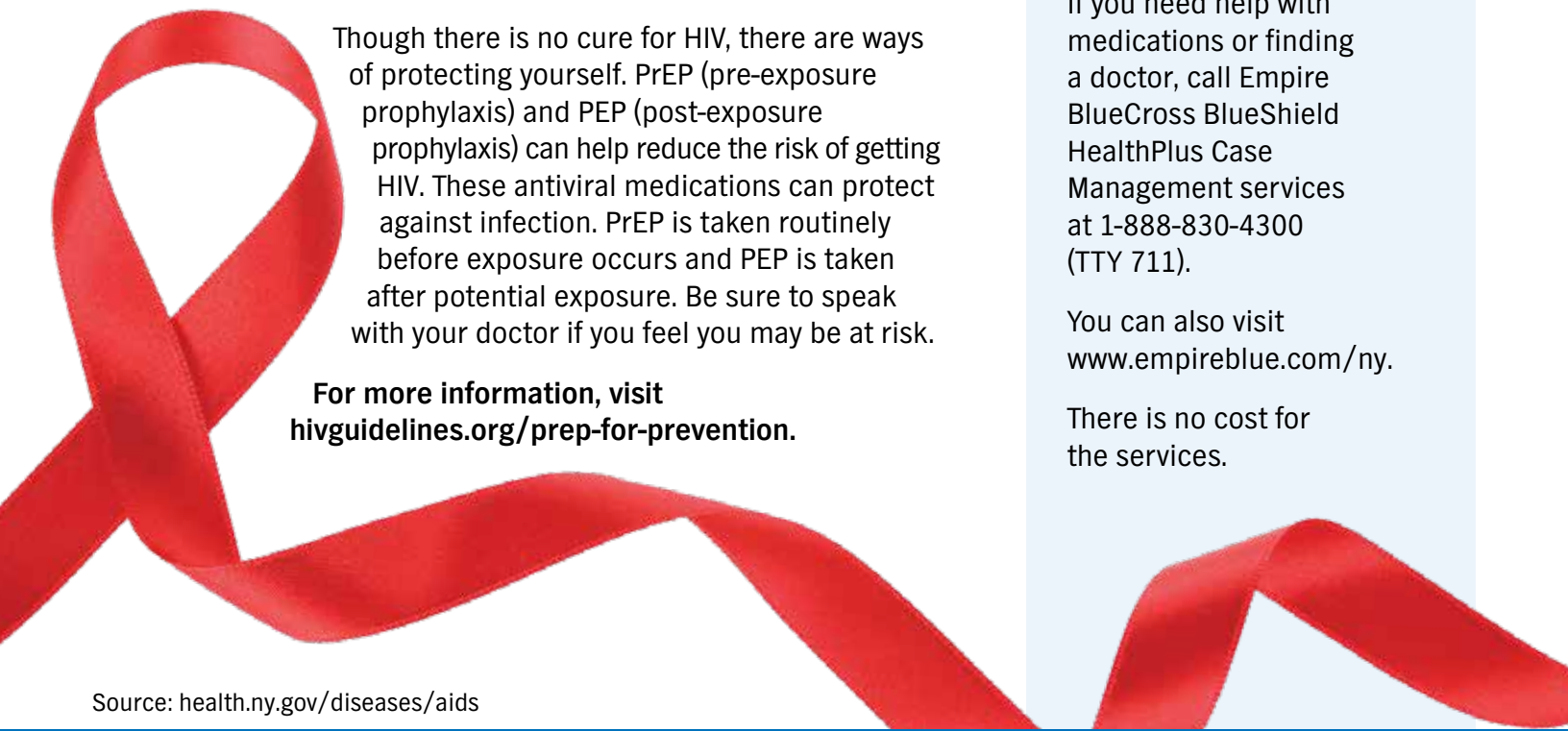


## How much do you know about HIV?

Most people know you can get HIV from having unsafe sex. But many people don't know that sharing needles to inject drugs puts you at high risk for HIV infection.

You can call 311 for referrals to needle exchange programs provided by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and confidential sexually transmitted disease (STD) services for non-enrolled sexual or needle-sharing partners.



Though there is no cure for HIV, there are ways of protecting yourself. PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) can help reduce the risk of getting HIV. These antiviral medications can protect against infection. PrEP is taken routinely before exposure occurs and PEP is taken after potential exposure. Be sure to speak with your doctor if you feel you may be at risk.

