



Be Sure to Get Your Free Flu Shot

Get your flu shot to lower your risk for illness this fall. The influenza virus is contagious and affects your breathing. It targets your lungs, sinuses, bronchial tubes and trachea. Left untreated, it can lead to serious illness, hospitalization or even death. Protect yourself and your loved ones with a flu shot every year.



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Member Services: 1-877-860-2837 (TTY: 711)
24/7 Nurseline: 1-888-343-2697 (TTY: 711)
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Everyone needs a flu shot

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu shot for everyone aged six months or older.

People most at risk are:

- Adults 65 years and older
- Pregnant women
- People with a weakened immune system, have Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), cancer or take treatments like chemotherapy or radiation
- People with chronic illnesses like asthma, blood disorders, diabetes or heart and lung diseases

How else does the shot help?

Getting vaccinated helps you and those around you. The yearly updated vaccine is made to:

- Prevent flu-related illnesses
- Make symptoms less severe when you get the flu
- Lower your risk of going to the hospital for flu
- Protect pregnant women during and after pregnancy
- Help protect babies from flu in their first few months of life
- Be lifesaving for children
- Prevent flu from spreading to neighbors and friends

What happens with a flu shot?

- You may have pain, redness or swelling at the needle site. You might get a low-grade fever, headache and muscle aches. All can be treated with an over-the-counter pain reliever. Check with your doctor before taking any.
- Talk to your doctor if any new or symptoms appear or get worse.

Where can I get a flu shot?

- You can get a free flu shot at your doctor's office or local pharmacy.

Get gift cards with our Healthy Incentives Program

Get rewards for taking care of you and your children's health. Earn gift cards for completing certain preventive care services like completing flu shots this season. To learn more, go to:

bcbsil.com/BCCHPILRewards.

Need a provider or a ride?

Check the **Provider Finder®** or call **1-877-860-2837**.

Visit **Transportation Services** to schedule a non-emergency ride three days in advance.

How to stop the spread of flu

- Stay away from people who are sick.
- If you get sick, take these safety steps:
 - Stay home and avoid contact with others as much as you can.
 - The CDC says to stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone (without using a fever-reducing medicine like Tylenol or Ibuprofen) and your symptoms are getting better.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
 - Wash your hands with soap and water. If you cannot get soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Wear a mask to protect others.
 - Clean and disinfect areas and objects that may have flu germs on them.
 - Get plenty of rest.
 - Try not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Talk to your doctor if symptoms do not go away.

Have the Birth Experience You Want With a Doula or Lactation Consultant

What is a doula?

Doulas are not doctors. They are trained professionals who:

- Help during pregnancy, birth and after your baby arrives
- Help you decide the safest birth plan
- Give emotional support and physical comfort
- Work with your provider and nurses

What is a lactation consultant?

Lactation or breastfeeding consultants are not doctors. They are trained professionals who:

- Teach about breastfeeding
- Give hands-on help with latching, feeding and using a breast pump
- Offer solutions for sore nipples, milk supply and returning to work
- Work with your providers and nurses

Ready to get started?

Visit our Maternal and Infant Health Maternity Programs and Services webpage at bcbsil.com/bcchp/resources/maternal-and-infant-health or call **1-888-421-7781** for the **Special Beginnings®** helpline to speak with a nurse to get started.

New moms should not feel alone.

If you are experiencing anxiety or depression and want to speak to someone, we are here to help.

- To talk with a nurse, call the 24/7 Nurseline: **1-800-345-9049**.
- You can also contact the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline by phone **1-833-9-HELP4MOMS (1-833-943-5746)** or online at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/national-maternal-mental-health-hotline>.

Get maternal and infant health support for free.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) has trained more than 850 doulas across the state.

Pregnant members can sign up for free doula and lactation consultants for up to 16 prenatal visits and 16 postpartum visits. They help in person or virtually.

For a crisis, call 911.



Helping More Men Get Mental Health Care

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America says one in 10 men experience depression, but less than half receive treatment. Men are also four times more likely to die by suicide than women.

Men often feel a stigma around getting mental health support. But trying to face problems alone is never the answer.

Men make up 80 percent of suicide deaths in the United States, and 60 percent of those who died did not see a provider for help with mental health.

Without help, mental health concerns can make everyday life more challenging. Quality of sleep, heart health, chronic pain and diabetes may worsen.

