooms, kitchens, and other areas. Some emergency shelters are for men only, some are for families only, and some are for women who have been abused. Staff at shelters may be able to help you look for transitional (short-term) housing, long-term housing, get you to a case manager, or find a health care clinic. Be sure to ask shelter staff for help.

EMERGENCY SHELTERS IN NEW YORK CITY

At most emergency shelters in New York City, you can stay for 30 days, but usually for not more than 90 days. You cannot stay inside some emergency shelters during the day. If you are looking for emergency shelters in New York City, contact the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) intake center. The staff will work to meet your needs for short-term housing.

IN THE NEW YORK CITY AREA CALL:

New York City Department of Homeless Services

33 Beaver Street, New York, NY 10004

(212) 361-8000

Single Adult Men

30th Street Intake Center

400-430 E. 30th Street, New York, NY 10016

Single Adult Women

HELP Women's Shelter

116 Williams Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217

718-483-7700, or

Franklin Shelter

1122 Franklin Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456

718-842-9797

New York City Housing Authority

250 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

(212) 306-3000

Fortune Society

Fortune Society works with people who are in prison and their families, as well as helping with re-entry. Fortune Society strives to help people make the transition back into the community and strengthen their family ties.

www.fortunesociety.org

Long Island City (Main Office)

29-76 Northern Boulevard, Long Island City, NY 11101

Hours: Monday - Thursday 8 AM - 8 PM

Friday 8 AM - 5 PM

212-691-7554

Castle Gardens*

625 W. 140th Street, New York, NY 10031

The Fortune Academy (The Castle)*

630 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10031

*No walk-ins Please call main office in Long Island City

Manhattan Main Office

53 West 23rd Street (between 5th and 6th Avenue)

New York, NY 10010

Hours: Monday - Thursday, 8 AM - 8 PM

Friday 8 AM - 5 PM

Intake starts at 9 AM, Monday to Wednesday.

(212) 691-7554

Queens Plaza, Drop-in Center

29-76 Northern Blvd., Long Island City, NY 11101

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM

(212) 691-7554

EMERGENCY SHELTERS IN THE REST OF NEW YORK STATE

Many counties in New York State do not have emergency shelters and instead provide emergency housing in local motels. If you meet the program rules, many local Departments of Social Services (DSS) can help you pay for housing in local motels until you can find more secure housing. These motels usually do not have a refrigerator or a place to cook meals.

Finding a place to live can take hard work and patience. Get help from someone who knows the area of the state where you want to live. You might be able to find housing on your own. But there are people whose job is to help you with housing. They are often called housing placement assistance workers.

Having a criminal record may affect the type of public housing you can get. You may not be accepted for housing if you have been convicted of a violent crime, a sexual offense or arson. If you have a criminal record and you have questions about getting housing, talk with a housing placement assistance worker.

OUTSIDE THE NYC AREA

Call the local DSS office, which is usually listed as “Department of Social Services” in the “County Government” section of your local phone book.

Most local DSS offices are not open on weekends or after 5:00 pm on weekdays, so you have to call them during a weekday. But if you have a case manager from another agency, ask him or her to help you through the DSS process because it can be confusing.

For a list of county government offices, visit:

www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/localdss.asp

DSS can provide a lot of help.

As soon as you find a place to stay, call your Parole Officer. Remember, you need to call him or her within 24 hours of your release date. Keep your Parole Officer’s phone number with you at all times and be sure to let him/her know the best way to reach you.

FINDING FOOD

If you need food right away and you do not have the money to pay for a hot meal, there are places (soup kitchens) that offer free hot meals or food pantries that will give you food to take with you. There are food pantries or soup kitchens in many towns and cities. Call the following numbers below to find a food pantry or soup kitchen in your area. You may have to pay for the food, or show ID (see page 12), so be sure to ask about this when you call.

These are some groups you can call if you need food:

Hunger Free America

This agency works with the many food pantries and other hunger groups in New York City. Their website has a list of all food pantries in New York City:

<https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/food-map>

50 Broad St., #1520

New York, NY 10004

212-825-0028, or email: hungerfreeamerica.org

Hunger Hotline

This service is run by the City of New York.

Call **1-866-888-8777** for free, Monday through Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM to find out when and where to get food.

If you live in New York City, just dial 311.

NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA)

HRA has many different programs and services to help individuals and families be independent.

Call the HRA Infoline at: **1-718-557-1399 for English**

1-718-5571339 for Spanish

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/localdss.asp>

Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities serves New York City and the whole state. For information about services and programs or to find a Catholic Charities near you, go to:

www.catholiccharitiesusa.org. Or call the Catholic Charities free help line at **1-888-744-7900**.

The Salvation Army of Greater New York (City)

120 W. 14th Street

New York, NY 10011

General information: 212-337-7200

WHAT TO DO WHEN PAYING FOR FOOD IS HARD

If you have a case manager, talk to him or her about free food programs. If you do not have a case manager and want to find out about how to get help paying for food, call the local Department of Social Services (DSS) office. The local office is usually listed as “Department of Social Services” in the “County Government” section of your local phone book. Most local DSS offices are not open on weekends or after 5 p.m. on weekdays, so you have to call them during a weekday.

Food Stamps

Food Stamps can help you pay for groceries. You may be able to get Food Stamps even if you are not on welfare. To find out where to apply for Food Stamps in your area, call the New York Temporary Assistance Hotline at **1-800-342-3009**. This is a free call.

WIC (Women, Infants & Children)

WIC is a food program for pregnant women and women with infants and young children. Call the Growing Up Healthy hotline at **1-800-522-5006** to find out more. This is a free call. **TTY 1-800-655-1789**.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Disability

SSI is for low-income people who are 65 years or older or who are disabled. SSI can provide you with monthly cash payments to meet basic food, clothing, and shelter needs.

To sign up for SSI, you will have to go to your local Social Security Office and fill out a form.

Call **1-800-772-1213**, (TTY) **1-800-325-0778**, to learn more about SSI.

STAYING DRUG FREE

Now that you are out, you may need some help staying drug free. Using drugs can harm your health and put you back in jail or prison. Call these numbers to get help staying off drugs:

New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS). Outside of New York City, call **1-877-8HOPENY (1-877-846-7369)**, or text 467369. Free, 24/7. Ask for the programs nearest you.

New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports. www.oasas.ny.gov/

In **New York City**, call **1-800-NYCWELL (692-9355)**.

This is a help line for people seeking treatment for drugs, alcohol, or emotional health problems. You can call this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and you do not have to give your name.

Injecting illegal drugs is not safe or good for your health. If you inject drugs, you are at risk for overdose, HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and other serious infections. To find **methadone maintenance programs** to help you quit heroin, call **1-877-8HOPENY (1-877-846-7369)**, Monday through Friday, 9 AM - 5 PM.

If you are going to inject, there are ways you can lower your risk for disease and protect others:

- Use new needles and works each time you inject.
- Do not share your works (syringes, needles, cotton, cookers, water, etc.).
- Do not buy needles on the street, even if they look new.
- If you are 18 or older, you can buy new syringes at some (ESAP) pharmacy. Look for this sign at drug stores:



Or, ask if they sell syringes without a prescription. You may also be able to get new syringes and other harm reduction supplies at a syringe exchange program. Call **1-800-541-2437** to find a drugstore that sells needles or to find a syringe exchange program. Spanish speakers can call **1-800-233-7432**. You can also use your phone or computer to visit: The Point, a NYS harm reduction supply and service locator tool. www.thepointny.org.

To learn more about safe injection, go to page 30.

New York State's Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs

A life-saving law took effect on April 1, 2006, making it legal in New York State for non-medical persons to administer naloxone to another individual to prevent an opioid/heroin overdose from becoming fatal. Naloxone (Narcan) is an easy-to-use prescription medication that can reverse an opioid overdose and save a person's life if it is given in time.

Opioids are drugs like heroin, Oxycontin, fentanyl, codeine, morphine, and others. People are at greatest risk of opioid overdose when beginning to use drugs after a period of not using them.

It is important to seek medical care if a person has been given naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose. Some opioids will last longer in the body than the naloxone and it is possible for a person to overdose a second time as the naloxone wears off.

Naloxone is not a controlled substance and is very safe to use. It can help save a life when used in time to reverse an opioid overdose.

NEED NALOXONE?

There are multiple ways to get Naloxone/Overdose Rescue Kits in New York:

- 1. Correctional Facility:** If you participated in an Opioid Overdose Prevention Training during your incarceration you may be to get naloxone at no cost when you are released. Ask your counselor for more information about how to participate in this training and how to access naloxone at no cost.
- 2. Opioid Overdose Prevention Program:** The New York State Department of Health registers providers to operate an Opioid Overdose Prevention Program. These programs train individuals how to respond to suspected overdoses including the administration of naloxone. These programs are sometimes available at places like health care facilities, health care practitioners, drug treatment programs, not-for-profit community-based organizations and local health departments. These registered programs provide training and naloxone at no cost for individuals without prescription coverage as part of their health insurance plan, individuals without insurance, vulnerable individuals or individuals using naloxone in the line of duty.
- 3. Pharmacy:** Many New York pharmacies provide naloxone through a “standing order” which means that you don’t need a prescription to get the medication.

If you have insurance, you can use your prescription coverage to help pay for naloxone at the pharmacy. If you have a prescription coverage as part of your insurance plan, you can use the Naloxone Co-payment Assistance Program (N-CAP) to cover up to \$40 to reduce or eliminate your out-of-pocket expenses when getting naloxone at a participating pharmacy. Ask the pharmacist if their store participates in N-CAP.

