



Medicine Cabinet Alert!

Telephone Directory

Customer Service

(941) 748-4501
ext 6415 and ext 6417
(941) 741-2960

Employee Health Benefits
(941) 748-4501 ext 6403

Member Advocacy
(941) 748-4501 ext 6407,
ext 6409, and ext 6411

Lifestyle Assistance and
Modification Program (LAMP)
(941)741-2995

Diabetes/Nutrition Program
(941) 748-4501 ext 6410

Communications Coordinator
(941)748-4501 ext 3967

Fitness/Exercise Programs
(941)748-4501 ext 3979

Pharmacy Advocate
(941) 748-4501 ext 6406

Prescription Solutions
(800) 797-9791

Precertification
(941) 741-2963

February is American Heart Month



Did you know that approximately 1 in 8 adults have been diagnosed with heart disease and that heart disease is the number one killer in the United States? Sometimes, heart disease will be discovered without a doctor's appointment, such as in an emergency situation like a heart attack. However, if you have a strong family history or are worried about heart disease, you may want to make an appointment with your physician. If heart disease is detected, you may be referred to a cardiologist, a doctor who specializes in heart disease.

Since appointments can be brief and you may feel nervous during your appointment, it is wise to be prepared in advance. Knowing what questions to ask and what questions the doctors are likely to ask can help you get the most out of your appointment. Studies have found that prepared patients are more likely to get all of their concerns addressed. Follow these tips to be prepared for your appointment.

- A few days before your appointment: call your doctor's office to if they have any special instructions, such as not eating before your appointment, or wearing exercise clothes and shoes.
- The day before your appointment: Write down any health issues that you are having, including those that may seem unrelated to your heart. Also write down background information such as a family history of heart disease, high cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, or stroke.
- The day of the appointment: Bring along a list of all medications that you are taking including over the counter products, vitamins, and herbals. You may want to bring a family member to help you remember important information.

When you get to the cardiologist, he or she will ask questions to learn more about your health. You probably have questions to ask him or her also. This chart lists some common questions so you know what to expect.



Manatee Blood Pressure screenings coming to a worksite near you!

Date	Time	Worksite
2/1	7:30am	Property Appraisers Office
2/7	11-1pm	County Administrators Staff/Office*
2/7	3pm	MSO District 3**
2/9	3pm	MSO District 3**
2/10	11- 1pm	CCC Jury Assembly**
2/11	7pm	MSO District 3**
2/16	6am	MSO District 3**
2/18	6am	MSO District 3**

*Featuring BMI Screening
**Blood Pressure Info Session

Join us on Thursday 2/17 from 12-1 for a great program, Early Diagnosis & Prevention of Coronary Artery Disease, presented by Dr. Ramos in the Manatee Room.

Questions Your Doctor May Ask You

1. Can you please describe your symptoms for me?
2. When did you first begin experiencing these symptoms?
3. Have these symptoms been continuous or occasional? How often do they occur?
4. Does anything seem to make your symptoms better or worse?
5. Have you seen any other doctors or had any tests done to look at this problem before?

Questions You May Want To Ask Your Doctor

1. What is the diagnosis and what does it mean?
2. How will this affect my life?
3. Does this require follow-up or additional tests? If so, when and by whom?
4. Is there anything I can do to alleviate this problem or decrease the number of symptoms?
5. Will these results be sent to my primary care physician?
6. Where can I get more information on this topic?
7. What signs or symptoms should I be concerned with and call about?
8. Is there a generic alternative to the medication that you are prescribing me?
9. Are there any restrictions such as diet or exercise changes that I need to follow?

Medicine Cabinet Alert!

Is it Safe to Use Plavix with Heartburn Drugs?

Antiplatelet drugs such as Plavix (clopidogrel) are used to prevent blood clots from forming. These medications can also increase the risk of bleeding though, especially in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) such as Prevacid and Prilosec treat heartburn. In the past, you may have heard about a potentially dangerous interaction between these PPIs and antiplatelet drugs such as Plavix. However, after careful study, three main expert groups (American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, and the American College of Gastroenterology) have found that Plavix and PPIs may be used together if needed. Only your doctor can decide what medication is right for you, so talk to your physician before starting any new medications.



Cost Saving Tip: Generic PPIs are available and work well for most patients- \$0 copay at preferred pharmacies

Drugs in the News: New Blood Thinner Available

Recently, you may have heard about a new medication called Pradaxa (dabigatran), which is being used to prevent blood clots in patients with atrial fibrillation. This medication is similar to another medication, warfarin (brand names are Coumadin and Jantoven). While Pradaxa does not require as much blood testing as warfarin, it can be much more costly and still carries the risk of developing side effects, such as life-threatening bleeding, stomach pain, heartburn, and bloating. Even though a new medication is available, you should not stop taking your current medication without first consulting with your physician. If your condition is properly controlled while taking warfarin, it may be unwise to switch medications. If you have any questions about your anticoagulation medication, talk to your doctor to get more information.

Know Your Numbers

As part of the "Know your Numbers" Campaign, Manatee encourages you to keep track of important health "numbers". Some important "numbers" to know concerning heart health are your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers.

Common Blood Pressure Numbers

Normal	Less than 120/80
Pre-hypertension	120-139/80-89
Stage 1 hypertension	140-159/90-99
Stage 2 hypertension	160/100 and above

Is Tablet Splitting Okay?

You may have heard recently that a study found that tablet splitting is unsafe. However, tablet splitting is actually fine, as long as it's done correctly. The two most important things to remember are:

1. Not all medications can be split. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist before splitting tablets.
2. A tablet splitter is a better tool for splitting tablets than a knife, scissors, or other ways to split tablets.

Generally, splitting medications is a safe and easy way to reduce medication costs. Ask your pharmacist or Manatee's Clinical Pharmacist, Chris Williams, about tablet splitting and how to get a tablet splitter.

Common Cholesterol Numbers

Total Cholesterol

Desirable	Below 200 mg/dL
Borderline High	200-239 mg/dL
High	240 mg/dL and above

HDL "Good" Cholesterol

Poor	Below 40 mg/dL (men) & 50 mg/dL (women)
Better	50-59 mg/dL
Best	60 mg/dL and above

LDL "Bad" Cholesterol

Ideal for those at risk of heart disease	Below 100 mg/dL
Near ideal	100-129 mg/dL
Borderline high	130-159 mg/dL
High	Above 160 mg/dL

Manatee Health Disclaimer

The information in this newsletter is not a substitute for medical advice. It is for reference only and should not be used to determine treatment for your specific medical conditions—only a health care provider can do this. You should seek prompt medical care for any specific health issues and consult your physician regarding the use of over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or consult your physician regarding the use of prescription or over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or before starting any new diet, fitness, or supplement regimen.

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