

ASPIRE

Winter 2025



February is Heart Health Month

Screenings: How Regular Screenings Can Safeguard Your Health

Tips for Preventing Colds and the Flu

Why Getting a Good Night's Rest is Good for Your Heart

INSIDE

- 4 FEBRUARY IS HEART HEALTH MONTH
- 5 WHY GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S REST IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEART
- 6 QUIZ: DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK?
- 7 SCREENINGS: HOW REGULAR SCREENINGS CAN SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH
- 8 TIPS FOR PREVENTING COLDS AND THE FLU
- 9 HELP US DO EVEN BETTER!

11 Where can I find medical coverage guidelines for AvMed's Medicare Advantage Plans?

10 Key Points to Remember Following a Hospital Discharge

ASPIRE

James M. Repp
President

Ana M. Eberhard
Vice President,
Member Experience

AvMed, one of Florida's largest not-for-profit health plans, provides quality health benefits throughout the state.

Always consult your Primary Care Physician (PCP) regarding medical advice. The health information in this publication is not intended to replace your doctor's directives.

ASPR-FL20-M002 AvMed, Inc. Coverage provided by or through AvMed, Inc. (health benefit plan). Plans contain limitations and exclusions.

AvMed *ASPIRE* is published by AvMed.

AvMed's Member Engagement Center
1-800-782-8633 (TTY 711)
October 1-March 31,
8 am-8 pm; 7 days a week.
April 1-September 30
Monday-Friday, 8 am-8 pm and
Saturday, 9 am-1 pm.
www.AvMed.org

AvMed Speaks Your Language
Aspire is available in Spanish on our website: <https://www.avmed.org/news/publications/medicare/>

Aspire está disponible en Español en nuestro sitio web: <https://espanol.avmed.org/news/publications/medicare/>

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Dear Valued AvMed Medicare Member:



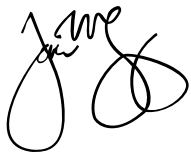
"New year, new you." It's a saying we often hear when flipping our calendars to January 1. However, as we enter 2025, I propose a slight revision: "New year, healthier you," which is what the AvMed team is prepared to help all our Members do.

This issue of AvMed **ASPIRE** is full of tips, tools and information for living a WELLfluent™ life balanced with happiness and wellness. You'll read about ways to improve your heart health; tips to fend off colds and flu; steps to properly prepare for a hospital discharge; and the importance of annual wellness visits and health screenings.

Additionally, in the next few weeks, you may receive a survey in the mail from the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems about AvMed. As you know, we value your opinion and appreciate your feedback as this tool plays an important role in your healthcare and ensures we continue delivering better service, quality, and affordability for our Members.

Have a WELLfluent story to tell us? Share it at ASPIRE@AvMed.org. You could be featured in a future issue. As always, thanks for your continued support.

Be well,



James M. Repp

President

ASPIRE@AvMed.org



Share Your WELLfluent™ Life! How are you joining the WELLfluent? Email us at ASPIRE@AvMed.org with your story and photo or share it on Facebook – tag AvMed and use the hashtag **#JoinTheWELLfluent**. You could be featured in an upcoming issue of the magazine.

FEBRUARY IS HEART HEALTH MONTH

Staying active is one of the best ways to keep your heart healthy. And maintaining a healthy heart is a great way to keep your loved ones' hearts happy. February is Heart Health Month, making it the perfect time to show your heart (and theirs) some love.

Why should you care about heart health?

According to the American Heart Association, while heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in the U.S., it is not a normal part of the aging process. Moreover, even if heart disease runs in your family, that doesn't mean it's inevitable. You can significantly reduce your risk of heart disease by maintaining a healthy weight and keeping your cholesterol and blood pressure at normal levels. The best way to do this is to commit to a healthy lifestyle and keep up with annual wellness visits.

