



# TEAMSTERS TRUST BENEFITS INSIDER



**PAGE 2** Should You See a Healthcare Provider in Person?    **PAGE 4** Kaiser Workshops for Chronic Conditions  
**PAGE 3** Making the Most Out of Virtual Doctor Visits

## The COVID-19 Vaccine

An important step in keeping you and your family safe.

Every day more and more Americans are becoming eligible to receive their COVID-19 vaccine. In mid-March over 2 million vaccine doses were being administered daily in the U.S.—with that number expected to rise. It is estimated that by April and May there will be enough available vaccine for anyone who wants it.

The COVID-19 vaccines are proven to be a safe and effective way of slowing and stopping the spread of the virus—with some mild and short-term side effects. All vaccines—including the COVID-19 vaccine—undergo rigorous safety testing before being introduced to the public, and they are constantly monitored after being released.

It is a common misconception that it is safe to build immunity from exposure to a disease or virus. In reality, it is much safer for you to become immune to a disease by getting vaccinated, than by catching the disease. Natural infections can cause severe complications and can be deadly. In addition to protecting you from illness, getting vaccinated also benefits your whole community through something called “herd immunity”. This means, if enough people are vaccinated it’s harder for the disease to spread to those people who cannot have vaccines—people who are ill or have a weakened immune system.

Because the vaccine is still in short supply, it is being distributed in phases. To find out when you’re eligible, use the Washington state **PhaseFinder** tool at **FindYourPhaseWa.org**. If you are not currently eligible you can enter your information to be alerted when it is your turn. When you are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, you can print out a confirmation page from PhaseFinder to show as proof of your eligibility.

The vaccine is being made available in multiple Kaiser locations, and places throughout the community. Eligible Trust participants may get the vaccine for \$0 co-pay from any provider or pharmacy that is offering it. Be sure to have your insurance card and proof of eligibility handy when you go.

Source: *cdc.gov*

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can find the Washington Phase Chart, helpful links and other important COVID-19 information by visiting the Using Your Healthcare section at **wateamsters.com/resources**.





## SHOULD YOU SEE A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IN-PERSON?

With the effects of COVID-19, it can be hard to know whether you should go to your provider's office or get medical care virtually. This guide can help you decide.



### Do you have...

#### URGENT SYMPTOMS

- signs of a heart attack or stroke
- severe stomach pain
- sudden blurred vision, severe headache (not a migraine), or dizziness
- a deep cut, broken bone, or other significant physical injury
- a high fever, seizures, difficulty breathing, or any other condition you believe is life-threatening

##### SHOULD YOU GO IN?

**YES**, you should call 9-1-1, or go to your nearest hospital emergency room.

#### NEW SYMPTOMS OR QUESTIONS

- a minor injury to a muscle or joint, such as a sprained ankle
- physical therapy needs
- a condition that's worrying you, such as depression or anxiety
- COVID-19 or other flu-like symptoms, like fever or chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, loss of smell, diarrhea

##### SHOULD YOU GO IN?

**MAYBE NOT**, if your doctor offers virtual visits (talking by video or phone), try that first.

##### YES, if you:

- are over 65,
- do not have access to remote health care,
- have an underlying health condition like diabetes, heart disease, or obesity.

#### SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- a newborn baby
- a child who needs vaccinations
- a dental emergency
- a serious health condition like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, or obesity that you are being treated for
- suicidal thoughts or other serious mental health concern

##### SHOULD YOU GO IN?

**YES**, you should go to the doctor.

#### PREVENTIVE OR ELECTIVE CARE

- a regular checkup with your primary care provider or a mental health visit
- to check in on a chronic condition that's stable
- an elective procedure or surgery
- a prescription refill

##### SHOULD YOU GO IN?

**PROBABLY NOT**, talk to your doctor about any potential harm if you wait or if you could have the appointment virtually (by video or phone).

#### CARE TIPS



Is it a heart attack or stroke? For warning signs, see the American Heart Association's [website](#).



Questions about coverage? Call your health insurance plan before making your appointment.



Have your insurance card handy when you call your doctor.



Getting your flu vaccine is more important than ever!

