



#39 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

Take Pride &



10 STEPS to a LONGER and HEALTHIER LIFE for LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, and TRANSGENDER NEW YORKERS

- Take Care New York gives *all* New Yorkers steps to improve their health.
- If all of us took just some of these steps, we could prevent thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of illnesses and disabilities each year.
- While most health issues are the same for LGBT people as anyone else, a few are more common.



- Available in Spanish and Chinese: call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health
- Disponible en español: llame al 311 o visite nyc.gov/health
- 需要中文服務 - 可電 311 或造訪網址: nyc.gov/health



1. Have a Regular Doctor or Other Health Care Provider Get regular medical care to stay healthy.

- Many LGBT people sometimes go without care because they fear discrimination.
- No one should have to worry about judgmental doctors!
 - Everyone needs to be able to talk honestly with providers about sexuality and other sensitive topics, such as drug and alcohol use.
 - If you're not comfortable with your provider, find one you can trust. (See **More Information.**)
- Even if you are not out to anyone else, consider coming out to your doctor.
 - Health care providers must keep everything you tell them confidential.
 - Telling providers about your sexual behavior can help them give you better care.

2. Be Tobacco-Free

Quit smoking and avoid second-hand smoke to prolong your life and protect those around you.

- Smoking is the #1 cause of preventable death among New Yorkers. Second-hand smoke is also dangerous.
- LGBT people are more likely to smoke than other New Yorkers, but are also more likely to try to quit.
- Quitting smoking greatly lowers your risk of serious illness and premature death, and protects those around you. (See **More Information.**)

3. Keep Your Heart Healthy

Keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, and weight at healthy levels to prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other diseases.

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death among New Yorkers.
 - Know your numbers. Get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked. Talk to your doctor about the levels that are right for you.
 - Take the medications your doctor prescribes.
- Get at least 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (such as a brisk walk) at least 4 days a week.
- Maintain a healthy weight and eat a healthy diet. Eat at least 5 servings of fruits or vegetables a day. Avoid trans fats. Reduce salt intake.

4. Know Your HIV Status

Get tested for HIV and use condoms to protect yourself and others.

- Anyone can get HIV, but men who have sex with men are at highest risk. Unprotected anal intercourse is extremely risky.



- Anyone who has ever been sexually active or ever injected drugs (even if only once) should be tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. (See **More Information**.)
- If you have HIV, it's important to know. If you're positive, you can get medical treatment to feel better and live longer.
- Use latex condoms to protect yourself and others against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- If you shoot drugs, *never* share needles or works.

5. Get Help for Depression

Depression can be treated. Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

- It's normal to feel "down" once in a while. But if you feel this way for 2 weeks or more, you may be depressed.
- LGBT people are more likely to experience depression and anxiety due to social stigma and discrimination.
- Medication and therapy can help most people. (See **More Information**.)
- Abusing alcohol or drugs makes depression worse.

6. Live Free of Dependence on Alcohol and Drugs

Get help for alcohol and drug abuse. Recovery from addiction is possible.

- LGBT people are at increased risk of stress-related problem drinking and drug use.
- Alcohol and drug abuse can be treated. (See **More Information**.)
- Get help for heavy drinking or drinking that worries your family, friends, or co-workers. Excessive drinking is defined as:
 - Men: More than 4 drinks in one setting or 14 drinks in one week.
 - Women: More than 3 drinks in one setting or 7 drinks in one week.
- If you have a problem with drugs (prescription or illegal), get help stopping.

7. Get Checked for Cancer

Colonoscopies, mammograms, and Pap tests save lives.

- LGBT people are at higher risk for some cancers. Lesbians and bisexual women are much less likely to receive mammograms and Pap tests.
- Everyone 50 and older, and others at high risk, should get a colonoscopy to prevent colon cancer.
- All sexually active women 18 to 65 should get regular Pap tests to prevent cervical cancer.
- All women 40 and older need regular mammograms to detect breast cancer.



8. Get the Immunizations You Need

Everyone needs to be vaccinated against disease, regardless of age.

- Everyone 50 and older and others at high risk should get a flu shot every year.
- Everyone 65 and older and others at high risk should get a one-time pneumonia vaccine.
- Ask your doctor about other vaccinations. Men who have sex with men are at higher risk for both hepatitis A and B.

9. Make Your Home Safe and Healthy

Have a home that is free from violence and free of environmental hazards.

Help is available for domestic violence.

- Domestic violence happens in LGBT households, too.
- Domestic violence is a *crime*. Physical violence is against the law.
- Abuse can also be psychological, emotional, or sexual.
- If you or someone you know needs help, call the City's free, confidential Domestic Violence Hotline. (See **More Information.**)
- FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 911.

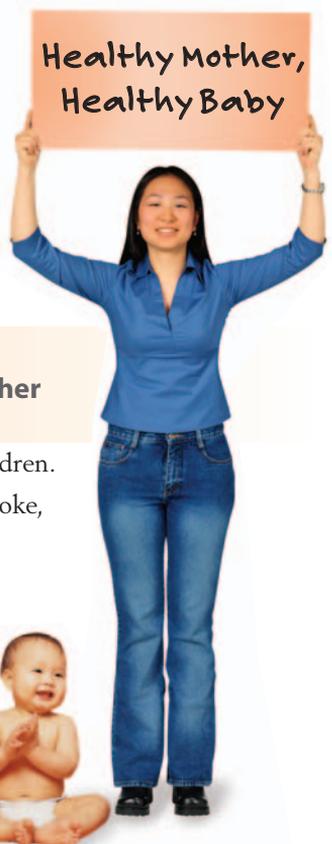
Prevent childhood lead poisoning.

- If you have a child under 6 and live in a building with 3 or more apartments, ask your landlord to inspect and safely fix peeling paint.
- Landlords are required to do this at no cost to tenants.

10. Have a Healthy Baby

Planning pregnancy helps ensure a healthy mother and a healthy baby.

- Many LGBT people are choosing to have or adopt children.
- If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, don't smoke, drink, or use drugs.
- Do take a daily multivitamin with folic acid to prevent birth defects.
- Get early and regular prenatal care. (See **More Information.**)



Transgender Health

Transgender men and women have special health and mental health needs. Hormone therapy and surgical transitioning present health risks. Talk to a doctor or mental health professional familiar with transgender health issues.

More Information and Help

- Talk to your doctor, call 311 and ask for Take Care New York, or visit nyc.gov/health/tcny
- Free or low-cost health insurance: call 311 and ask for HealthStat
- Free, confidential testing for HIV and other STDs: call 311
- LifeNet (help with mental health or substance abuse problems): 1-800-LIFENET (1-800-543-3638), or call 311
- Domestic Violence Hotline (24-hours-a-day): 1-800-621-HOPE (1-800-621-4673), or call 311
- Smokers' Quitline (free help quitting): call 311
- Women's Healthline: call 311
- Callen-Lorde Community Health Center (primary health care services): www.callen-lorde.org or call 212-271-7200
- NYC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center (counseling and referrals): www.gaycenter.org or call 212-620-7310
- National Coalition for LGBT Health (information about health issues): www.lgbthealth.net
- GayHealth (information about health issues): www.gayhealth.com
- Gay & Lesbian Medical Association (referral to GLBT-friendly health care providers): www.glma.org
- New York Online Access to Health (health information and resources): www.noah-health.org/en/healthy/glb
- Transgender Care (transgender health information): www.transgenderscare.com
- Trans-Health (transgender health information): www.trans-health.com

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VOLUME 5, NUMBER 5



Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#39 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

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