



# Communicating with your senior patients

Your patients may not always remember to tell you about changes in their health care, especially the elderly and those with chronic diseases. Here are some tips to help your patients remember any changes in their health care:

## Physical activity

Ask what type of physical activity they do and how often. Then, encourage them to continue, increase, or decrease their activity based on their current state of health.

## Balance

Have they fallen? Do they have trouble with balance or walking? If the answer is yes to either of these questions, check their blood pressure lying or standing, and consider suggesting (if appropriate):

- That they use a cane or walker
- That they begin an exercise or physical therapy program
- A vision or hearing test

If they've had a fracture in the last six months, consider ordering a bone density screening or osteoporosis medication (if appropriate).

## Immunizations

Have they had a flu shot or pneumovax? Check other vaccines as appropriate.

## Urinary incontinence

Have they accidentally leaked urine in the past six months? If yes, then ask how much of a problem, if any, is the urine leakage. If they are not receiving treatment, consider bladder training, exercises, medication, or surgery.

If you've suggested they see a specialist, ask if they've followed up. If they have had trouble getting an appointment, encourage them to call our patient advocacy service at 1-800-359-5465.

For BlueShield of Northeastern New York patients you feel need additional education, resources, support, or assistance navigating the health care system, please call us at 1-877-878-8785, and press 2. Our registered nurses, social workers, nutritionists, and other health professionals are ready to assist you.



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