A directory of registered **Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs** as well as the list of pharmacies in each region with a standing order are available at this website: <https://www.health.ny.gov/overdose>

For more information you can call the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute at **1-800-692-8528**.
English/Spanish

For ESAP ordering or Syringe Exchange Programs press **#1**

For Opioid Overdose Prevention press **#2**

For the Office of Drug User Health, naloxone or N-CAP press **#3**

For buprenorphine or bup trainings press **#4**

For ESAP programs, pharmacies or syringe disposal sites press **#5**

PREVENTING DISEASES THAT CAN BE SPREAD DURING SEX

There are many diseases that can be passed through sexual contact. These are called sexually transmitted infections (STIs). STIs are spread from person to person by vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Some STIs are also spread by skin-to-skin contact. You cannot tell by looking at someone if he or she has an STI. You may not even know if you have an STI. Even if you have no signs or symptoms, you can still spread an STI to others (even skin that looks normal may be infected). HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is just one type of STI. Most people who have HIV or another STI have no signs or symptoms. The only way to know for sure if you have an STI is to get tested. See page 36 to learn more.

If you are having sex, you can lower your chances of getting an STI by using a latex male condom or a female condom each time you have sex. Latex male condoms and female condoms work very well to prevent the spread of HIV and many other STIs.

HOW ELSE CAN YOU LOWER YOUR CHANCE OF GETTING OR PASSING AN STI?

Make sure you do not get anyone else's blood, semen, vaginal fluids, or breast milk in your body. Protect your partners, too. Condoms are the best protection and the only way to protect yourself and your partner from STIs or HIV. It is important to use condoms correctly every time you have sex.

Drug use can also lead people to take risks that they might not take if they weren't high. These drugs include alcohol, cocaine, crack, heroin, and marijuana.

Be honest with yourself about the risks you take and decide how you can be safer.

To protect yourself and your partner:

- Always use condoms.
- Do not have sex if you have sores or other signs of infection.
- Get tested and treated by a doctor or a clinic.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a prevention option for people who are at high risk of getting HIV. It's meant to be used consistently, as a pill taken every day, and to be used with other prevention options such as condoms. Find out if PrEP is right for you. Visit: www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html

For a list of New York State PrEP Providers:
1-800-541-AIDS or 1-800-233-SIDA
<https://providerdirectory.aidsinstituteny.org/>

You may find that you need an ID (proof of who you are) for many services, including housing or health care, and to apply for a job.

This section will give you information on how to get each of these important forms of ID. You will need to fill out many forms and show other forms of ID. You must use your real name (the one on your birth certificate) when you apply. You cannot use nicknames or aliases.

RELEASE ID

A release ID is given to people leaving prison so that they can show proof of who they are. If you have been given a release ID, it is good for 60 days (about two months) after the date of your release. You can use it to get a Non-Driver's ID or a Driver's License.

NON-DRIVER'S ID OR DRIVER'S LICENSE

A Non-Driver's ID does not allow you to drive, but it is a good form of picture ID that will help you get into housing programs, apply for jobs, or get medical care. You can get these IDs at the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). You will need to show another form of ID to get a Non-Driver's ID or a Driver's License; for example, a birth certificate. Call the DMV before you go so that you know what forms of ID you will need to bring.

To find a DMV near you, call:

**New York State Department of Motor Vehicles
1-518-486-9786**

**New York City Department of Motor Vehicles
1-718-966-6155**

General Telephone Assistance (DMV Call Centers):
DMV Call Center Representatives are available weekdays (except state holidays) between 8AM and 4PM (Eastern Time).

From area codes 212, 347, 646, 718, 917 & 929:
1-212-645-5550 or 1-718-966-6155

From area codes 516, 631, 845 and 914:
1-718-477-4820

From area codes 315, 518, 585, 607 and 716:
1-518-486-9786

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)
1-800-622-1220

From outside New York State:
1-518-473-5595

SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

The Social Security card lists your nine-digit Social Security number (SSN). This number is unique to you and cannot be used by anyone else. All United States citizens born in this country get a SSN at birth. If you do not have your original card and need a new one, you can get one at a Social Security Administration Office. You will need to fill out a form called an SS-5. You will also need to show two forms of ID that prove your age, identity, and U.S. citizenship or visa. Only the original forms of ID are accepted, no photocopies. IDs that the Social Security office accepts are:

- Driver's license or non-driver's ID
- Marriage or divorce record
- Military record
- Employer ID card
- Insurance policy
- Health insurance
- School ID
- Adoption record
- Passport

To find a social security office near you, call:
1-800-772-1213.

The TTY number for deaf and hard-of-hearing people is:
1-800-325-0778.

When you call these numbers, you will get a recorded message.

Wait for a message that says, "To speak to a social security representative, press 0." You may have to wait on the line for several minutes; be patient and hold on the line so that you can get the information you need to get your Social Security card.

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

You may need your birth certificate as proof of your age and identity to apply for other forms of ID or health insurance. You can request a copy of your official birth certificate by writing to the department of health in the state where you were born. You may have to pay to get this new birth certificate and you will need to send copies of proof of your identity. Call the department of health before you send your letter and ask how much it will cost for a new birth certificate, what type of payment they will accept (for example, personal checks or money orders) and what type of ID they will need for your proof of identity. Be prepared to tell them your:

- Full name (not a nickname or alias).
- Exact date of birth (month/day/year).
- Mother's maiden name (her last name before she was married).
- Father's full name (you do not have to include your father's name – this is your choice).
- Birth place – either the name of the hospital or the street address where you were born.

To request a birth certificate from the department of health, call or write to this address if you were born in one of the five boroughs of New York City:

**New York City Department of Health
Office of Vital Records
Dial 311 or 212-799-4522
www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/services/vr.shtml**

If you were born in New York State (outside the five boroughs of New York City):

**New York State Department of Health
Office of Vital Records
1- 855-322-1022
www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/**

800 North Pearl Street, 2nd Floor,
Menands, NY 12204

1-877-854-4481

(Free within NYS)

On the next page is a sample letter to the department of health asking for a birth certificate.

SAMPLE LETTER ASKING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FOR A BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Name
Street Address or P.O. Box
City, State, Zip Code

New York State Department of Health
Office of Vital Records
800 North Pearl Street
2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12204
1-877-854-4481

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as my request for a copy of my birth certificate. My full name is (your full name here). I was born in (name of hospital or street address where you were born) on (month/date/year). My mother's maiden name is (mother's maiden name). My father's name is (father's name here. You do not have to include your father's name; this is your choice.) Enclosed is a copy of my (type of ID, proof of identity) and a money order in the amount of (total cost here). Please send my birth certificate to this address:

Name
Street Address or P.O. Box
City, State, Zip Code

If you have any questions, please call me at (phone number). Thank you for your help.

Please note: Remember to sign the letter.

MEDICAID BENEFIT CARD

Medicaid is a program for people who cannot afford to pay for medical care. Many people leaving prison qualify for Medicaid. You may be covered by Medicaid if:

- you have high medical bills.
- you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- you meet certain income, resource, age, or disability requirements.

You may apply for Medicaid in the following ways:

- NY State of Health, The Official Health Plan Marketplace **1-855-355-5777**
- Online website **<https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>**
- Managed Care Organization (MCO) **www.healthbenefitexchange.ny.gov/**
IPANavigatorSiteSchedule Navigators and Certified Application Counselors
- Medicaid Helpline **1-800-541-2831**
- Local district Social Services Offices (see page 46) or visit **www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/ldss.htm**

Where you apply for Medicaid will depend on your category. Your category might be single, childless couples, pregnant women, parent(s) and caretaker relatives with dependent children, elderly and/or disabled.

The Marketplace determines eligibility using Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Rules. In general, income is counted with the same rules as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) with minor variations. Applications may be completed online, in person with a navigator or certified application counselor, by mail and by phone.

FINDING A DOCTOR OR CLINIC

Finding a doctor or clinic that gives you the care you want and need is important. There are many things to think about when you are looking for a doctor or clinic. Some of the questions you may want to ask are:

- Do you have any special health concerns and does that doctor have experience treating them?
- Is the doctor or clinic easy for you to get to?
- Is the office open during hours that fit your schedule?
- Do they accept “walk-in” visits?
- Do they accept your health insurance?
What other methods of payment do they accept?

If you need help finding a doctor, ask your parole officer or case manager. Or, talk to trusted family members, friends, and coworkers who are familiar with doctors and clinics that meet your needs. Call your county department of health and find out about health care clinics they may offer, such as family planning, pregnancy care, screening for diseases that can be passed from person to person, HIV testing, or dental care. The county department of health is usually listed as “Department of Health” in the “County Government” section of your local phone book. Or in NYC, call 311.

PAYING FOR HEALTH CARE

There are many ways to pay for health care. Some are listed below.

Medicaid and **Medicare** are government programs that pay for health care services for people who qualify.

Medicaid covers:

- Hospital in-patient care
- Hospital out-patient care, like emergency room or clinic visits
- Doctor visits
- Eyeglasses
- Hearing aids
- Medicines
- Dental care
- Other services

You can get Medicaid if you:

- Receive public assistance
- Are on Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Get assistance through the HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) in New York City

- Meet other income, resource, age, or disability requirements
- Persons with AIDS (PWA's) can get services either if they have AIDS or have symptoms of HIV

Getting Medicaid

To get information on getting Medicaid in New York City, call the Human Resources Administration at **718-557-1399** for English, **718-557-1339** for Spanish, or go to **www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/** for more information. Outside of New York City, call the New York State Medicaid Hotline at **1-800-541-2831**.

