



Pacific Medical Centers Newsletter

Winter Wellness

For many people, winter means slowing down. For others, it's the start of a fast-paced sports season. However you spend your cold-weather months, Pacific Medical Centers is here to keep you informed about your healthcare.

It's all part of our commitment to treat you better.





Pacific Medical Centers Newsletter

Winter Wellness

winter
2005

Stress Less

Insurance Peace of Mind

Deciphering insurance plans and terminology can raise anyone's stress level. Ease your mind by understanding the basics of this important component of your healthcare.

First, we accept most major insurance plans, so be sure to have your current insurance card on hand for appointments. This saves you time and ensures you are correctly billed, especially if your plan has recently changed.

It's a good idea to clarify your payment responsibility with your insurance company before your visit. For example, you may be asked for a co-payment for services such as pharmacy, office visit, or emergency room.

Know who to call with questions. Our helpful staff can answer questions about our services on your bill. Invoices for lab tests often come separately from Dynacare. For co-payment and benefits inquiries, talk to your insurance company. You can find the customer service number on the back of your insurance card.

Finally, distinguishing basic insurance terminology can help you understand your plan and prepare for questions. Here are some terms:

Co-pay – Your co-pay is your out-of-pocket cost paid for each office visit, medical service, or prescription. For example, a health plan may have a ten-dollar co-pay. This means every time you visit a doctor, you would pay just ten dollars.

Your co-pay amount depends on your plan and the type of service.

Deductible – The annual deductible is the amount of covered expenses you must pay for each year before the plan pays certain benefits. The start and end date of each plan's year may vary, so it's important you check with your insurance provider. Co-pays will usually not count toward the annual deductible.

Coinsurance – Coinsurance or "cost share" is the percentage of medical expenses that you and your insurance company are each responsible for. For example, if the coinsurance amount is 80/20, that means that your insurance plan pays 80% and you pay 20%, usually after the deductible is met.

Out-of-Pocket Maximum – This is the most you'll pay for covered expenses each year. After you pay the out-of-pocket maximum, the plan will pay 100% for most covered services. The out-of-pocket maximum does not apply to co-payments.

Pacific Medical Centers has behavioral health professionals who work in partnership with adults, kids, and families to achieve quality emotional and mental healthcare.

For an appointment with a specialist, call **1-888-4-PACMED** (1-888-472-2633).



Preventive Health

Focus Your Annual Exam on Prevention

You may not have any symptoms. In fact, you may be feeling great. But medical appointments with the sole purpose of preventing and screening for diseases play a key role in a healthy lifestyle. During your annual exam, your doctor will discuss your health history, the screening tests you need, and why they're necessary. There are also several ways you can play an active role in your preventive exam:

1. Personal History – Write down your medical history, including any illnesses or treatments that required hospitalization, surgery, or emergency care. List each condition and treatment.

2. Family History – Gather information on any diseases that appear to run in your family, such as cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes.

3. Medications and Allergies – Write down the name and dose of any medications, vitamins, or supplements that you take on a regular basis. Also include information on reactions or allergies to medications.

4. Immunizations – Provide a record of your immunizations. Note the year you were last vaccinated against tetanus, diphtheria, measles, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, pneumonia, and influenza.

5. Questions – Jot down all of your questions and concerns, and prioritize that list. Making a list helps you remember details and provides focus so that you're more likely to cover your main concerns.



Exercise

Staying on Your Feet

Winter sports enthusiasts – especially skiers, snowboarders, and ice skaters – are prone to injuries of the ankles and feet. Luckily, most of these cold-related injuries can be prevented with proper equipment and planning.

Here are preventive steps to keep you on your feet this winter:

- Treat any ailments you may have, such as bunions, before taking part in winter sports.
- See your doctor for advice before engaging in winter sports if you have a pre-existing medical condition that can affect your feet, such as diabetes.
- Ensure that your feet don't get cold. Wear appropriate footwear, such as insulated and waterproof shoes, and wear socks that draw sweat away from the skin.
- Make sure all footwear fits you properly, especially if you are skiing or skating. Footwear that is too tight or too loose can cause injuries.
- Remember that in the cold muscles take longer to warm up, and the body is much more susceptible to muscle pulls and tear injuries. Proper stretching is essential.

If you need a physical therapy or rehabilitation consultation, make an appointment today by calling **1-888-4-PACMED** (1-888-472-2633). Pacific Medical Centers' physical therapy is currently offered at Beacon Hill, Northgate, Totem Lake, Renton, and, coming in spring 2005, Lynnwood.

