

## **RESPONSIBLE HEALTH CARE CONSUMERISM: USING PREVENTIVE CARE**

Being a smart health care consumer doesn't mean you should avoid trips to the doctor. Being a smart health care consumer means making the best decisions about *when* to go to the doctor. Each trip to the doctor costs you — and Trinity Health — a certain amount of money.

Regular check-ups can improve your health and extend your life. However, fewer than 30 percent of associates currently use the preventive care benefits provided by the Trinity Health medical options. By getting the recommended exams and tests, you increase your chances of discovering medical problems early — before an illness significantly affects your health. Plus, preventive care is beneficial not only to your physical health, it also makes sense for your financial health because generally, it's covered at 100 percent by your medical plan.

### **Improving Your Health: Managing Chronic Conditions**

If you're one of the 90 million Americans who live with a chronic condition or illness, you know that health care isn't just something you think about once a year. You have to make decisions about your health much more frequently, and for that reason, it's especially important to effectively manage your condition and the care you receive. According to the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the medical care costs of people with chronic diseases account for more than 75 percent of the nation's \$1 trillion medical care costs.

Many companies are now introducing disease management (or health management) programs to help their people manage these chronic conditions or illnesses. These voluntary, confidential programs help workers identify and manage medical conditions that they may have or be at high risk for.

A chronic condition can be one of many health conditions, from mild to severe, that include everything from asthma to diabetes to hay fever to heart disease. Some conditions flare up occasionally, while others cause symptoms on a regular basis and can even impact a person's everyday life. The Alliance for Health Reform estimates that by 2020, half the population — or 157 million Americans — is expected to have at least one chronic condition.

Better chronic condition management can improve your health and create a more balanced lifestyle while reducing medical costs. If you think you or one of your family members could benefit from participation in a management program, watch for more information during Open Enrollment. In the meantime, be sure to visit Trinity Health's preventive care website at <http://mybenefits.trinity-health.org/preventive.shtml> for more information.