Medicare

Medicare is a federal program that helps people aged 65 years or older and some people with disabilities pay their medical bills. Medicare can cover the cost of hospital stays, follow-up care, doctor's fees, and medical supplies. Call the Human Resources Administration at **1-877-472-8411** or **1-800-633-4227** for more information.

NY State of Health

NY State of Health is an organized marketplace designed to help people shop for and enroll in health insurance coverage. Individuals, families and small businesses can use the Marketplace to help them compare insurance options, calculate costs and select coverage by going to: **<https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>** online, **nystateofhealth.ny.gov/agent/hx_brokerSearch**, **<http://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/news/customer-service-center-open>**: over the phone, or by mail. The Marketplace helps people to check their eligibility for health care programs like Medicaid, and to sign up for these programs if they are eligible.

The Marketplace also tells what type of financial assistance is available to applicants to help them afford health insurance purchased through the Marketplace.

Visit: **<https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>**
Help Line: **1-855-355-5777**
TTY: **1-800-662-1220**
Hours: **Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 8 PM**
Saturday, 9 AM - 1 PM

You may also be able to get private insurance through your employer and pay for it yourself.

Ask your employer about their health insurance coverage.

Call your local or county department of health to find out about free clinics they may offer. Some local health departments offer family planning, pregnancy care, screening for diseases that can be passed from person to person, HIV testing, or dental care.

Community agencies or hospitals may also offer free or low-cost health care clinics. To find these, look in the “health care” section of your local phone book.

GETTING REGULAR CHECK-UPS

Whether or not you have health problems, it is a good idea to get a full health check-up by a doctor or health care provider. Yearly visits let you and your doctor screen for diseases that can affect your health. When you have a check-up, ask questions, and make sure you know your health problems and how to take care of them. When you first visit the doctor, be sure to give your whole health history, including how you feel on the day of the visit, a full list of medicines or drugs you are taking, and any health concerns you now have.

List all the drugs prescribed to you by other doctors, any drugs you buy over-the-counter without a prescription, herbal or alternative drugs, and illicit or illegal drugs. Do not assume that your doctor or health care provider will test you for everything; be sure to ask for tests that you are interested in.

REGULAR EXAMS AND TESTS FOR MEN

These are some of the things your doctor may recommend:

- measure your height and weight
- blood pressure
- blood cholesterol test
- colorectal cancer screening
- prostate cancer screening test
- testicular examination
- tests for sexually transmitted infections

REGULAR EXAMS AND TESTS FOR WOMEN

These are some of the tests your doctor or you may ask for:

- measure your height and weight
- blood pressure
- blood cholesterol test
- breast exam
- mammogram
- pelvic (or GYN) exam
- colon and rectal cancer screening
- measure bone density and check for osteoporosis (a disease that leads to loss of bone mass)
- tests for sexually transmitted infections

ASK THE DOCTOR

Find out what exams and tests you should have and be ready with questions that you want to ask, or topics you want to talk about with your doctor. Here are some things you can do before, during, and after your doctor's visit.

Before the visit:

- Think about any health problems you may be having and try to keep track of signs or symptoms to share with your doctor. For example, let the doctor know if you are tired all the time and do not have energy. Be able to describe when the symptoms started, how long they lasted, things that you did to make them better, or things that made the symptoms worse. Also, tell your doctor whether you have had these or similar symptoms in the past and what made them better or worse.
- Prepare a list of questions or concerns you want to discuss with your provider.
- Bring a list of any medications you are taking.

During the visit:

- Talk about your main question or problem first and describe your past experiences with the problem.

For medications, tests, and treatments that your doctor suggests, you may want to ask:

- What is the name of the medication, test, or procedure?
- Why do I need it?
- What are the risks?
- Are there tests or choices?
- What happens if I do nothing?
- How do I take a new medication?
- What happens if I miss a dose?
- How do I prepare for a test?

Note: Be sure that your adult shots and vaccines are up-to-date. Talk to your doctor about this.

At the end of the visit, ask:

- Do I need to return for another visit?
- Can I call to get the test result?
- What else do I need to know?
- How do I get in contact with you if I have more questions?

After the visit, write down:

- Important instructions from the doctor.
- Your next step or next visit.
- What you can do to stay healthy.

Remember that you are an important partner in the relationship with your doctor or health care provider. If you feel that all of your questions were not answered or something was not done that you expected, make sure you let your doctor know before you leave the office.

It helps to make a list of questions or concerns to share with your doctor. At the end of the visit, you should check that everything on the list was addressed.

DENTAL HEALTH

Here are some general tips to keep your teeth and gums in good health:

- Brush your teeth after every meal. Use toothpaste with fluoride.
- Brush your teeth at least once a day, even if you do not have toothpaste.

- If for some reason you cannot brush your teeth, rinsing your mouth with water several times a day can be very helpful.
- Rinse your mouth with a little peroxide or mouthwash.
- Floss daily; this is a good way to prevent cavities.
- If you can, eat yogurt, cheese, and drink 2% or 1% milk to get more calcium and vitamin D, which make your teeth and bones stronger.
- Try to eat crunchy fresh fruit and vegetables, such as apples and carrots.
- Visit your dentist regularly for cleanings and exams.
- Know when to see a dentist for a dental health problem. Here are some common problems that require a visit to the dentist or dental clinic at a local community health center:
 - **Dental abscess** is an infection around a tooth or in the gums or jawbone. You may feel fever, redness, and swelling of the gums or cheek, a lump that may feel hot, or tooth or mouth pain.
 - **Gum disease** is an infection of your gums and the bones around the teeth. You may feel or see red or swollen gums, loose teeth, a lump that may feel hot, or mouth pain.
 - **Cavities and toothaches.** Cavities are holes in the teeth caused by germs (bacteria). Cavities are caused by plaque, a sticky white film on your teeth made up of bacteria and food left in your mouth. At first a cavity is small, does not hurt, and can be treated with a filling. If not treated, the hole can get deeper, become very painful, and can lead to a serious mouth infection that can only be cured by removing the tooth. Most toothaches are caused by cavities. You may feel pain in the tooth or jaw that is sharp, dull, or aching and may come and go along with fever or swelling. A dentist can fill the cavity and make it feel better.

In New York State, oral health care is covered by Medicaid and, for people living with HIV, by ADAP Plus. Your case manager can tell you more about these and other programs to help you get free or low-cost care. For more information on Medicaid call, Medicaid Helpline **1-800-541-2831**.

HIV Uninsured Care Programs

The NYS Department of Health's AIDS Institute has established five programs which provide access to free health care (HIV Drugs, Primary Care, Home Care, Insurance Premium Payments, and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis to prevent HIV infection) for New York State residents who are uninsured or underinsured. The programs use the same application form and enrollment process.

www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/resources/adap/index.htm

HIV Uninsured Care Program **1-800-542-2437**

TIPS FOR STAYING HEALTHY

- Eat fruits and vegetables every day (such as oranges, apples, or corn).
- Eat whole grain breads and cereal (such as oatmeal or raisin bran).
- Try to eat three healthy meals each day.
- Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise, three or four times a week.
- Ask your doctor for more information about healthy eating.
- Do not drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.
- Ask about programs to help you quit smoking. Call the Smoker's Quitline at **1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487)**. This is a free call.

WRITING A RESUMÉ

When you are looking for work, most employers will want to see a resumé. The resumé is a list of your work history and work skills. Even if you do not have work experience, you can write a resumé to list any skills you may have learned. For example, filing, working on specific machines, or repairing cars can be included on a resume.

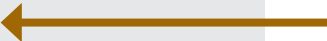
A resumé should include your address and phone number. If you do not yet have a permanent address, post office (P.O.) box, or a phone number, ask a trusted friend or family member if you can use theirs. Other topics to include on your resumé include:

- your work goal – what type of job you hope to find.
- a list of your past and present jobs.
- your education – what degrees or certificates you have earned (for example, a high school diploma, a GED, or an associate's degree or bachelor's degree).


SAMPLE RESUMÉ

Jane Doe


123 Main Street
 Apartment 3
 New York, NY 10029
 (212) 555-5555


Objective


A position as a sales clerk.


Qualifications

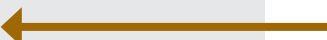
Trustworthy and honest.
 On time and reliable.
 Good attitude around others.
 Motivated and enthusiastic.


Skills

Skilled in using an electronic cash register.
 Skilled in taking inventory.
 Good customer relations.


Employment History

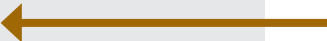
Check-out clerk,
 Broadway Stationery Store
 New York, NY
 Christmas 1995



Inventory worker,
 Michael's Crafts
 New York, NY
 1992-1993

Education

Completed GED May 1999.



If you do not have a typewriter or a computer, ask to use a friend's or use the computer at your local library. Sometimes the library will charge a fee for each page you need to print. Ask the librarian how much it will cost to print each page. You may also need a library card and/or an ID to use the computer. Be sure to ask the librarian what you will need to use their services.

Be sure to include the best way to reach you. You may need to use a friend's or family's address until you have a permanent address.

This clearly states the type of work you want to do.

This describes how your personal qualities will help you at work.

This describes some of your work skills that relate to the new job.

This is a list of all of your jobs and a brief description of what your duties were.

You can choose not to include this information.