If you are a male member of Blue Cross Community Health Plans (BCCHPSM), it is important to get help when you need it. If you notice these symptoms, do not wait to reach out.

- Sleep changes like trouble falling or staying asleep
- Feeling irritable, easily angry and upset
- Trouble focusing
- Overworking or lots of distractions
- Withdrawing from friends
- Feeling less interested in things you usually enjoy
- Drinking alcohol or using substances to help deal with your feelings

Talk to your primary care doctor. They can ask questions to see if you have signs of depression or anxiety. They can also help connect you to mental health support like a therapist or counselor.

A doctor can also prescribe medicine that helps lower your symptoms. Take the medication as prescribed. Be sure to talk to your doctor before making any changes.

Connect with people who support you. Friends, family, your church or others in your community can help make a difference in how you feel. Exercise can also improve mental health.



Check out our online digital tools

Learn to Live is a free, online mental health program with self-paced video courses to help with anxiety, depression, insomnia and substance use. A coach is available 24/7. For members ages 13 and older. Visit: bcbsil.com/bcchp/resources/behavioral-health and scroll to see Learn to Live and register.

Lead Screening Protects Your Child

Lead is a toxic metal found in lots of places and is very harmful to children. It was used in house paint, dishes and toys before 1978. It was also in metal water pipes and gasoline. Both past and present uses are still a problem. The good news is you can get tested and treated if it is found in your blood.

Children can eat tiny paint chips on accident by putting lead-painted toys in their mouths or crawling in areas that have paint dust then putting their hands in their mouths. Their bodies absorb more lead than adults, and lead harms their growing brains and nervous systems.

Lead can cause:

- Learning delays, a lower IQ
- Trouble focusing and behavior problems
- Anemia (low iron in blood) that causes fatigue and shortness of breath

Prevent lead poisoning

The only way to know if your child has been exposed to lead is from a blood test. Ask your child's doctor about lead screening, especially if you live in a ZIP code where lead exposure is common. If your child tests positive, do these things right away:

- Call your child's doctor and your local health department. Trained staff will answer your questions and connect you to resources in your community.
- Find the source of lead in your home and fix the problem as soon as possible.
- Clean areas exposed to lead dust with wet paper towels.
- Give your child healthy foods with calcium, iron and vitamin C.

Where can my child contact lead?

- Homes built before 1978 can have lead-based paint. When the paint peels and cracks, it makes lead dust. Children can swallow or breathe in lead dust.
- Older water pipes may contain lead that leaks into the water supply.
- Lead can be found in toys, jewelry and candies.
- Certain jobs and hobbies like construction, renovation, the use of firearms or working at a firing range like law enforcement and military may cause adults to bring lead into the home on accident.
- Children who live near airports may be exposed to lead found in the air and soil from airplane fuel.

More rewards for preventative health care are available once you complete a lead screening for your child. go to: bcbsil.com/BCCHPILRewards.

Every six months you can use OTC benefits to order a water pitcher filter and replacement filters to remove lead particles. To order, log in to the MPA OTC website (mpaotc.com). You will need your member ID and password. Look for #349 (Brita Water Pitcher) or #350 (Brita Water Pitcher Filter Cartridge). Need help? Call Member Services at **1-877-860-2837** (TTY: **711**).

New Medicaid Requirements for 2027

Starting Jan. 1, 2027, some adults who received Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) may need to meet new federal requirements to keep their Medicaid coverage, ACA adults are generally ages 19-64 who do not have dependent children under 18 at home and are not on Medicare.

Do these apply to you? If so, go to abe.illinois.gov.



Received Medicaid through the ACA Adult Program



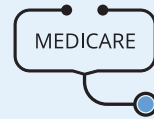
No child age 18 or younger living in your home



Ages 19-64



Not pregnant or post partum



Do not receive Medicare

NOTE: You may qualify for an exemption. Some people may not need to meet these requirements because of a medical condition, disability or other approved reason. To find out more about exemptions, visit medicaid.illinois.gov.

What is changing?

Renew your Medicaid coverage every six months instead of every 12 months.

Must have at least 80 hours a month of:

- Work
- Community service
- Work program participation
- Educational enrollment, at least half time

Must also have:

- Income of at least \$580/month
- Seasonal workers - \$580/month averaged over six months

What to do now?

