membershealth
Empowering Health, Elevating Lives

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Members' Digest

Highlights

When something doesn't feel right

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When every step matters

Why access, navigation and follow-up are essential to better healthcare.

Good healthcare goes beyond the first appointment. It means recognizing health concerns, understanding your next steps and receiving support throughout your care journey.

A symptom that is easy to dismiss. A delayed appointment. A referral with unclear next steps.

This month, we explore why timely assessment, care navigation and follow-up matter, and how MembersHealth helps connect the journey. Because better care is about what happens next.

MEMBERSHEALTH

When something doesn't feel right

Sometimes the first sign is simply a change from what feels normal.



Meet Sarah

Sarah, 52, balances a full-time job and family responsibilities, often putting everyone else's needs before her own.

When unusual fatigue turned into shortness of breath and occasional pressure in her chest and upper back, she wondered whether stress or menopause could explain her symptoms.

But the symptoms kept returning. One afternoon, chest pressure and shortness of breath prompted Sarah to call 9-1-1 rather than wait for an appointment.

Emergency clinicians assessed her symptoms and determined the appropriate next steps. Yet questions remained: Would she need additional testing? Who would explain the results? When should she follow up?

Sarah's experience highlights why timely assessment is only the beginning. Clear guidance, care navigation and follow-up are essential parts of a connected healthcare journey.

What happens after the first assessment?

Once Sarah's immediate concerns were addressed, her healthcare journey was not necessarily over.



She still needed to understand:

- What should she do if her symptoms changed?
- Who could help her understand the next step?
- Were additional tests recommended?
- When should follow-up happen?
- Who would review the results?

With MembersHealth



Sarah could speak with an appropriate healthcare provider about her follow-up needs, review recommendations from her assessment, and receive guidance on what should happen next.

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Women's health deserves a closer look

Understanding the gaps in healthcare



Difficulty Accessing Specialist Care, Ages 45–64

33.4%

Women

26.9%

Men

2024 data | Statistics Canada. Both bars use a 0–50% scale.

In 2024, 27.8% of Canadians aged 45 and older, approximately 4.5 million people, reported difficulty accessing specialist care. These figures cover specialist care generally, but they demonstrate a measurable difference in healthcare access.

The cardiovascular research gap

Women's heart health has also historically received less research attention.
According to Heart & Stroke, two-thirds of heart disease and stroke clinical research has focused on men.
This reinforces the importance of understanding women's cardiovascular risks, symptoms and healthcare needs.

Heart symptoms are not always what you expect



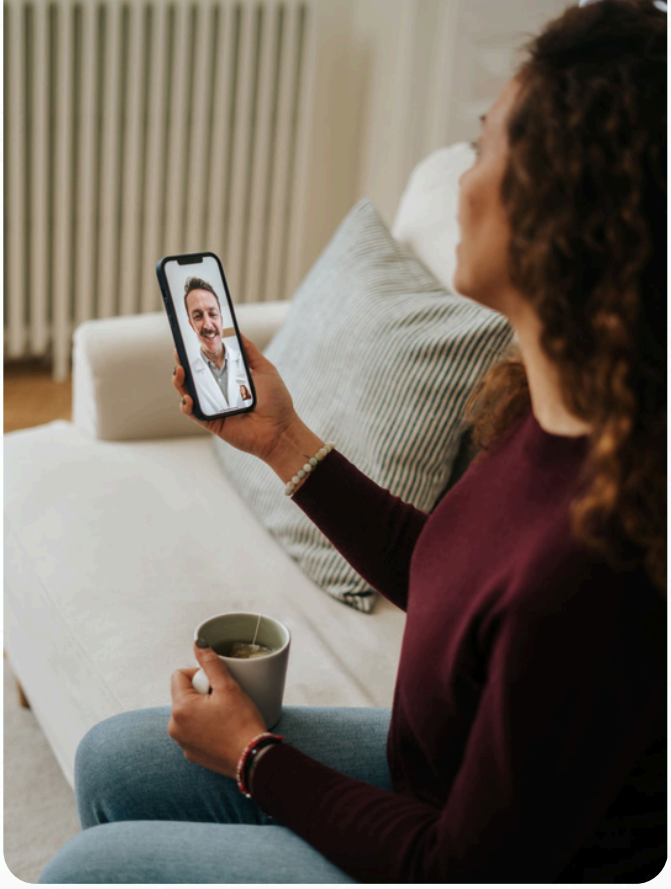
Chest pain or discomfort is the most common sign of a heart attack in both women and men. Women may also experience:

- Unusual shortness of breath or extreme fatigue
- Nausea, sweating or light-headedness
- Pressure or discomfort in the upper back, neck or jaw

Recognize the signs. If you suspect a heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately, even if symptoms seem mild.

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How MembersHealth helps connect your care



When the next step is unclear, you should not have to navigate it alone.

A healthcare concern may begin with an appointment, but care often continues beyond it. You may need to understand a recommendation, complete testing, arrange a referral or know when further assessment is needed.

MembersHealth helps eligible members connect those steps through physician-led care, navigation and follow-up.

How we support your care journey



MembersHealth physicians: Assess and guide
For non-emergency concerns, MembersHealth physicians can review your symptoms, health history and individual circumstances, assess what can appropriately be addressed through virtual care and recommend next steps when further investigation or care is needed.