If you live in New York State (outside of New York City) and want to find a library in your area, call:

New York State Library

Cultural Education Center,
7th Floor, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY
Reference desk: **518-474-5355**

If you live in New York City and want to find a library near you, call:

Mid-Manhattan Library

476 Fifth Avenue at 40th Street, New York, NY 10016
212-340-0863

www.nypl.org/locations/mid-manhattan-library

THE JOB INTERVIEW

If an employer is interested in hiring you, s/he may invite you in for an interview. This is away for the employer to learn more about you and how you get along with others. It is also a way for the employer to decide if s/he should choose you for a job, or hire someone else. It is very important to make a good impression at the interview. Here are some tips to help you through an interview:

- Clean and iron the clothes you wear. You do not have to wear fancy or expensive clothes.
- Plan how you will get to the interview a day or so before it is scheduled and try to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early.
- Bring copies of your resumé to leave with the employer, along with names and numbers of people who can say you are a good worker – like past employers or people you have worked with. Be sure to let these people know ahead of time that you will use them as a reference.
- Bring paper and a pen.
- Do not use slang or say anything bad about your last employer.
- Be friendly, polite, and smile.
- Write a thank-you note to the employer no later than a week after the interview.

GETTING HELP WITH YOUR JOB SEARCH

It is illegal for an employer to refuse to hire you based only on your arrest or conviction record – unless the conviction was for a crime directly related to the job duties, or the employer believes you might be a threat to the safety of employees. If you have been convicted of a felony or some misdemeanors, you may not be able to get some types of jobs, like civil service positions (like a firefighter), working in a place that sells liquor, or being a real estate agent or a pharmacist. There are programs that can help you gain the skills you need to get certain jobs, or they can help you find a new job. Some of these programs are listed on the following page.

Parolee Vocational Rehabilitation Services (PVRS).

This program is for New York City parolees who need help finding jobs. To be a part of this program, you must be referred by a parole office. Ask your parole officer about this as soon as you are ready.

One-Stop Centers. These are career training centers that provide help to people searching for a job. They provide counseling services, list job openings, and offer training to help you learn new work skills. To find a One-Stop Center near you, call: **1-877-US-2JOBS (1-877-872-5627).**

New York State Department of Labor
1-800-HIRE-992 (1-800-447-3992)

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

If you feel you were not hired because of your arrest or conviction record, this may be employment discrimination. Employment discrimination is illegal. If you have questions about employment discrimination, call:

**New York State Department of Corrections and
Community Supervision Executive Clemency Bureau**
The Harriman State Campus – Building 21220 Washington
Ave., Albany, NY 12226-2050
518-457-7565

email: PardonsAndCommutations@doccs.ny.gov
<https://www.parole.ny.gov>

The Legal Action Center
212-243-1313 or 1-800-223-4044
<http://lac.org/>

TIPS FOR STAYING OFF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Using or abusing alcohol and other drugs can be very bad for your health. Using illegal drugs is in violation of the law. Here are some tips to help you stay alcohol- and drug-free:

- Make a plan that you know you can stick to.
- Get help from drug treatment programs, harm reduction programs or others you trust.
- Talk with your doctor or health care provider about your drug or alcohol use. He or she may be able to prescribe medication or get you into a program that can help you quit and stay drug-free.

Call these numbers to get help staying off drugs:

- The New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS). **1-877-8HOPENY (1-877-846-7369)**. or text **467369**. Free, 24/7. Ask for drug treatment programs nearest you.
- In New York City, call **1-800-LIFENET (543-3638)**. **www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/mental/lifenet.shtml**. This is an anonymous help line (you do not have to give your name) for people seeking treatment for drugs, alcohol, or emotional health problems. You can call this number any time of the day, every day of the week.

QUITTING HEROIN

Injecting heroin puts you at risk for HIV, hepatitis, heart infections, and other illnesses. Because heroin is illegal, you are in violation of your parole if you use it. There are medication and other treatments that can help you quit and get your life under control.

Methadone treatment may help you stop using heroin. Methadone may prevent withdrawal symptoms and control your cravings. If you're not ready to quit, methadone can help you use less heroin, less often, until you can stop using altogether. Methadone maintenance treatment is a way to get your heroin use under control and help you quit.

Methadone is available at special clinics.

To find a treatment program in New York State, call: **1-877-8HOPENY (1-877-846-7369)**, Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM.

Buprenorphine is a prescribed medication that is available for maintenance use in treating heroin and opioid addiction. It stops your craving and withdrawal symptoms and blocks the effects of heroin and other opioids. Because it is hard to overdose from or abuse buprenorphine, it can be prescribed from a regular doctor's office. You get a prescription between once a week and once a month, depending on your treatment schedule. Dosing varies from every day to several times a week. Your doctor should also recommend that you have substance abuse counseling while you are taking buprenorphine. Talk to your doctor to learn more and to find out if buprenorphine is right for you.

To learn more about buprenorphine, call the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at **1-866-BUP-2728**. This is a free call. You can find more information and a list of doctors in the U.S. who can prescribe buprenorphine.

SAFE INJECTION PRACTICES

Injecting illegal drugs is unsafe and hazardous to your health. If you inject drugs, you are at risk for overdose and disease. If you cannot quit, be sure to follow these tips for safer injections:

- Use new needles each time you inject.
- Do not share your works (syringes, needles, cotton, cookers, water, etc.).
- Do not buy needles on the street, even if they look new.
- If you are 18 or older, you can buy new syringes at some (ESAP) pharmacies.

Look for this sticker at your pharmacy:



Or, ask if they sell syringes without a prescription.

You may also be able to get new syringes at a syringe exchange program.

Call **1-800-541-2437** to find a syringe exchange program or to find a pharmacy that sells needles.

New York State's Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs

A life-saving law took effect on April 1, 2006, making it legal in New York State for non-medical persons to administer naloxone to another individual to prevent an opioid/heroin overdose from becoming fatal. Naloxone (Narcan) is an easy-to-use prescription medication that can reverse an opioid overdose and save a person's life if it is given in time.

Opioids are drugs like heroin, Oxycontin, fentanyl, codeine, morphine, and others. People are at greatest risk of opioid overdose when beginning to use drugs after a period of not using them.

It is important to seek medical care if a person has been given naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose. Some opioids will last longer in the body than the naloxone and it is possible for a person to overdose a second time as the naloxone wears off.

Naloxone is not a controlled substance and is very safe to use. It can help save a life when used it is used in time to reverse an opioid overdose.

Need Naloxone?

There are multiple ways to get Naloxone/Overdose Rescue Kits in New York:

Correctional Facility:

If you participated in an Opioid Overdose Prevention Training during your incarceration you may be to get naloxone at no cost when you are released. Ask your counselor for more information about how to participate in this training and how to access naloxone at no cost.

Opioid Overdose Prevention Program:

The New York State Department of Health registers providers to operate an Opioid Overdose Prevention Program. These programs train individuals how to respond to suspected overdoses including the administration of naloxone. These programs are sometimes available at places like health care facilities, health care practitioners, drug treatment programs, not-for-profit community-based organizations and local health departments. These registered programs provide training and naloxone at no cost for individuals without prescription coverage as part of their health insurance plan, individuals without insurance, vulnerable individuals or individuals using naloxone in the line of duty.

Pharmacy:

Many New York pharmacies provide naloxone through a “standing order” which means that you don’t need a prescription to get the medication.

If you have insurance, you can use your prescription coverage to help pay for naloxone at the pharmacy. If you have a prescription coverage as part of your insurance plan, you can use the Naloxone Co-payment Assistance Program (N-CAP) to cover up to \$40 to reduce or eliminate your out-of-pocket expenses when getting naloxone at a participating pharmacy. Ask the pharmacist if their store participates in N-CAP.

A directory of registered Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs as well as the list of pharmacies in each region with a standing order are available at this website:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/overdose>

For more information you can call the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute at **1-800-692-8528**.
English/Spanish

For ESAP ordering or Syringe Exchange Programs press **#1**

For Opioid Overdose Prevention press **#2**

For the Office of Drug User Health, naloxone or N-CAP press **#3**

For buprenorphine or bup trainings press **#4**

For ESAP programs, pharmacies or syringe disposal sites press **#5**

DON'T SHARE!

ESAP or a Syringe Exchange Program can help!

If you cannot use new needles, clean your needles and works with bleach and water. Follow these steps:

1. Rinse with water to remove blood from the syringe/needle.
2. Rinse with full-strength bleach.
3. Rinse syringe/needle with clean water three or more times.

Do not use other drugs like alcohol, marijuana, crystal meth, ecstasy, cocaine or crack. If you are drunk or high, you may not make healthy choices and you may not protect yourself and others from HIV and other diseases.

Use **The Point** locator tool to find the nearest safe sharps disposal location or syringe exchange program. It is easy to access The Point locator tool by visiting this website:

www.thepointny.org

SAFE DISPOSAL OF USED NEEDLES AND SYRINGES

Be sure to safely dispose of your used needles and syringes so that others are not harmed. Here's how:

- Put used syringes in a plastic bottle.
- Use a puncture-resistant, unbreakable bottle.
- Close the screw-on top tightly and label the sealed container "Contains Sharps".
- Keep the container in areas that are child-proof and animal-proof.
- Do not put a plastic bottle containing used syringes out with the recyclable plastics.

Use **The Point** locator tool to find the nearest safe sharps disposal location or syringe exchange program. It is easy to access The Point locator tool by visiting this website:

www.thepointny.org

QUITTING SMOKING:

Smoking tobacco kills about 28,000 adults New Yorkers every year. Smoking causes many diseases, including: cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, diabetes, cataracts and rheumatoid arthritis. Exposure to secondhand smoke is harmful and deadly, leading to more than 41,000 deaths among nonsmoking adults and 400 infant deaths in the U.S. every year.

Vaping and E-Cigarettes are not regulated by the FDA, and amount of nicotine varies in each product. Research is needed to determine health-related effects.