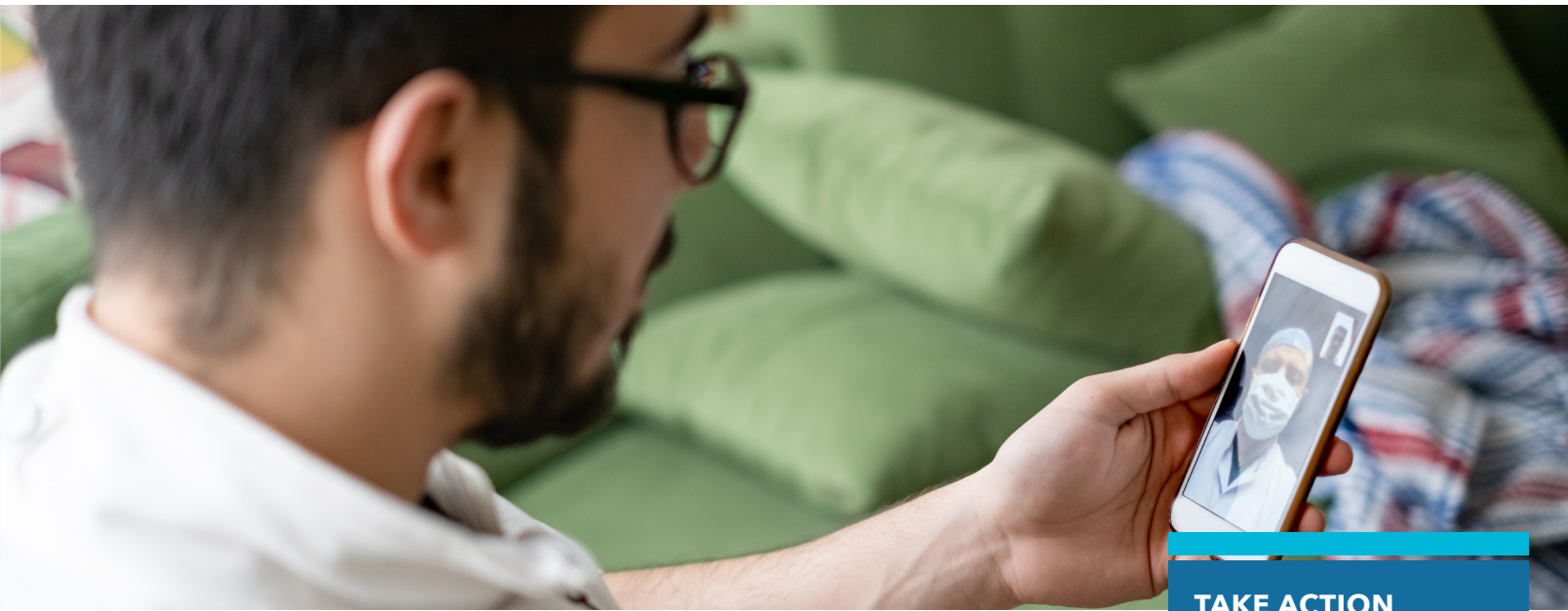


Don't skip certain health screenings. That includes eye exams if you have diabetes; and breast, cervical, or colon cancer screenings if you are at high-risk.



##### FOR COVID-19 INFORMATION AND TESTING

- Call 800-525-0127
- See Washington State Department of Health's [website](#)
- Check your **local public health department** for testing sites near you, including those offering free tests



## Virtual Doctors Visits

### Making the most out of your next visit.

One positive thing to come from the pandemic is that many people now feel more comfortable with virtual doctor visits and are realizing the convenience of seeing a doctor from home or the breakroom, while a child is napping or whenever it might be convenient! And just like in-person visits, all virtual visits are confidential and protected by HIPAA privacy laws.

As we return to in-person visits (which are very important for many conditions), virtual care will continue to be an important way to access quality care when you need it. Here are some tips to make the most of your next virtual visit:

1. Follow the preparation instructions provided and download the app or know the link to click ahead of time.
2. Have a list of questions and symptoms to discuss with your provider. Be prepared to take notes.
3. Find a quiet, private space. Try to be in a location with a stable internet connection.
4. Log in a little early, just in case you have trouble getting connected.
5. Once your appointment is over, don't hesitate to follow-up with any questions.

Depending on the type of visit you could also have a family member sit with you to help remind you of questions and symptoms or to help your provider perform a hands-on physical exam when necessary. You could also have a thermometer on hand in case your doctor would like you to take your temperature, or a flashlight if you are having a sore throat.

Source: <https://www.providence.org>

### As a Kaiser Permanente participant, you and your covered family members have access to **virtual care visits**.

With a Video Visit, Plan participants can receive quick online care for many common conditions, a treatment plan and, if needed, a prescription – without a trip to your doctor's office.

You may use an online visit for the following common conditions:

- Back pain (lower back)
- Cough
- Seasonal allergies
- Cold and flu symptoms
- Diarrhea
- Sinus problems
- Constipation
- Sore throat
- Rashes
- UTIs
- Vaginal yeast infections, and more.

To schedule a video consultation, login at [www.kp.org/wa](http://www.kp.org/wa) to get started. It is easy to set up a call or video chat for a time that works for you.

#### TAKE ACTION

As a Trust participant you have many options for getting the care you need. From a fully covered virtual appointment, to calling the Kaiser nurse line with medical questions, or accessing one of thousands of in-network providers. Visit [wateamsters.com/benefits](http://wateamsters.com/benefits) to learn more.







2323 Eastlake Ave E  
Seattle WA 98102

## THE TAKEAWAY

# Help for Chronic Conditions

## Living Well Workshops from Kaiser.

If you have chronic pain or an ongoing condition like diabetes, heart disorders, asthma, depression or others, then you understand the challenges in maintaining your health and wellness. Kaiser Permanente's Better Choices, Better Health program offers you strategies to manage your condition, along with the support of knowledgeable, trained health professionals – all at no cost to you.

Better Choices, Better Health offers several six-week workshops that are designed to help you gain skills to take care of yourself and improve your overall well-being. You'll be part of an online group who are experiencing similar health challenges. New content is introduced each week and you can log on when it is convenient for you. Over the six weeks you'll learn how to complete small, achievable steps toward healthier living.

To find out more, or to sign up for a class, visit: <https://wa.kaiserpermanente.org/html/public/classes/living-well>.