**For more information, visit**  
[hivguidelines.org/prep-for-prevention](http://hivguidelines.org/prep-for-prevention).


Source: [health.ny.gov/diseases/aids](http://health.ny.gov/diseases/aids)

### Living with HIV?

Regular checkups can help you stay healthy.

- Do a physical exam.
- Check your viral load and CD4+ cell count.
- Prescribe or adjust your medications.

### How can we help you?



If you need help with medications or finding a doctor, call Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus Case Management services at 1-888-830-4300 (TTY 711).

You can also visit [www.empireblue.com/ny](http://www.empireblue.com/ny).

There is no cost for the services.



What medical questions do you have?  
Call the 24/7 NurseLine:  
**1-800-300-8181 (TTY 711)**

Member Services  
**1-800-300-8181 (TTY 711)**  
[www.empireblue.com/ny](http://www.empireblue.com/ny)

# Start a **new habit** today

## Make taking medications a routine

### Tips to help you remember when and how to take your medicine:

If picking your medications up on time every month is a hassle, ask your doctor about signing you up for mail order. This way the medication your doctor prescribes can be shipped directly to your home.



**Remember,**  
never stop or start taking a medication without your doctor's advice.

Make taking your medications part of your daily routine. For example, after you brush your teeth, or at a mealtime (especially if your medication should be taken with food).

Use a daily pillbox organizer.

Set a reminder alarm.

Put your medications where you'll see them at the time you should take them. Try putting them on your nightstand, near your toothbrush or next to your coffee pot.

### Taking your medications exactly as your doctor prescribes can help you achieve better results.

For more helpful tips on how to make it easier to take your medications, visit [www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews6-09.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews6-09.pdf)



## How can we help you?

When treating a medical condition such as depression, it's important to take your medicine on time. Empire can help you refill your antidepressant medication, and give you tips on the proper use of these medicines, as well as questions you should ask your doctor.

You can call the Empire Clinical Pharmacy Call Center at 1-866-330-1054 (TTY 711) from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. local time, Monday through Friday. You can also visit [www.empireblue.com/ny](http://www.empireblue.com/ny).

# New pharmacy benefit for high blood pressure medications

Controlling your blood pressure is one of the most important things you can do to prevent heart disease and



strokes. In order to make it easier to fill your high blood pressure medications, Empire will allow members to get a 90-day supply of your high blood pressure medications when you use our mail order program. Ask your doctor about signing you up for mail order. If you need help, call Empire's Clinical Pharmacy Call Center at 1-866-330-1054 (TTY 711).



---



**We want to  
make sure you  
are in the KNOW  
about your  
medications!**

# Preventive health care tips

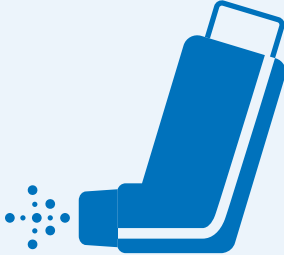
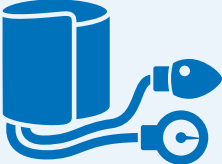



Getting regular wellness exams can help find diseases early, helping you and your family stay well. If you or your family have certain health conditions, you may need other tests or screenings in addition to regular checkups.

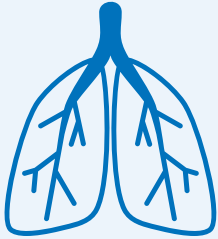

	What should you know?	When should you go for services?
<b>CHILDREN</b>		
<b>ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children need follow-up care and monitoring when first starting an ADHD medication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take your child for a face-to-face follow-up visit with the prescribing doctor within 30 days of filling the first prescription.</li> </ul>
<b>Immunizations (shots)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children should be fully immunized by age 2.</li> <li>Immunizations are required for children to attend day care and school.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children should receive immunizations during well-child visits (from birth to age 2).</li> <li>Additional immunizations are required during later years.</li> </ul>
<b>Well-child screenings (ages 0-12)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to taking your child to the doctor when he or she is sick or there's an emergency, regular wellness visits are recommended to help keep your child healthy.</li> <li>Well-child visits include physical exams as well as monitoring the growth and development of your child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk with your child's doctor to learn more about how many visits your child needs.</li> </ul> 
<b>Adolescent wellness screenings (ages 13-19)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yearly wellness checkups can help keep teens in good physical, mental and emotional health.</li> <li>During a wellness checkup, teens receive a physical exam and information about good nutrition and healthy living.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk with your teen's doctor to learn how many visits your teen needs.</li> </ul>