Smoking is an addiction - Get Support. For help quitting smoking and tobacco use contact:

- New York State Smokers Quitline (NYS Department of Health) **1-866-697-8487** or **<https://www.nysmokefree.com/>**
Hours: M-Th 9AM-9PM, Sat-Sun 9AM-5PM
NY Relay Services at 7-1-1 (Voice or TTY)
- Every Try Counts. (National Cancer Institute) **1-877-448-7848** or **<https://smokefree.gov/everytrycounts/>**
- **Smokefree.gov** (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) Material in English and Spanish

HIV AND AIDS

HIV is a serious virus that leads to AIDS. There are medicines that have helped people living with HIV and AIDS live longer, healthier lives. Some people have lived for more than 20 years and have taken medicines for more than 10 years. But, there is no cure for HIV.

You can get HIV by having sex without a condom with someone who has HIV. That includes vaginal, anal, and oral sex.

You can get HIV by sharing syringes, needles, and other works used to inject drugs with someone who has HIV.

A woman who has HIV can give it to her baby when she is pregnant or breastfeeding. There are medicines the woman and baby can take to lower the chances that the baby will get infected with HIV.

You **CANNOT** get HIV from:

- Shaking hands
- Food
- Water
- Sneezing
- Pets
- Hugging or kissing
- Mosquitoes or other bugs
- Toilets

HIV: Know your status

People with HIV may not look sick. Many people do not know they have HIV. The only way to know if you have HIV is to get an HIV test. You can get a blood test or an oral (mouth) test. An oral test does not use needles. At some places, you can get your results right away. Getting an HIV test is important. If you learn that you have HIV, you can:

- get treatment that may help you stay healthy longer.
- learn how to avoid passing HIV to others.
- learn how to protect yourself from other strains of HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that can make you sick.

If your test shows that you do not have HIV, you can learn how to stay that way.

Call **1-800-872-2777** to find out how to get a free HIV test without giving your name. Or, ask your doctor or health care provider about getting an HIV test.

You can protect yourself from HIV

- If you have sex, use a condom. Condoms work very well to prevent HIV if you use them the right way every time you have sex. Or, do not have sex at all.
- Do not shoot drugs. If you do use drugs, do not share needles. (See page 31 to learn more about how to prevent HIV if you inject drugs.)
- Do not use alcohol or drugs. These can lead you to make poor choices and not protect yourself and others from HIV.
- Do not share needles to inject any drugs (including steroids or insulin), or for piercing or tattooing.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a prevention option for people who are at high risk of getting HIV. It's meant to be used consistently, as a pill taken every day, and to be used with other prevention options such as condoms. Find out if PrEP is right for you.

www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html

List of NYS PrEP Providers:

<https://providerdirectory.aidsinstituteny.org/>

Post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP, is taking antiretroviral medicines (ART) after being potentially exposed to HIV to prevent becoming infected.

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/pep.html>

New York State HIV/STD/HCV Information Hotlines

These calls are free within New York State and you do not have to give your name.

English: **1-800-541-2437**; Spanish: **1-800-233-7432**

New York State HIV/AIDS TDD Information Line:

1-800-369-2437. Voice callers use the New York Relay: **711 or 1-800-421-1220** and ask for **1-800-541-2437**.

To learn about HIV testing and find sites near you, call the New York State HIV Counseling Hotline:

1-800-872-2777.

Call these numbers to find out more about how to protect yourself and others from HIV, where to find HIV testing sites near you, or where to find health care and services for people living with HIV and AIDS.

OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are passed during sex. They are spread from person to person by vaginal sex, anal sex, or oral sex. Some STIs are also spread by skin-to-skin contact. Even skin that looks normal may be infected. STIs are sometimes called sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and they used to be called venereal diseases or VD.

HIV is an STI. If you have another STI, it's easier for you to get HIV.

Most people who have HIV or another STI have no signs or symptoms. You can't tell by looking at someone that they have an STI. You may not know you have an STI. Even if you have no signs or symptoms, you can still spread STIs to others. The only way to know for sure is to get tested.

The good news is that some STIs can be cured, and there are treatments for others. If you think you have an STI, visit your doctor or clinic right away. If your tests show you have an STI, you can get treatment. Without treatment, these diseases can lead to major health problems such as sterility (not being able to get pregnant), brain damage, heart disease, cancer, and even death. The longer you wait to get tested and treated, the more damage the disease may cause, and the better the chances that you can pass the STI to others.

You may have been exposed to an STI and should get tested if you have ever:

- Had sex without using a condom with someone who has an STI or HIV, or whose status you do not know.
- Had sex without using a condom with someone who has ever injected drugs.
- Had many sexual partners.

If you think you have been exposed to an STI, you and your sex partner(s) should visit a free health clinic or doctor for testing.

You can lower your risk for becoming infected with an STI by:

- Using a latex male condom or female condom the right way, every time you have sex.
- Not using drugs and alcohol - because they can get in the way of you protecting yourself.
- Having only one sex partner, whom you know does not have an STI.
- Not having sex with a person who shoots or has ever shot drugs.

A note about condoms and STIs: Latex condoms, when used the right way every time you have sex, are very effective in preventing HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and trichomoniasis (common STDs). Herpes, syphilis, and genital warts are STDs that are passed mainly through skin-to-skin contact either with sores, or with infected skin that may look normal. Correct and consistent use of latex condoms can lower the chances of passing these STDs only when the infected area or site of exposure is protected.

Don't want to ask about STIs? If you have access to the Internet, visit **www.afraidtoask.com**.

This website explains all about different health issues, such as STIs, HIV/AIDS, birth control, depression, hepatitis, yeast infections, and other health topics. Doctors make sure that all of the information on the website is correct. For STI information and testing sites near you, call: **NYS HIV Hotline 1-800-541-2437**

**CDC National Information Hotline (English/Spanish)
1-800-232-4636**

HEPATITIS

Hepatitis A (HAV)

Hepatitis A is one of the many hepatitis viruses that infects the liver.

Hepatitis A virus is found in the feces of persons with hepatitis A. Hepatitis A is spread most often from person to person by:

- Putting something in the mouth (even though it may look clean) that has been contaminated (touched) with the feces of an infected person.
- Feces getting into food and water.
- People who prepare food who are infected. They can pass the virus on if they do not wash their hands properly after using the bathroom.

- Eating raw or partly cooked shellfish (clams, oysters, or mussels) contaminated (touched) with hepatitis A.

People who are most at risk (likely to get) hepatitis A:

- Live in the same house with an infected person.
- Have sex with an infected person.
- Travel to countries where hepatitis A is common.
- Men who have sex with men.
- Use injection drugs and other drugs.

To protect against hepatitis A:

- Get the hepatitis A vaccine (a shot). It is your best protection against getting hepatitis A.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before preparing and eating food.

Hepatitis B (HBV)

Hepatitis B is a dangerous virus that attacks and kills liver cells. Hepatitis B virus lives in blood and other body fluids. The virus can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and even death.

Hepatitis B is spread by:

- Having sex without using a condom with someone who has hepatitis B.
- Sharing needles with someone who has hepatitis B.
- Mothers who give hepatitis B to their babies during birth.

You cannot get hepatitis B from food, water, or casual contact (like hugging or shaking hands).

To protect against hepatitis B:

- Get a hepatitis B shot.
- Use a condom or a dental dam every time you have any kind of sex.
- Do not share needles or syringes.

People can have hepatitis and not know it. If you think you are at risk, have yourself, your sex partner, and your family checked for hepatitis. Many people recover from hepatitis B, but some will never be able to get rid of it and may develop serious liver disease.

Persons at risk for hepatitis B infection might also be at risk for infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV) or HIV.

To protect against hepatitis B:

- Get a hepatitis B shot.
- Use a condom or a dental dam every time you have any kind of sex.
- Do not share needles or syringes.

People can have hepatitis and not know it. If you think you are at risk, have yourself, your sex partner, and your family checked for hepatitis. Many people recover from hepatitis B, but some will never be able to get rid of it and may develop serious liver disease.

Persons at risk for hepatitis B infection might also be at risk for infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV) or HIV.

Hepatitis C (HCV)

Hepatitis C is a disease of the liver. Most people with hepatitis C do not look or feel sick. They may have no symptoms for 20 years or more. Only a blood test can tell if someone has hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C is spread through blood. It is spread by:

- Sharing needles or works to inject drugs.
- Needlesticks to health care workers on the job.
- Sharing things in your house (like razors or toothbrushes) with anyone. Razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers, and other objects can have a little bit of blood on them that may be infected with HCV.
- Getting a tattoo or a body piercing from a place that does not use new, sterile needles.
- A mother giving birth to her baby.
- Having sex without using a condom. This is rare, but it does happen.

There are treatments that can cure hepatitis C. Talk to your doctor or nurse to find the best treatment option for you.

You can help keep your liver healthy by:

- Getting a hepatitis A and a hepatitis B shot. You can get these shots from most doctors and clinics.
- Not drinking alcohol. If you have hepatitis, alcohol can make it much worse. If you cannot quit, try to cut down on the amount you drink.

To prevent hepatitis C:

- If you shoot drugs, use a new syringe every time you shoot up.
- Never share anything you use to shoot up.
- Wash your hands before and after helping another person shoot up.

- Do not share razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers, or other similar household items with anyone.
- Before you get a tattoo or a body piercing (including getting your ears pierced), make sure needles are in sealed bags before they are used.

To find out more about hepatitis C, call:

CDC Hotline: 1-800-232-4636
www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm

New York State HIV/STD/Hepatitis Hotline:
1-800-541-2437

American Liver Foundation Helpline:
1-800-465-4837, www.liverfoundation.org/

TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

TB stands for tuberculosis. TB is a bacterial disease that usually affects the lungs, but other parts of the body can also be affected. TB can affect anyone of any age. TB can be prevented with treatment, and can also be cured. People who are infected with TB can become very sick or die if they do not get treatment.