Learn more about understanding your blood pressure: www.rb.gy/xorll4

Five things you can do to reduce the risk of heart disease:

1. **Stay active.** Take a fitness class, walk, stretch, do yoga, or ride a bike—as little as 10 minutes a day of physical activity can deliver some maximum health benefits. If a fever was present, it has been gone without having to use fever-reducing medication.
2. **Choose healthy foods.** Good nutrition helps keep critical risk factors like cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, and weight in check. Plus, you'll feel better. Make sure your diet includes a good balance of proteins, complex carbs, and healthy fats.
3. **Stop smoking.** The toxic chemicals in cigarettes negatively impact the functionality of your heart and blood vessels, which leads to a build-up of plaque in your heart arteries.
4. **Limit alcohol intake.** Having more than two drinks per day for men, and more than one per day for women, can increase your risk of high blood pressure and obesity—both conditions that raise the risk of heart disease.
5. **Relax.** Managing stress in a healthy way is essential to your mental health.



WHY GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S REST IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEART

You can boost your heart health by getting quality sleep. Here's why (and how) to sleep better.

You probably know that eating nutritious foods and getting regular exercise is good for a healthy heart. According to the American Heart Association, another equally critical heart-healthy habit you should add to your routine: get a solid seven to nine hours of sleep every night.

Poor sleep can put you at higher risk for many conditions linked to heart disease. Here's what you need to know about the link between sleep and heart health, plus how to get quality sleep.

When you don't snooze well at night, your heart health can suffer. That doesn't mean that if you stay up watching tv tonight, you'll have a heart attack tomorrow. But over time, lack of sleep takes a toll on your heart.

Here's what poor sleep can lead to:

- **Weight gain.** When we don't sleep, we tend to make poor food choices. In one study, women who were sleep-deprived ate significantly more calories per day than those who had plenty of sleep. Those extra calories can lead to weight gain, and obesity is a well-known risk factor for cardiovascular disease.
- **High blood pressure.** Your blood pressure naturally dips and remains lower all night when you sleep. But if you stay awake longer, your body spends less time in this mode of lower blood pressure. Plus, lack of sleep increases stress hormones such as cortisol, which can raise your blood pressure.
- **Less physical activity.** It's easy to see why: without sleep, you'll be too tired to exercise. And the result of inactivity? You guessed it — a higher risk for heart disease.
- **Depression.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health disorders are linked with risk factors for heart disease. A 2021 study found that people who didn't get enough sleep had nearly three times the risk of mental distress (such as anxiety and depression). That's a concern, because depression is hard on your heart.

Now that you know what poor sleep can lead to, here is some advice for catching some quality ZZZs.

When you visit your dentist, be sure to provide a complete medical history and inform them of any recent health issues, even if they seem unrelated to your oral health. It may be that they will be the first healthcare Provider to diagnose a health problem and can advise you to follow-up with your Primary Care Provider for further treatment.

Tips for being a "super sleeper":

- **Practice good sleep habits.** Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Having a bedtime routine can be helpful, too. Perhaps read a book, have a warm cup of tea, or take a shower before you turn in for the night. A steady routine can trigger your body to know that it's time to go to sleep.
- **Say "NO" to screens.** Using your phone or tablet in bed is a no-no. Blue light from most screens disrupts melatonin production, and that disrupts your sleep.
- **Keep it cool and dark.** The ideal temperature for sleeping is between 60°F and 67°F degrees. So, turn down the thermostat as you prepare to go to bed. If possible, open your bedroom window — that extra burst of oxygen can help you fall asleep faster. Block out light from outside with heavy curtains or a sleep mask.
- **Listen to sleep sounds.** A white noise machine or phone app (but keep that phone screen OFF, or turned face-down), can help drown out background noises, which can help you drift off faster. You can tune in to pattering rain, a babbling brook, or whatever helps you feel relaxed and sleepy.
- **Try meditation.** Start out with a simple breathing technique: sit quietly and relax for a few minutes. Pay attention to your breath as you slowly inhale and exhale. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the sound of your breathing. A meditation app can help, too.

QUIZ: DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK?

Fast action saves lives, but you've got to know what you're looking for. We've all seen the movie version of a heart attack — the crushing pain, the splayed hand clutching the chest, the grimace, the collapse. It's very dramatic but often not at all realistic.

If you suspect someone is having a heart attack, call 911 right away, even if you're not sure.