Call today and make your annual exam appointment with your provider.

1-888-4-PACMED (1-888-472-2633)

The Informed Patient

Dangerous Drug Interactions: What You Need to Know

Even drug interactions that aren't life threatening can decrease a drug's effectiveness, resulting in insufficient therapy and unnecessary costs and complications. According to the American Pharmaceutical Association, there are four key things to remember to avoid adverse drug interactions:

1. Thoroughly read the labels of all over-the-counter and prescription medicines. Without reading the label, you may be taking the incorrect dose or overlooking potential side effects.
2. Make sure you know the benefits as well as the potential risks of both the prescription and the over-the-counter medications you are taking. Look specifically for the section called "Warnings" on the labels of over-the-counter medicines.
3. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new medication. Ask whether it is safe to take the new medicine with other over-the-counter medicines, prescription medications, vitamins, or herbal products you are already taking regularly or even occasionally.
4. Use one pharmacy for all of your family's prescription and over-the-counter medication needs. This will improve the level of safety and patient consultation that can be provided.

Our on-site pharmacies track each prescription that you fill with us, even mail-order items. That means your prescriptions are carefully screened for interactions and possible complications with existing medical conditions. Best of all, Pacific Medical Centers' physicians and pharmacists work in tandem to ensure your best possible healthcare.

Pharmacies are conveniently located at our Beacon Hill, Madison, Northgate, Renton, and Totem Lake clinics.

Healthy Kids

Your Child and Sleep: What You Should Know

Not enough sleep makes everyone less attentive and more prone to making mistakes. For children, the risks are even more serious. Studies show younger children who don't get enough sleep – nine hours is considered optimum for elementary school children – are at higher risk for accidents.

A recent study found that sleep deprivation increased the risk of injury by 86%, especially in boys three to five years old. Sleep deprivation also affects school performance. In addition, children can be misdiagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) because the symptoms of sleep deprivation closely mirror those of ADHD.

A good night's sleep is a must for kids, but getting children to bed can be a challenge. Here are some practical bedtime tips for parents:

- Set a regular time for bed each night and stick to it.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine, such as giving your child a warm bath or reading him or her a story.
- Avoid giving children a big meal close to bedtime and give no caffeine within six hours of bedtime.
- Make after-dinner playtime relaxing; too much exercise close to bedtime can keep children awake.
- Keep the noise level down and the bedroom dark. If some light is necessary, use a small nightlight.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Pacific Medical Centers has pediatric and family practice specialists at our Beacon Hill, Northgate, Renton, and Totem Lake clinics.



Pacific Medical Centers has caring providers for all your healthcare needs. Our specialty services include:

- Audiology
- Behavioral Health
 - Child Psychology
 - Individual & Family Therapy
 - Psychiatry
 - Psychology
- Cardiology
- Cosmetic Procedures
- Diabetes, Metabolism & Endocrinology
- Ear, Nose & Throat (Otolaryngology)
- Eye Care
 - Ophthalmology
 - Optometry
 - Optical Shop
- Family Practice
- Gastroenterology
- General Surgery
- Geriatrics
- Hematology
- Hepatology
- Internal Medicine
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Orthopedic Surgery
- Pediatrics
- Physical Medicine
 - Rehabilitation
 - Physical Therapy
- Pulmonary Medicine
- Rheumatology
- Urology
- Women's Health
 - Obstetrics & Gynecology
 - Bone Density Screening (DEXA)

We welcome most major insurance plans.

Call **1-888-4-PACMED** (1-888-472-2633) for an appointment.

Pacific Medical Centers offers an integrated, comprehensive network of primary and specialty healthcare providers. We focus on prevention, early detection, and high-quality care that is respectful and responsive to your needs. We offer same-day primary care appointments in all six of our locations.

Locations

Beacon Hill

1200 12th Avenue S
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 326-2400

Lynnwood

19401 40th Avenue W
Lynnwood, WA 98036
(425) 744-7153

Madison

1101 Madison St, Suite 301
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 505-1101

Northgate

10416 5th Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98125
(206) 517-6700

Renton

601 South Carr Rd,
Suite 100
Renton, WA 98055
(425) 227-3700

Totem Lake

12910 Totem Lake Blvd NE,
Suite 101
Kirkland, WA 98034
(425) 814-5000