TB is spread through the air when someone who has TB coughs or sneezes. Coughing, sneezing, speaking, singing, and laughing can put TB germs in the air. If you breathe in these TB germs, you can get infected. TB is only spread through the air. You can't get TB from shaking hands, toilet seats, or sharing food with someone who has TB.

If you use drugs or have a disease that weakens your immune system, such as HIV or AIDS, your chances of getting TB disease are higher because your body can't fight off the disease.

What are the symptoms of tuberculosis?

The symptoms (signs) of TB include fever, night sweats, feeling tired or weak often, unexplained weight loss, and a persistent cough. Some people may not have noticeable symptoms.

Get a TB test if you have:

- Recently lived in a homeless shelter, prison, or jail.
- Spent time with a person with TB.
- HIV infection or AIDS.
- The symptoms listed above.

If you have signs of TB, make an appointment to see a doctor. Or, call your local health department or community health center or clinic. There is a simple skin test you can get to find out if you have TB.

TB can be cured with medicine.

FINDING A DOCTOR AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES

It is important that people with HIV seek medical treatment right away care so they can:

- Find out about medicines and treatments that fight HIV.
- Receive care for HIV-related conditions.

Try to find a doctor who is well-informed about HIV. The New York State Department of Health designates doctors as HIV specialists. Call **1-800-541-2437** to find an HIV specialist near you.

If you are living with HIV/AIDS and you get Medicaid, you can choose from a Special Needs Plan (SNP). A SNP is a health care plan that covers special services for people living with HIV/AIDS. When you join an HIV SNP, you will get:

- An HIV Specialist primary care doctor.
- HIV case management.
- Information about HIV medications and side effects.
- Help taking all of your medications the right way, at the right time.
- Other special services.

To learn more about SNPs or to enroll, call **New York Medicaid CHOICE** at **1-800-505-5678**. All calls are confidential. On the internet, go to: www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/resources/snps/plans.htm

GETTING TREATMENT

Today there are medicines that can fight HIV, make the immune system stronger, and help people live longer, healthier lives. These medicines are called HAART (Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy).

Often, it is best to start treatment before symptoms appear. A doctor can do blood tests that will help decide when it is best to start treatment and how well treatment is working. Early medical care helps people with HIV take best advantage of treatments for HIV.

HAART involves taking three or more drugs that fight HIV at the same time. HAART can strengthen the immune system and reduce the amount of HIV in the blood.

Many medicines are available, and no one combination is best for everyone. Not everyone with HIV needs HAART, which is usually started only when signs of immune system damage or symptoms of HIV appear.

Testing and treatment for other illnesses, such as TB (tuberculosis) and STIs (sexually transmitted infections), is also important. These illnesses are more common in people with HIV and can make HIV progress more quickly to AIDS.

Drugs that fight HIV have improved the health of many people, but these treatments are not perfect. HIV medicines can be hard to take and often have side effects, some of which are serious and even life-threatening. Missing or delaying just a few doses of medicine can lead to the person developing resistance to the drugs, which means that the drugs will stop working.

Preventive medicines. Opportunistic illnesses, such as PCP (pneumocystis carinii pneumonia) and MAC (Mycobacterium avium complex) affect people whose immune systems are severely weakened by HIV. Many of these illnesses can be prevented by taking certain medicines as soon as the immune system becomes weak. It is important for people with HIV to see their doctors so they can start preventive treatment as soon as it is needed. A HAART regimen is the most effective way to strengthen the immune system.

Treatments for AIDS-related cancers, infections, and other conditions are available and can be combined with HAART.

People with HIV should ask their doctor, nurse, or case manager for more information about HAART and other medicines before they make any changes to their treatment plan.

Testing and treatment for other illnesses, such as TB and STIs, is also important. These illnesses are more common in people with HIV and can make HIV progress more quickly to AIDS.

For more information, call the New York State HIV/STI/HCV Information Line at **1-800-541-2437**.

Healthy Living with HIV and AIDS

Good health habits can play an important role in the treatment of HIV. Here are some tips for staying healthy:

- Eat healthy foods.
- Prepare and store food safely.
- Take vitamins as directed by a doctor or nutritionist.
- Exercise (both aerobic and muscle-building).
- Get enough sleep.
- Get help to manage stress.
- Avoid using alcohol, cigarettes, street drugs, and other harmful substances. Smoking increases the risk of bacterial pneumonia, thrush, and other oral health problems.

HOUSING FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

Some types of housing in New York are just for people with HIV/AIDS. Other types of housing are for people who meet eligibility rules (also known as program rules) — the rules for getting into the program. In New York City and New York State, there are many different types of housing for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Keep in mind that New York City has more places to live that are just for people with HIV/AIDS. In the rest of New York State, there are fewer places that are just for people with HIV/AIDS. So, if you live in New York State outside of New York City, it is important to look for other types of housing as well. You do not have to tell anyone that you have HIV/AIDS. In New York City and New York State, the law states that you cannot be turned away from any type of housing because you have HIV or AIDS. It is up to you to decide if you want to let anyone know your HIV status. You may be able to get into some types of housing if you have a disability (mental illness, drug problems) or another life challenge (victim of domestic violence). New York City has a special housing system that is just for people who have HIV or AIDS.

No matter what kind of program you choose, it is illegal for anyone to discriminate against you because you have HIV/AIDS. It is also illegal for any housing program staff member to tell anyone that you have HIV/AIDS unless they get your written permission.

Finding housing can be hard. Here are some places to go for help:

Ask your HIV/AIDS case manager. HIV/AIDS case managers work for community-based agencies or government agencies. If you do not have an HIV/AIDS case manager, call an HIV/AIDS program in your area that can help you find one. The New York State HIV/AIDS Information Service can help you find an HIV/AIDS program in your area (including New York City). Call their free and private hotline number at **1-800-541-AIDS (1-800-541-2437)**. When you call the HIV/AIDS agency, ask for an HIV/AIDS case manager who knows about housing.

In New York City, use **How to Get to a Place Called Home - A Handbook to Help People Living with HIV/AIDS Find Housing in NYC** www.health.ny.gov/publications/9547 to locate programs with an HIV/AIDS case manager or housing placement assistance worker.

To find out more about HIV/AIDS housing programs outside of New York City, use **How to Get to a Place Called Home - A Handbook to Help People Living with HIV/AIDS Find Housing in NYS** at www.health.ny.gov/publications/9548.pdf (These handbooks are also available in Spanish.)

Contact other agencies in your area that provide housing services that are not just for people living with HIV/AIDS.

LETTING PARTNERS KNOW THEY MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO HIV

It is important that your partner also be tested for HIV. If one of you has HIV, you can pass it to the other. Talking to your partner may not be easy. Start by thinking of a place where both of you can talk and feel safe. Your health care provider or counselor can help you plan what to say or can talk with you and your partner.

If you have HIV, there is a State Health Department program you should know about called **PS**. In New York City, the program is called **CNAP**. Your partners may have been exposed to HIV during sex with you or by sharing works with you to shoot drugs (even insulin or steroids) or for piercing or tattooing.

If you are married, your spouse is your partner. Sometimes partners are called contacts. Partner Services (PS) helps you find the best way to let your partners know they need to get an HIV test. A PS counselor will work with you and your doctor to help you decide whether to:

- Have the PS counselor tell your partners for you without revealing your identity.
- Tell your partners with the help of the PS counselor or your doctor.
- Tell your partners yourself.

Your partners need to know they have been exposed to HIV because:

- They need to get tested to find out if they have HIV.
- If they do have HIV, they can get health care and medicines that may help them stay healthier longer.
- They can learn how to protect others from HIV by not having sex, using condoms, and not sharing needles.
- Pregnant women with HIV can take medicine that will help protect their babies from the virus.
- If it turns out that your partners are not infected, they can get information that will help them learn how to stay that way.

To learn more about **Partner Services**, call **1-800-541-AIDS**. If you are concerned about your safety or think that a past or current partner could harm you, your children, or someone you love, call the following numbers for help.

Local County Health Departments and NYSDOH Regional Contacts for Partner Services for STI/HIV

Albany County*	518-447-4516
Dutchess County	845-486-3452
Erie County	716-858-7683
Monroe County	585-753-5391
Nassau County	516-227-9439
Onondaga County	315-435-3240
Orange County	845-568-5333
Rockland County	845-364-2992
Schenectady County*	518-386-2824
Suffolk County	631-854-0364
Westchester County	914-813-5115

* (HIV Partner Services only; for STIs, contact the Capital District Regional Office)

Regional Office Contacts Phone Number:

Buffalo Regional Office (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming): **716-855-4511** or **1-800-962-5064**

Capital District Regional Office (Clinton, Columbia, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Green, Hamilton, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schoharie, Warren, Washington) **518-402-7411** or **1-800-962-5065**

Central New York Regional Office (Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Tioga, Tompkins) **315-477-8116** or **1-800-562-9423**.

Metropolitan Area Regional Office (Putnam, Sullivan, Ulster) **845-794-2045** or **1-800-828-0064**

New York City (including CNAP) (Bronx, Kings, New York, Richmond, Queens) **212-693-1419**

Rochester Regional Office (Chemung, Livingston, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates) **585-423-8103** or **1-800-962-5063**

To locate a HIV Service Provider in your area visit: <https://providerdirectory.aidsinstitute.ny.org> and enter your zip code.

This website can also be used to locate service providers for HIV, HCV, PrEP, PEP, Buprenorphine, STIs and Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs.