First responders can get the patient to the hospital faster, begin treatment on the way, and ensure that the person is admitted quickly when they arrive. By calling 911, your loved one can have treatment up to an hour sooner than if you'd jumped in the car. And it could save their life.

Here's a short quiz to test your knowledge of cardiac events. Perhaps you'll learn something new.

Q1: True or false: Most heart attacks involve a sudden onset of intense chest pain.

Q2: What chest-area symptoms are associated with most heart attacks?

- a. Discomfort in the center of the chest or toward the left side
- b. Discomfort that lasts more than a few minutes, or that comes and goes
- c. Feelings of pressure or squeezing
- d. All of the above

Q3: True or false: Nausea, vomiting, pain above the navel, and cold sweats are signs of the stomach flu, not a heart attack.

Q4: Which of these statements is NOT TRUE regarding women's heart attacks?

- a. Women always have the exact same symptoms as men.
- b. Feeling tired for no reason is a symptom more common in women than in men.
- c. Women often mistake heart attack symptoms as signs of stress or exhaustion.
- d. A woman having a heart attack is more likely than a man to have abdominal pain or heartburn.



Answers

A1: False. Though chest pain or discomfort is the most common sign, most heart attacks begin slowly, and symptoms can range from mild to intense. Milder symptoms are more common in women, older adults, and people with diabetes.

A2: D, all of the above. Mild or severe versions of any of these can signal a heart attack.

A3: False. Symptoms of a heart attack aren't always limited to the chest area. Signs can include those listed above, as well as pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, back, shoulder, or one or both arms. Some people experience lightheadedness and shortness of breath, with or without chest pain, when active or at rest.

A4: A is NOT TRUE, but the others are. Women can experience the same symptoms as men, but they may not. Many women don't have chest pain at all. They are also more likely than men to experience dizziness and fainting, shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, and pain in their back or jaw. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, so it's important for everyone to know the possible signs, regardless of gender.

SCREENINGS: HOW REGULAR SCREENINGS CAN SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH

You already know the basics of optimizing your health. Eating nutritiously, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, drinking in moderation, and not smoking are the foundations for good health and disease prevention. That's not all you can do, though. Regular screening tests are essential when it comes to preventing disease and finding better ways to stay healthy.

Screenings Save Lives

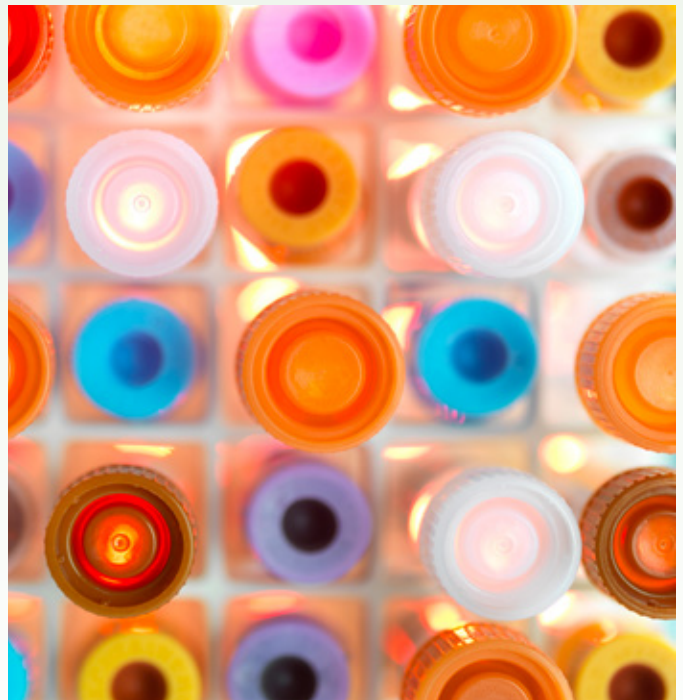
Screenings are important for better health because even serious conditions may not cause symptoms until the disease is advanced – and that's why screenings can save lives.