- **Update your contact information at abe.illinois.gov.** Click 'Manage My Case'. Updating your contact information does not mean your benefits are changing.
- **Watch your mail.** HFS will send you a notice if you are affected.
- **Call HFS for help: 1-877-805-5312.**
- **Scan the QR Code** for more information.



Beware of scams.

Illinois will never ask you for money to renew or apply for Medicaid. Report scams to <https://hfs.illinois.gov/oig/reportfraud.html> or the Medicaid fraud hotline at **1-844-453-7283/1-844-ILFRAUD**

We are here to support you

- Go to bcbsil.com/bcchp and click the link that says, 'Find out how to renew your Medicaid.'
- Call Member Services at **1-877-860-2837** (TTY/TDD: **711**).
- Check your member portal.

Check Out What Is New in Your Health Plan

Every year we publish changes and upgrades to your BCCHP plan in the **Annual Notice of Changes**. These are also in your **Blue KitSM**, which is your Member Handbook and Certificate of Coverage.

As mentioned on **page 6**, if you are ages 19–64, do not have Medicare, have no children, are not pregnant or postpartum and receive Medicaid through the ACA Adult Program, you will have to renew your Medicaid coverage every six months and meet new work requirements.

Changes to MLTSS Coverage

In 2027, BCCHP will no longer offer the Managed Long Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) plan. If you are currently enrolled in BCCHP MLTSS, you will get more information about what this means for your coverage and any next steps. Your health and continued care are important. We are committed to help make this transition as smooth as possible. Watch for future communication from BCCHP and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS).

Member ID Cards will get a new look.

In 2027, BCCHP ID cards will no longer have a subscriber ID. They will only include your Medicaid ID. New cards will also have a Behavioral Health Care crisis phone number plus a phone number for our provider services team.

Over-the-Counter (OTC) drugs and supplies

- Every six months, you can order approved, non-prescription items for up to \$50 for your household.
- Items can be shipped to you at no cost.
- View the OTC catalog and benefit amounts at bcbsil.com/bcchp.
- Place an order by calling Member Services.
- You can also order online at mpaotc.com.

Visit bcbsil.com/bcchp/benefits-and-coverage/drug-coverage to learn more.

Dental coverage change

- BCCHP works with DentaQuest® to help get you the care you need.
- As of Aug. 1, 2026, BCCHP no longer offers a second dental cleaning as a Value-Added Benefit.
- Members still have all covered dental benefits that include an oral exam, X-rays, fillings, emergency dental services and more.

Visit bcbsil.com/bcchp/benefits-and-coverage/dental-coverage-bcchp to learn more.

Transportation services (non-emergency) change

Beginning Oct. 1, 2026, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois will have a new vendor, MTM Health, to provide rides. See the article on **page 8**. All your same transportation services are covered. Be on the lookout for updates in your Blue Kit that we mail to you, on our website, in BAM and more.

Doula and lactation support

Healthy moms and babies are the foundation of our future. We want moms to have access to vital services. Use a doula or lactation expert to support you in childbirth and afterward. Lactation support services may be provided before the baby is born until infant weaning. Coverage includes up to 16 prenatal visits and up to 16 postpartum visits.

Need a Ride to Health Care Visits? MTM Health Will Take You.

On Oct. 1, 2026, MTM Health will provide transportation for qualified members to visits like:

- Doctor visits
- Specialist appointments
- Behavioral health visits
- Therapy services
- Pharmacy

Schedule your transportation in the way that works best for you:

- Use the MTM Link member mobile app.
- Log in to the MTM Link member portal.
- Use online chat support.
- Call MTM **1-877-831-3148** (TTY: **711**).

Be sure to schedule your ride at least three days before your visit. If your plans change, cancel your ride as soon as you can.



DentaQuest is an independent company that provides dental benefits for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois.

MTM Health is an independent company that has contracted with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois to provide non-emergency transportation for members with coverage through BCBSIL.

Learn to Live provides educational behavioral health programs. Members considering further medical treatment should consult with a physician. Learn to Live, Inc. is an independent company that provides online behavioral health programs and tools for members with coverage through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois.

BCBSIL makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding third-party vendors and the products and services offered by them.

To ask for supportive aids and services, or materials in other formats and languages for free, please call, 1-877-860-2837 TTY/TDD: 711.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).

UWAGA: Jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).