Partner Services can serve as a medical provider's proxy in identifying partners, conducting domestic violence screening and the notification plan, and will assist in completing the Partner/Contact Information on the DOH-4189 (Medical Provider HIV/AIDS and Partner/Contact Form). For more information on Partner Services visit: www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/std/partner_services/

New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline: 1-800-942-6906

Safe Horizon Hotline: 1-800-621-HOPE

New York City Gay/Lesbian Anti-Violence Project: 212-714-1141

HIV/AIDS DISCRIMINATION

It is illegal to discriminate against someone because he or she has HIV or AIDS or is believed to have HIV/AIDS. If you are living with HIV, you cannot be discriminated against in:

- Your job or getting a job.
- Finding or keeping housing.
- Public places, like restaurants and theaters.
- Medical, legal, and dental services.
- Other personal services available to the general public.

If you have HIV or AIDS and you feel that you are a victim of discrimination, call:

New York State Division of Human Rights

One Fordham Plaza, 4th Floor, Bronx, NY 10458
718-741-8400, or TDD **718-741-8304** (central office)

New York State Division of Human Rights

Corning Tower, 25th Floor, Empire State Plaza,
P.O. Box 2049, Albany, NY 12220
518-474-2705 (or 2707)

New York State Division of Human Rights

Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building
163 West 125th Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10027
212-961-8650

These agencies may also be able to help:

New York Civil Liberties Union

125 Broad Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10004
Call **212-607-3300**, or visit **www.nyclu.org/**

The Legal Aid Society

www.legal-aid.org/en/las/findus/locations/manhattan/legalaidsocietyheadquarters.aspx

Legal Aid Society Headquarters

199 Water Street, New York, NY 10038
Call **212- 577-3300**, or fax **212- 509-8761**
www.legal-aid.org, **www.legal-aid.org**

Legal AIDS Society for Mid-NY, Inc.

www.lasmny.org/Programs/Office

Gay Men's Health Crisis

1-800-243-7692 or **1-212-367-1000**
www.gmhc.org

HIV Law Project, Inc.

81 Willoughby Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201
212-577-3001

NYC Anti-Violence Project

116 Nassau Street, NY, NY 10038
Call **212-714-1141**, or visit **www.avp.org/**

Commission on Human Rights Bias Hotline

212-662-2427 (212-NO-2-BIAS)
For information only: **718-722-3131**

DIABETES

- Diabetes is a disease that affects the body's ability to process sugar (glucose) in the bloodstream.
- Diabetes is a chronic disease that can be controlled with the right management.
- Insulin is a hormone (chemical) that your body makes to change glucose into energy.
- If you have diabetes, your body may not make enough insulin or use insulin in the right way, and the level of glucose in your body gets too high.

There are two common types of diabetes:

Type 1 Diabetes

- Usually begins before age 30
- Is treated with daily insulin injections and a healthy diet

Type 2 Diabetes

- Usually begins after age 40
- Is treated by diet, exercise, weight loss, oral medication, or insulin
- Is more common in people who are obese, in African Americans, Hispanics, or Native Americans, in people who have a family history of diabetes, and those who are not physically active.

Symptoms of diabetes:

- Urinating a lot
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Skin infections
- Being thirsty often
- Difficulty with sexual function
- Being very tired
- Slow-healing wounds
- Blurred vision
- Vaginal infections that happen again and again
- Increased appetite.

To keep your glucose at a healthy level, you need to keep a balance between three important things:

- What you eat and drink
- How much physical activity you do
- What diabetes medicine you take (if your doctor has prescribed diabetes pills or insulin)

It is very important to get treatment if you have diabetes. Without treatment, diabetes can raise your risk of:

- Heart disease
- Atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries)
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol levels
- Damage to blood vessels, kidneys, eyes, and the nervous system
- Stroke
- Kidney trouble
- Visual problems such as blindness

See an eye doctor and foot doctor regularly to watch out for symptoms. You can also examine your own feet. Pay close attention to clipping your toenails and cutting calluses.

Diabetes and smoking, as well as other disorders such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels, put you at high risk for heart disease.

Syringes for insulin

- Insulin syringes should only be used once.
- Insulin syringes should not be shared with other diabetics or with anyone.
- Obtain an identification card from the American Diabetes Association at **1-800-DIABETES** that says you have diabetes and use syringes. Or, purchase a diabetes identification bracelet or necklace from your local pharmacy.

An identification card, bracelet, or necklace tells health care professionals critical and potentially lifesaving health information about you at times when you cannot speak for yourself.

CORONARY HEART DISEASE

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the thickening and hardening of the arteries that supply the heart muscle with blood. Heart cells need blood flow through these arteries to provide oxygen. Without enough blood flow, heart cells can become injured or die. CHD is the single largest killer in the United States.

Preventing heart disease

You can lower your chances of heart disease by not smoking and by controlling your cholesterol and blood pressure through a well-balanced diet, losing excess weight, regular exercise and physical activity, and use of medications.

ASTHMA

Asthma is a serious and growing health problem. Asthma is a chronic lung disease. That means you have the disease 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even when you aren't feeling any symptoms. The best way to deal with asthma is to take medicine to control the disease. You take this medicine every day, even when you don't have asthma symptoms.

Asthma causes breathing problems. The airways in your lungs become swollen and your body doesn't get enough air. The swelling can lead to coughing or wheezing or an asthma "attack." An asthma attack can come on quickly and can cause death if you stop breathing completely.

People with asthma may go through times when they have no symptoms. But asthma affects your lungs all the time, even when you do not feel it. The best way to control the swelling is by asking your doctor to prescribe a "controller medicine" and taking it even when you don't feel bad. Albuterol is not a controller medicine. It relieves your symptoms for a few hours, but it doesn't control swelling. There is no cure for asthma, but it can be prevented and controlled with proper care. People with asthma can live normal and active lives.

Asthma “triggers” are things that build up the swelling in your airways. Asthma triggers include: pollen, mold, diesel exhaust, animal dander, dust mites in sofas or bedding, cockroaches, exercise, stress, or cold air. If you can stay away from these triggers, you may be able to take less of your controller medicine.

If you have asthma, work with your doctor. Learn what medicines you need to take and what else you can do to prevent asthma attacks.

If you have an asthma attack:

- Slow down and rest.
- Try to remain calm. Stress can make it worse.
- If you have albuterol from your doctor, use it.
- Try to drink coffee or soda with caffeine (no ice).
- Do not use antihistamines — they may make it worse.
- Drink water to help thin and loosen the mucus in your lungs.
- If none of these things helps, go to an Emergency Room. Asthma attacks can be very serious.
- After the Emergency Room doctor brings your attack under control, try to go to a clinic for a follow-up visit with a doctor.
- Ask the doctor to prescribe a controller medicine to prevent attacks.

To prevent asthma attacks:

- Describe your asthma symptoms to your doctor, and how much albuterol you use. Ask your doctor to prescribe a controller medicine. See your doctor again a couple of months later to make sure the medicine plan is right for you.
- Ask your doctor to test you for allergies.
- If you smoke, try to quit and try not to be in smoke-filled areas.
- Try to get rid of roaches and pests in your home.

For more information on asthma, call the **American Lung Association at 1-800-548-8252**. Or visit the **New York State Department of Health** website at: www.health.ny.gov/diseases/asthma.

Emotional well-being is the way your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors affect your life. Being emotionally healthy leads to a positive self-image and in turn, to satisfying relationships with friends and others. Being in good emotional health helps you deal with life's challenges at home, work, or school.

An upset in your emotional well-being can create more and more problems. Being emotionally unwell often causes difficulty in dealing with everyday demands, affecting how you think, feel, and relate to others.

Emotional problems are common and can affect people of any age, race, and religion. These problems are NOT caused by personal weakness or lack of character.

If any of the following statements are true for you, seek help for your emotional health issues:

- I have spells or attacks when I feel scared, anxious, or uneasy that come on suddenly.
- I get so happy or excited that I get in trouble with my family.
- I have felt depressed, sad or empty most of the day, almost every day, for at least two weeks, so much so that it gets in the way of my daily life.
- I see or hear things that other people cannot see or hear.
- I have been anxious or worried about certain events or activities for most days for at least six months.
- I have thoughts of death or suicide.

Emotional problems are similar to other health problems and can be treated, allowing you to feel better.

Treatment may involve getting counseling, taking medication, or both.

How do I get help with emotional health problems?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or case manager.
- See a mental health professional.
- Psychologists, licensed professional counselors, and clinical social workers provide counseling.
- Talk to your minister or religious leader in your faith. Psychiatrists are licensed doctors and can prescribe medication; sometimes they provide counseling, too. Often, they work with psychologists and social workers so you can get the right combination of treatment that you need.
- Seek support from family or friends. Choose a family member or friend who you trust and decide what information you want to share. If possible, talk in person, rather than on the phone. Discuss your current concerns and plans for seeking care.

Tips for staying in good emotional health:

- Get plenty of sleep.
- Exercise.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Maintain relationships with friends and family.
- Avoid or cut down on drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Take any medications as prescribed.
- Get involved in your community.
- Schedule and keep regular appointments with your health care providers.
- Talk to someone and seek help early if you are feeling overly stressed.
- Develop some type of relaxation activity, like walking or listening to music, and work it into your daily schedule.

Finding Help

What should I do if I have an emotional health emergency?