Medical issues such as diabetes, high cholesterol, colon cancer, and cervical cancer are among the many conditions for which there are excellent screening tests. The guidelines for screenings vary, and factors include health status, risk factors, and age. Sit down with your Primary Care Provider (PCP) and review the screenings you should be having.

- **Colon Cancer.** Colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum) is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Screenings can identify precancerous polyps and detect colorectal cancer early when treatment is most effective.

There are different screening tests for colorectal cancer, and Members should speak with their PCP to determine the best test – or tests – for them. Regular screenings beginning at age 45 are the key to keeping colorectal cancer at bay or finding it very early to begin treatment. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that adults aged 45 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer, and also recommends that adults aged 76 to 85 discuss screenings with their PCP.

- **Diabetes.** According to the CDC, diabetes affects more than 25% of people ages 65 and older in the United States. There are different types of diabetes, but all are related to high levels of blood sugar. Most diabetics should have Hemoglobin A1c (blood sugar testing) and testing for kidney damage at least once per year. The new American Diabetes Association guidelines recommend that all adults be screened at least once every three years starting at age 35, even if results are normal. Learn more about your A1C here: www.rb.gy/zg8yvw
- **Cholesterol.** It is important to monitor for high cholesterol because it has no symptoms. When cholesterol is too high, it builds up in the arteries, decreasing blood flow to the heart. The screening test is a lipoprotein profile, which measures total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, and triglycerides.



TIPS FOR PREVENTING COLDS AND THE FLU

Spring on the horizon doesn't mean we can relax about colds and the flu. Flu season stretches well into spring, and colds stick around even through fair weather.

While the best way to prevent the flu is to get the flu vaccine, here are some other tips to stay healthy, and prevent catching colds or the flu:

- **WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN.** Cold and flu viruses tend to spread through direct contact.
- **AVOID TOUCHING YOUR FACE.** Our eyes, nose, and mouth are where cold and flu viruses are likeliest to enter our bodies.
- **EXERCISE.** Aerobic exercise boosts our body's natural virus-killing abilities.
- **QUIT SMOKING AND CUT BACK ON ALCOHOL.** Both vices lower our immune system's ability to fight viruses.
- **GET YOUR R & R.** Relaxing through activities such as meditation helps rev-up our ability to fight off cold and flu viruses.
- **DON'T PASS IT ON.** When you do have a cold or flu, don't use your bare hands to cover coughs or sneezes. Use a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Continue to wash your hands frequently and limit your direct contact with others.

CHEF PATTY'S ONE-PAN CHICKEN

4 SERVINGS

Ingredients:

- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 orange, juiced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 6 chicken thighs
- 1 medium zucchini, halved lengthwise and sliced or cut into thick rounds
- 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- ½ large red onion, sliced into thick wedges
- 1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes
- ½ cup Castelvetrano or kalamata olives, pitted
- ¼ cup feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 425°F. In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, lemon juice, orange juice, garlic, oregano, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper. Place the chicken thighs in the bowl with the marinade and let marinate for at least 30 minutes. Then, place the zucchini, bell pepper, red onion, and tomatoes in the bottom of a large cast iron skillet or oven-proof pan. Add the chicken thighs over the veggies and bake for 35 minutes. Remove the skillet/pan from the oven, add the olives and feta and then place it back in the oven for another 10 to 15 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened and the chicken is cooked through to 165°F. Finish with fresh chopped fresh parsley. Enjoy!



HELP US DO EVEN BETTER!

It is our top priority to continuously improve your Member experience and benefits to help you stay healthy.

In the next few weeks, you may receive an independent survey in the mail from the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems program – aka, CAHPS.

By filling out this CAHPS survey, we can learn more about your AvMed experience to improve our services and better meet your needs. This tool plays an important role in the care of your health and ensures we continue delivering quality services and the best healthcare experience possible.

We value your opinion and learning about your healthcare experiences is very important to us! If you receive a letter or call about a survey to rate your AvMed health plan, we kindly ask that you take a few minutes to participate.