	What should you know?	When should you go for services?
<b>WOMEN</b>		
<b>Breast cancer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early detection is the best protection against breast cancer. Regular mammograms, or X-rays of the breast, can find lumps when they're too small to be felt by hand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you're a woman age 40-74, talk to your health care provider about when to start getting mammograms and how often you have them.</li> </ul> 
<b>Cervical cancer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cervical cancer is preventable and one of the most successfully treated cancers when detected early.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women age 21-65 should visit a gynecologist or primary care provider (PCP) for a pelvic exam and Pap test. Talk to your provider about how often to have this screening.</li> </ul>
<b>Chlamydia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) that can affect a woman's reproductive health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexually active women, especially those age 25 or younger, should visit their gynecologist or PCP and get tested for chlamydia.</li> </ul>
<b>CHRONIC CONDITIONS</b>		
<b>Depression and mental health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Severe mental illness can be debilitating.</b></li> <li>• Mental illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia are leading causes of disability in the United States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you've ever been hospitalized because of a mental illness, getting follow-up care within seven days after you have been discharged from the hospital can help you continue to manage your symptoms.</li> <li>• Call your doctor or Empire for help making an appointment.</li> </ul>
<b>Diabetes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>It can cause serious health problems such as heart disease and kidney disease.</b></li> <li>• Being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet and taking your medications as prescribed can help prevent and control diabetes.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hemoglobin A1c is a blood test that lets you know how well your sugar is being controlled. This test is needed two to three times a year.</li> <li>• Have an eye exam (including a retinopathy screening test) and urinalysis once a year or as recommended by your doctor.</li> <li>• If you have Type 2 diabetes, getting a urine test when you're diagnosed and then every year thereafter checks for kidney damage.</li> </ul>

# Preventive health care tips

	What should you know?	When should you go for services?
<b>CHRONIC CONDITIONS</b>		
<b>Asthma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective management of asthma can decrease the number of missed school and work days.</li> <li>Talk to your doctor about an asthma action plan.</li> <li>There are two main kinds of asthma medicine:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Rescue medications</b> (like albuterol) are taken when you have symptoms of asthma or an asthma attack.</li> <li><b>Control medications</b> are taken every day, even when you're feeling well.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk with your doctor about your asthma at every visit.</li> <li>Fill your prescription medications as instructed by your doctor.</li> <li>Visit a specialist (pulmonologist) as recommended by your PCP.</li> </ul> 
<b>Hypertension (high blood pressure)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>High blood pressure is the single most important risk factor for a stroke.</b> </li> <li>The only way to tell if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked. Normal blood pressure should be less than 120/80 mm Hg for an adult. Blood pressure above 140/90 mm Hg is considered high.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit your doctor and get your blood pressure checked regularly.</li> <li>Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure a second time (during the same visit), if your blood pressure reading was high the first time.</li> <li>If you're taking blood pressure medicine, taking it as your health care provider prescribed can help you keep your symptoms under control.</li> </ul>
<b>BMI (Body Mass Index)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>BMI is a number calculated from a person's weight and height.</b></li> <li>Maintaining a healthy weight can decrease risks for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis and cancer.</li> <li>A BMI test is used to screen for weight categories that may lead to health problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit your doctor every year for a physical exam.</li> <li>Discuss your BMI with your doctor.</li> <li>If you have children, talk to your doctor about how your child's BMI is calculated.</li> </ul> 



	What should you know?	When should you go for services?
<b>CHRONIC CONDITIONS</b>		
<p><b>COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telling your doctor about changes in breathlessness, wheezing or coughing, difficulty sleeping, eating habits, or sputum production and color can help him or her help you better manage your COPD symptoms.</li> <li>• Be sure you receive a spirometry test (special breathing test) when you're diagnosed with COPD.</li> <li>• Even if you feel well, keep taking your COPD medications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your doctor about how often to go for screenings and follow-up visits.</li> <li>• Ask your doctor about the benefits of breathing exercises and whether pulmonary rehabilitation is right for you.</li> <li>• Go over the instructions for taking your medications with your doctor or pharmacist.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CHF (Congestive Heart Failure)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weighing yourself daily, reporting changes to your doctor and taking diuretics as prescribed can help you stay as healthy as possible while living with CHF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your doctor about how often you'll need to be seen.</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Colorectal cancer screening</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorectal cancer usually develops from abnormal growths (polyps) in the colon or rectum. Screenings can find polyps and remove them before they turn into cancer. They can also find colorectal cancer early, when it's easiest to treat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For most people, colorectal cancer screening begins at age 50. Some people with a family history of colorectal cancer or certain other conditions should start screening sooner. Talk to your health care provider about when to begin screenings.</li> </ul>