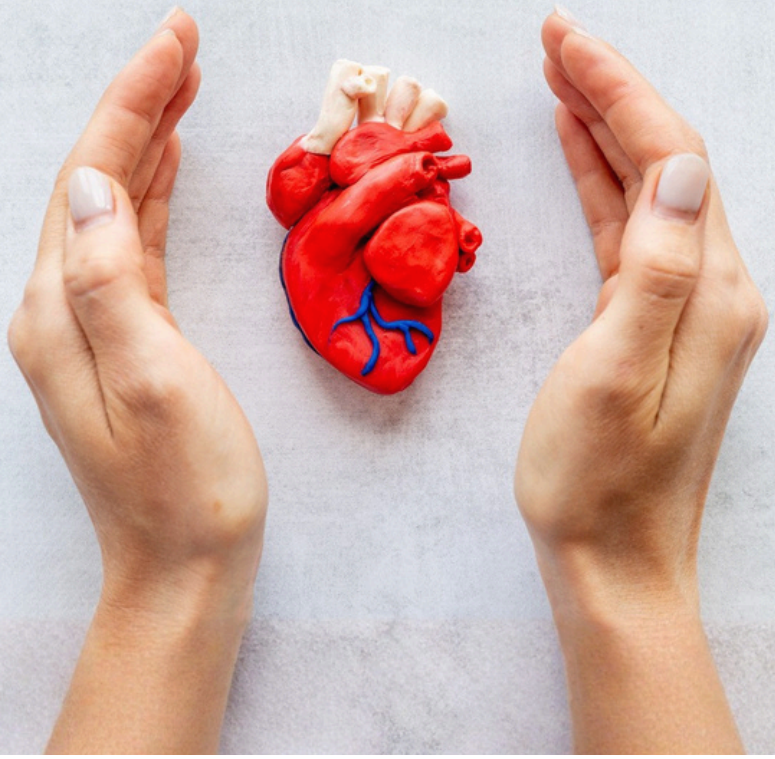
Care coordination and navigation: Connect the next steps
When testing, referrals or additional care are recommended, the care team can help clarify next steps, support navigation and help members understand where they are in their healthcare journey.



Follow-up: Keep your care on track
Questions can ariseafter an appointment. Follow-up gives members another opportunity to discuss how they are doing, raise questions about recommended next steps and identify where additional guidance may be needed.

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Heart health starts with awareness



Recognizing risk factors and making informed decisions about your cardiovascular health.

Heart disease can affect anyone, and some risk factors develop without noticeable symptoms.

Understanding your cardiovascular health can help you recognize potential concerns and make informed decisions about your care.

Know your risk factors

Blood pressure
High blood pressure often has no noticeable symptoms but can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Cholesterol
Elevated cholesterol can contribute to plaque buildup in the arteries, increasing cardiovascular risk.

Blood glucose
High blood glucose and diabetes can increase the risk of cardiovascular complications.

Personal and family history
Your medical history and cardiovascular conditions in close relatives can help identify potential risks.

Lifestyle and daily habits
Smoking, physical activity, nutrition and other daily habits can influence long-term heart health.

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Make every step count toward better health

Five practical ways to stay connected to your care and take an active role in your health.



Earlier attention creates more opportunities to act.

Good healthcare is not only about identifying a concern. It is also about understanding what happens next and having support to follow through.

Five ways to stay connected to your care

1. Notice what has changed
Pay attention to new or persistent changes in how you feel or function.

2. Prepare for appointments
Keep a short record of symptoms, medications and questions you want to discuss.

3. Ask what happens next
Before an appointment ends, understand what is recommended, when to expect an update and whom to contact with questions.

4. Keep track of follow-up
Make note of outstanding tests, referrals and recommended appointments.

5. Reach out when you need guidance
If you have a non-emergency health concern or are unsure about your next step, eligible members can connect with the MembersHealth care team for appropriate guidance and support.

MEMBERSHEALTH

Flu season is here. Don't wait to protect yourself

A timely reminder for you, your family, and your workplace.



As respiratory virus season begins, influenza remains a health concern across Canada. With flu activity rising in some countries, now is the time to prepare.
Influenza can cause fever, cough, fatigue and muscle aches, sometimes leading to serious complications.

The good news? Simple preventive steps can help reduce your risk.

Five ways to protect yourself & others

Get vaccinated
Book your annual flu shot through a pharmacy, healthcare provider or public health program.

Recognize symptoms
Fever, cough, body aches, chills and fatigue may indicate influenza.

Stay home when sick
Avoid close contact with others, especially those at higher risk.

Protect others
Wash your hands, improve ventilation and consider a well-fitting mask in crowded spaces.

Know when to seek care
Seek medical advice if symptoms worsen or you are at higher risk. Get emergency help for severe breathing difficulties or persistent chest pain.

How MembersHealth can help

If you have flu-like symptoms or questions about your health, MembersHealth physicians can assess non-emergency concerns, discuss treatment options and help guide your next steps.
Our role is to help you get appropriate advice when you need it, with follow-up and care navigation where available.
Protect your health. Protect your family. Help protect your workplace.

Prioritize Your Health Today

1-800 - 484 - 0152 *info@membershealth.ca* *www.membershealth.ca*

This newsletter provides information only and is not a substitute for professional healthcare advice. We highly recommend individuals facing any health concerns, including symptoms related to mental well-being, to seek advice from their healthcare practitioner.