As a reminder, through AvMed you now enjoy:

- Trusted service with more than 50 years serving Floridians

- More ways to help keep money in your pocket:
 - Prescription savings tool via Rx Savings® Solutions
 - Healthyperks gives you up to \$125 in rewards for healthy behaviors
- Extra benefits such as over the counter, hearing aids, and vision
- \$0 Premium, \$0 Primary Care Provider office visits, \$0 Telemedicine visits
- Comprehensive dental coverage with \$0 copay for crowns
- Private transportation door-to-door to approved healthcare Providers
- Fresh meal delivery program via DeliverLean™ (available on certain plans after an overnight stay in the hospital)
- SilverSneakers® Fitness Program – attend classes in person or receive in-home kits and exercise at home!



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER FOLLOWING A HOSPITAL DISCHARGE

Not surprisingly, the experience of a hospital stay can be overwhelming. Which is why your primary focus after being discharged from the hospital should be on achieving a smooth recovery.

Here are key points to remember and proactive steps you can take following a hospital discharge to get you on the road to recovery without skipping a beat:

- Contact your Primary Care Provider (PCP) as soon as possible following your hospital stay to schedule a visit within 7 days from your discharge date.
- Fill all medications prescribed during your hospital stay and take them as instructed. If you have any questions regarding your medications, be sure to ask your pharmacist or PCP.
- Notify your PCP of any medication changes. This includes new medications added to your medication regimen or changes in current medication frequency or dosages resulting from your hospitalization.
- Ensure all discharge instructions are followed. If you have any questions regarding your discharge instructions, reach out to the number provided on your discharge paperwork and/or your PCP.



- If in-home services and/or durable medical equipment are ordered, and you do not receive services/equipment within 24-48 hours following your discharge, contact AvMed Member Engagement at 1-800-782-8633.
- If you need any assistance coordinating care following a hospitalization, reach out to AvMed's Case Management Department at 1-800-972-8633, Option 3 or via email at CM@AvMed.org.
- If you have any question after hours or on the weekend, call our Nurse on Call at 1-888-866-5432.

Helpful hint: Take your medications with you to review with your PCP to make sure you are taking the right medications at the right dosage and the right frequency.

ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS: THE BEST WAY TO STAY HEALTHY

At AvMed, we are committed to promoting better health among our Members. We offer comprehensive preventive care services as part of your coverage options.

Continue the new year with a focus on prevention with an annual wellness visit with your doctor. Connect with your Primary Care Physician (PCP) for a routine exam and review the preventive care you need this year. It is crucial to prevent diseases and ensure you stay healthy.

We encourage you to schedule your **annual wellness visit** and discuss all your preventive care needs with your doctor at **no cost to you**. A yearly wellness visit is recommended to ensure your doctor has an ongoing

record of your health, which makes it easier to spot subtle signs of disease. Plus, annual visits ensure you get the recommended health screenings and immunizations that can keep you healthy.

Being proactive about your health and wellness is the best way to avoid serious medical issues and keep your healthcare costs to a minimum.

To view a complete list of preventive services, visit AvMed.org. Contact your healthcare Provider to find out recommended services, schedule your virtual or in-office visit, and start enjoying a healthier you!

Where can I find medical coverage guidelines for AvMed's Medicare Advantage Plans?

Information on the coverage criteria sources that we use in making medical necessity determinations for our Medicare plans, can be found on AvMed's website at: www.AvMed.org/about-us/corporate-governance-and-responsibility/medical-technology-coverage-guidelines/.

You can also find the complete list of our Medicare internal coverage guidelines used for medical necessity determinations and our review of new developments in technology through our Medical Technology Assessment Committee (MTAC) on AvMed's website at: www.AvMed.org/about-us/corporate-governance-and-responsibility/medical-technology-coverage-guidelines/.