**If you have a chronic condition,**  
you should see your doctor  
*at least once a year.*

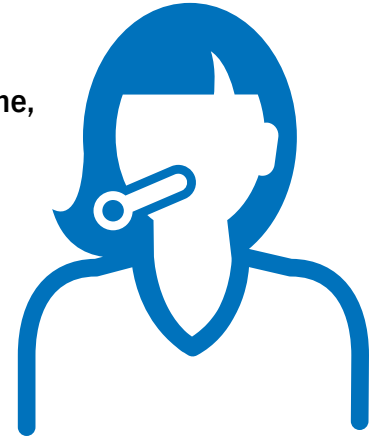


If you need help finding a doctor or making a doctor's appointment, call **1-800-300-8181 (TTY 711).**

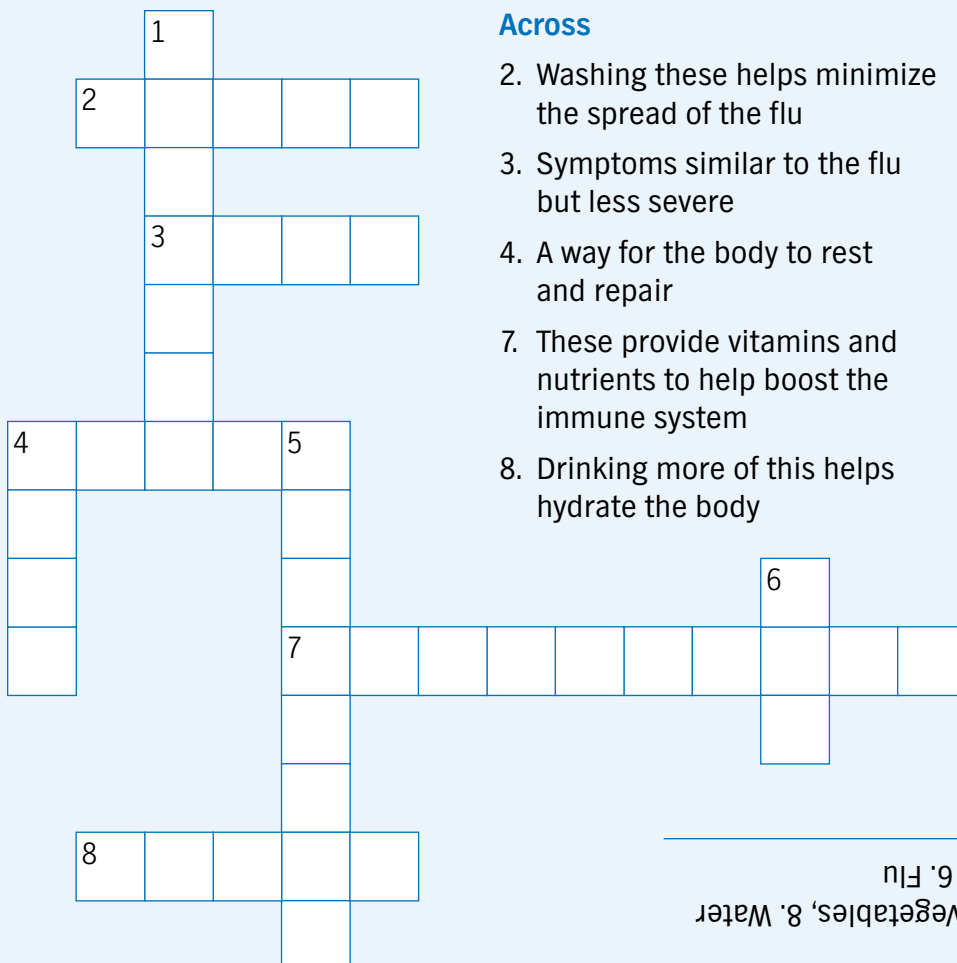
# Let's prepare to **stay healthy** during **flu season**

Influenza (flu) is a viral infection that typically comes on quickly and without prior illness. Some of the symptoms to look for are fever, body aches, headache, dry cough and unusual fatigue. The worst part of the illness tends to last for three to four days, but it can take up to two weeks to feel completely well.