- Go to an emergency room or call **911** right away if you feel you might hurt yourself or someone else.
- Call the 24-hour emergency number for your health care provider or clinic. If you have to leave a message, be sure to say you need help right away. If they cannot help you at that time, they may tell you to call 911 or will call 911 for you.
- Call **NYC WELL**, a New York City agency that helps people in crisis by giving information and phone numbers for places to find help. NYC WELL is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

English: **1-888-NYC-WELL (692-9355)**

Hearing Impaired (TTY): **711**

Other languages: **1-888-NYC-WELL**,
and ask for an interpreter.

- Call the **National Hope Line Network** (suicide hotline): **1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)**. Trained crisis line workers will connect you to find the certified crisis center closest to you.
- Contact the **NYC WELL** at **1-888-532-2400**. This is New York City's crisis and suicide hotline. Staff respond to crises and provide useful information and referrals.

Who can help me find emotional health services?

- Your primary care provider can help.
- New York State Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH). They provide information and referrals for finding help for emotional health problems. It is not an emergency or suicide hotline. Call **1-800-597-8481** or **1-800-597-9810** (TDD) Monday through Friday, 9 AM - 4 PM.

PREGNANCY

A healthy baby starts with a healthy pregnancy. Early and regular check-ups are important to you and your baby's health.

Here are some things you can do for yourself and your baby:

- Get early and regular prenatal care.
- Take your prenatal vitamins.
- Exercise and be sure to eat well.
- Stay away from cigarettes, alcohol and any drugs not given to you by your doctor.

Women and teens who live in New York State who are pregnant and who meet certain income guidelines can get complete medical care during pregnancy, delivery, and for at least two months after delivery.

The Prenatal Care Assistance Program (PCAP) can help you get the care you need for you and your baby. PCAP offers complete pregnancy care and other health care services to women and teens who live in New York State. The Medicaid Obstetrical and Maternal Services (MOMS) Program provides complete pregnancy services in areas of the state where PCAP health centers are not located. There is no cost to eligible women who participate in MOMS or PCAP.

To get more information and a referral to a pregnancy care provider, call the **New York State Growing Up Healthy Hotline** at **1-800-522-5006**.

Remember, drinking, smoking, and using drugs when you're pregnant can hurt your baby. If you are a woman who uses drugs and you are pregnant, you should seek medical care immediately and take steps to reduce your use. You can try to:

- Use fewer drugs
- Use smaller amounts
- Use less often
- Learn how to use safer

Do not try to quit using opioids (example: Oxycontin, fentanyl, heroin, morphine) on your own. Withdrawing from opioids while you are pregnant can be harmful to both you and your baby if you are not under a doctor's care.

It is possible for you to have a healthy pregnancy. Work in partnership with your doctor to get the help you need to have a safe pregnancy and healthy baby.

If I have HIV, will my baby have HIV?

If you are HIV positive and pregnant, there is a chance you could give HIV to your baby during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.

- Taking medication before you give birth can greatly lower this chance.
- Talk to a doctor about your options.
- You should not breastfeed your baby if you have HIV.
- All pregnant women should be tested for HIV.

Early treatment of HIV can help you stay healthy and reduce the chance of your baby getting HIV.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program

WIC is a special food program for low-income pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5. All applicants must be income eligible and have a medical or nutritional risk.

WIC provides nutritious foods (like milk, cheese, eggs, juice, cereal, beans, and formula), along with nutrition education and information on where to apply for free or low-cost health care or other services you need. To find the WIC office closest to you, call the **Growing Up Healthy Hotline** at **1-800-522-5006**.

Health insurance is available for most uninsured children under age 19 living in New York State. There are two programs: Child Health Plus A (children's Medicaid) or Child Health Plus B. Almost all children are eligible, no matter how much the family earns or the child's immigration status. Health insurance is available under Medicaid and Family Health Plus for most people aged 19 to 64 who have limited income and who are citizens or who fall within one of many immigration categories.

To find the location nearest you where you can apply to the program, call:

For adults: **1-877-934-7587**

For children: **1-800-698-4543**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, whether you are gay, straight, bisexual, or transgender. You do not have to be in a steady relationship to be abused. If you think you are being abused, you probably are, and it is not your fault. There are many kinds of abuse. Some examples are:

- **Emotional abuse** (also called psychological or verbal abuse) is when your partner calls you names, puts you down, threatens you, or criticizes you.

- **Physical abuse** is when your partner punches, slaps, kicks, bites, scratches, burns, pinches, shoves, withholds medication, or hurts you physically.
- **Sexual abuse** is when your partner forces you to have sex (any kind of sex) through violence or emotional abuse. Even if you are married or are in a steady relationship, your partner does not have the right to force you to have sex.

Ask yourself, does your partner:

- Make you feel like you can't make decisions?
- Use being drunk or high as an excuse for saying hurtful things or abusing you?
- Threaten to hurt or kill himself or herself if you break up with him or her?
- Constantly criticize you and your abilities as a spouse or partner, parent, or employee?
- Behave in an overprotective manner or become extremely jealous?
- Threaten to hurt you, your children, pets, family members, friends, or himself or herself?
- Prevent you from seeing family or friends?
- Get suddenly angry or lose his or her temper?
- Destroy personal property or throw things around?
- Deny you access to family assets like bank accounts, credit cards, or the car, or control all finances and force you to account for what you spend?
- Use intimidation or manipulation to control you or your children?
- Hit, punch, slap, kick, shove, choke or bite you?
- Prevent you from going where you want to, when you want to, and with whomever you want?
- Make you have sex when you do not want to or do things sexually that you do not want to?
- Humiliate or embarrass you in front of other people?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may be a victim of domestic violence. Talk to someone and get help. You are not to blame and you are not alone.

Safety Plan

Whatever else you may decide to do, one thing that many victims of domestic violence find helpful is making a safety plan. You can make one yourself or you can call your local domestic violence program and ask them to help you.

Answer these questions to make your safety plan:

- Where can you keep important phone numbers (police, hotline, friends, and shelter) for yourself and your children?
- If you need to get out of your house or apartment in elevator or stairwell, will be able to use to get out safely?
- If you need a place to stay for a while, where can you go? Can you arrange to stay with family or friends in a crisis?
- Do your children know how to use the telephone to call the police?
- Is there a code word you can use with friends, family, and/or your children to alert them to call for help?
- Can you keep some money, a change of clothes, and important papers hidden from your partner, but that you can get to quickly?

Help is available. Call:

Safe Horizon

Bilingual Hotline: **1-800-621-HOPE (4673)**.

Hearing impaired: **1-866-604-5350**.

New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline

1-800-942-6906 (English 1 and Spanish 2)

TTY Dial **711** and then the hotline number

NYC Anti-Violence Project

212-714-1141

National Domestic Violence Hotline

The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides primarily Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Safe Horizon

212-577-7777 or 1-800-621-HOPE (4673)

Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center

212- 442-3103

Domestic Violence Hotline

1-866-689-HELP (4357)

TDD Hotline:

1-866-604-5350

Rape and Sexual Assault Hotline

1-212-227-3000

EMERGENCY: Call 911

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services and the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) can legally take your children if:

- They have a **court order** (a paper signed by a judge).
- You agree that they can take your children.
- Your caseworker or a hospital decides that your children are in serious danger (called **imminent risk**).

If your children are taken from you:

- Ask for a court hearing to try to get your children back right away.
- You have a right to a lawyer.

In New York State (outside of New York City), each county has a Department of Social Services. Call the Department of Social Services where the child was placed, or call the department in the county where you live and ask for help.

If you were represented by a lawyer during the court proceeding, contact that lawyer for legal advice.

If you need a referral for a lawyer, call the **New York State Bar Association** at **518-463-3200**.

In New York City, call **646-442-3600** to get a lawyer from **Legal Services for New York City**, or call the **Legal Aid Society** at **411**. Otherwise, the court will give you a lawyer.

At the hearing, the judge will decide if your children will be in “immediate and serious danger” if they are sent back to you. You can get your children back even if you need some help to keep them.

You have a right to get help or preventive services so your children can come home.

Call the **NYS Central Register Child Abuse & Maltreatment Hotline** to report child abuse and neglect:
1-800-342-3720
1-800-638-5163 (TDD)

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

Foster Care and Your Rights

If your children are in foster care you have certain rights:

- You have the right to know the name, address, and phone number of the foster care agency taking care of your children and the name of the worker and supervisor on your case.
- You have the right to visit your children while they are in foster care, unless you have a court order saying that you cannot visit.
- You have the right to make all major decisions about your children (except in a life-and-death emergency). The only time this is not true is if a judge orders something different.

IMPORTANT: These laws change often. To be sure that the rights listed here have not changed, call:

Empire Justice Center (Former GULP)

119 Washington Avenue

Albany, NY 12210

518-462-6831 or

For legal services in New York City dial 411

Legal Services for New York City

212-431-7200

For a copy of the **Parent’s Guide to New York State Child Abuse and Neglect Laws**, call: **1-877-KIDS-NYC (1-877-543-7692)**

FAMILY PLANNING BENEFIT PROGRAM

You may be eligible for the Family Planning Benefit Program (FPBP). Planning a family is important. Here's how you can get the help you need. Birth control and other family planning services are available. The FPBP can help you get services to plan your family. It is FREE to females and males who qualify.

What services can I get?

- All forms of birth control (pills, condoms, diaphragms, the patch)
- Information about family planning and choices for birth control
- Emergency contraception
- Check-ups and pap smears during a family planning visit
- Laboratory tests related to family planning services
- HIV counseling and testing related to family planning visits
- Sterilization

For more information call:

New York State Growing Up Healthy Hotline

1-800-522-5006

Or call your local social services office.

If you cannot locate the telephone number, call:

New York State Medicaid Helpline

1-800-541-2831

In NYC call:

Medicaid Helpline

1-888-692-6116



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Department
of Health

5/20