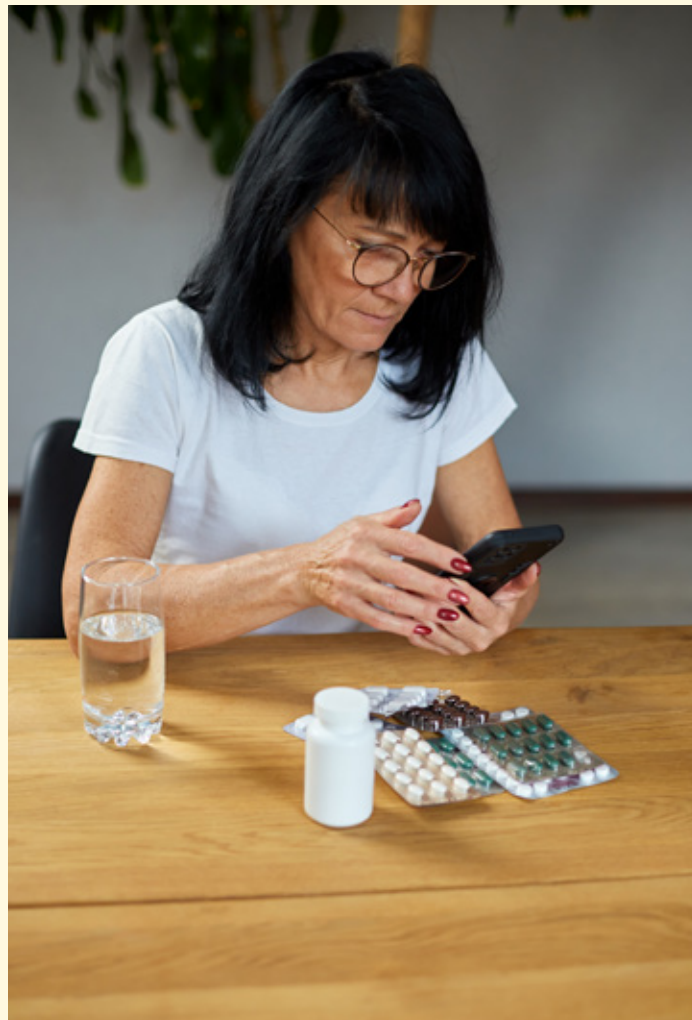
From time to time our medical coverage guidelines may change. You can also find Upcoming Changes to Medical Necessity Coverage Criteria for Medicare Advantage Members on this page.

Currently posted to this area are Upcoming Changes to Medical Coverage Guidelines for the following service types:

- Diagnostics testing and Surgical procedures for certain Inpatient and Outpatient Cardiology Services, effective April 1, 2025
- Remote Therapeutic Monitoring, effective April 1, 2025
- Radiation Oncology Services (using high-energy particles or waves to destroy or damage cancer cells) and Oncology Genetic testing, effective July 1, 2025
- Part B Drugs for Oncology Services, effective July 1, 2025

We are changing the medical coverage guidelines for some of these services due to updated clinical guidance from the organization the clinical guidelines originated from and/or annual review and update. You can find a list of the specific services with medical coverage guideline updates and the changes being made at: www.AvMed.org/about-us/corporate-governance-and-responsibility/medical-technology-coverage-guidelines/.

Find a Pharmacy Near You!



Did you know that you can access drug prices and pharmacy information 24 hours a day by visiting Find a Pharmacy | AvMed? (<https://www.AvMed.org/prescriptions/find-a-pharmacy/>)

- From the drop-down menu select your AvMed plan type
- Then select plan name and press view details
- Then you will have the ability to either:
 - o Price a medication OR
 - o Find a pharmacy

- AvMed's Member Engagement Center
1-800-782-8633 (TTY 711)
October 1-March 31, 8 am-8 pm; 7 days a week.
April 1-September 30 Monday-Friday, 8 am-8 pm
and Saturday, 9 am-1 pm.
- AvMed Nurse On Call: **1-888-866-5432**
(TTY 711) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Fraud and Abuse Hotline: **1-877-286-3889**
- AvMed website: **www.AvMed.org**
- AvMed Facebook:  **www.Facebook.com/AvMedHealth**

Access **BIG NEWS** about your health. Sign up to receive text messages!

From getting essential health and wellness information to possible savings, **AvMed** delivers big news via text.

Scan the **QR Code** below to get started:



We only send you texts that are relevant to your plan and health, and you can opt out at any time.



AvMed Medicare is an HMO plan with a Medicare contract.
Enrollment in AvMed Medicare depends on contract renewal.