Since it's a virus, antibiotics won't work. It's often best treated at home with hydration and rest. If symptoms persist or get worse, call your primary care physician (PCP) right away. If you're unable to reach your PCP, go to an urgent care or emergency room.



How can you prepare for flu season and a healthy you? Here's a fun puzzle to get you started:



### Across

2. Washing these helps minimize the spread of the flu
3. Symptoms similar to the flu but less severe
4. A way for the body to rest and repair
7. These provide vitamins and nutrients to help boost the immune system
8. Drinking more of this helps hydrate the body

### Down

1. Lowers your risk of getting the flu each year
4. Staying away from people while they are this helps prevent the spread of flu
5. This person can help answer your questions about the flu and vaccine
6. A viral infection of fever, body aches, headache, dry cough and sore throat



Crossword puzzle answers:  
Across, 2. Hands, 3. Cold, 4. Sleep, 7. Vegetables, 8. Water  
Down, 1. Vaccine, 4. Sick, 5. Provider, 6. Flu



# What are some things you can do to **help prevent the flu from spreading?**

I will:

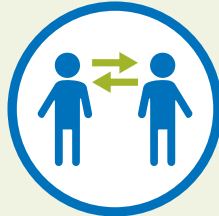
**Get a flu vaccine**

at or before the beginning of flu season.



**Avoid close contact**

with those who have the flu whenever possible.



**Wash my hands**

often with soap and water.



**Cover my nose and mouth**

with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.



**Avoid touching**

my eyes, nose and mouth.



**Answer:** All of the above



For more information on the flu and its activity in your area, reach out to your PCP or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



## Flu shots

### What?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone **6 months of age and older** get an injectable flu vaccine. If you're an adult 65 years or older, talk with your provider about getting a pneumonia vaccine as well.

### When?

The flu season usually peaks in **January** so getting a flu shot as soon as the vaccine becomes available in the fall allows your body time to develop the necessary antibodies to protect against the flu before it reaches your community.

### Where?

- Your PCP
- Any of our network pharmacies if you're age 21 or older
- Your local health department

# Renewing coverage



If you or a member of your family is a Medicaid Managed Care member, you'll need to renew your plan once a year, on or before the anniversary of when you signed up.

You'll get a notice around 45 to 90 days before your renewal date from either:

- The New York State of Health (NYSOH)
- The Human Resources Administration (HRA)
- Your Local Department of Social Services (LDSS)

Make sure you open and read the notice when you get it. It'll tell you what you need to do to renew your benefits on time and avoid losing your coverage.



## We can help you renew!

Call us today at **1-888-809-8009 (TTY 711)** from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### OR

Free, in-person help from a Marketplace Facilitated Enroller (MPFE) is available near your home or work. We'd love to meet you. Visit an Empire Community Service Center near you.

To find a list of MPFEs, call New York State of Health at **1-855-355-5777**.

### OR

You may also renew by calling NY State of Health at **1-855-355-5777** or visit [nystateofhealth.ny.gov](http://nystateofhealth.ny.gov).

## Tips for successful renewal:

- Look for the respond-by-date on your renewal form. Don't wait until the last minute to renew.
- If you haven't received your renewal packet, you may be eligible to complete your renewal online or by phone.
- It is also important to continue making your payments on time. Making your payments notifies the insurance company you want to continue the policy.
- It's important that the New York State of Health (NYSOH) has your most up-to-date address. Otherwise, you won't receive your notice.
- Empire may send you text, email, or automated phone call reminders to assist you with your renewal process to avoid losing your coverage.



# Making decisions on care and services

**Sometimes we need to make decisions about how we cover care and services. This is called Utilization Management (UM).**

Our UM process is based on the standards of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). All UM decisions are based on medical needs and current benefits only. We do this for the best possible health outcomes for our members. We also don't tell or encourage providers to underuse services. And we don't create barriers to getting health care. Providers and others involved in UM decisions do not get any reward for limiting or denying care. When we hire, promote or fire providers or staff, it isn't based on their likelihood to deny benefits.



An Anthem Company

## My Health 2018

### Our Notice of Privacy Practices

This type of notice explains how medical information about you may be used and disclosed by Empire. It also tells you how to access this information. The notice follows the privacy regulations set by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). If you would like a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices, please call Member Services at the phone number listed on your ID card or go online to [www.empireblue.com/ny](http://www.empireblue.com/ny).

---

*My Health* is published by Empire to give information. It is not a way to give personal medical advice. Get medical advice directly from your physician. ©2018. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus is the trade name of HealthPlus HP, LLC, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

