



Yearly Checkups Beat Illness at Its Own Game

Many serious diseases do not have symptoms for years. High blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and cancers can go for a long time without any signs. Yearly or preventive care checkups help doctors catch problems when they are easy to treat.

Earn gift cards when you go to preventative care appointments!

Sign up to get all gift cards you are eligible for:
bcchpilrewards.healthmine.com



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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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Ill or need care? Choose the right care for the right problem

You need annual checkups for when you are healthy, but there are times when you or your family member are ill or have an emergency. Below are several options for getting help:

24/7 Nurseline:

- Our 24-hour, no-cost advice line has trained nurses to answer your health care questions.
- Nurses can also help you decide if you should visit a provider or if you can take care of the issue yourself.
- Talk to a nurse in your own language.
- Teens can speak in private about health issues.
- Call the 24/7 Nurseline at **1-888-343-2697** (TTY: **711**)

Primary Care Provider (PCP):

- Best for non-emergency care
- Yearly or preventive care checkups, school physicals and vaccinations
- Managing chronic diseases and pain that do not go away
- Talking about any changes in your health

Urgent Care:

- Best if your PCP is not available and you need non-emergency, same-day care

Virtual Care:

- Phone or computer-device appointments with a provider for non-emergency care available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Learn more or set up your visit at **MDLIVE®**

Emergency Room (ER) or Call 911

- Best for life-threatening health issues such as:
 - Stroke symptoms like slurred speech, face drooping, arm weakness
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Chest pain
 - Heavy bleeding
 - Thoughts of harming yourself or others

For a complete guide of care options, visit Where to Go for Care. <https://www.bcbsil.com/bcchp/find-care/where-to-go-for-care>

Need Help Finding a Doctor? Need a Ride?

Log in to **Blue Access for MembersSM** or **BAMSM** - Go to My Health - Find Care. Choose 'Select a Provider' or 'Change Provider.' Or visit Find a Provider <https://www.bcbsil.com/bcchp/find-care/find-a-provider>.

You can also schedule a ride to your visit:

<https://www.bcbsil.com/bcchp/resources/transportation> for more details.

For any help with these services, plus pharmacy delivery, benefit questions, gift cards and more, call Member Services toll-free: **1-877-860-2837** (TTY: **711**).

Why risk losing Medicaid? Be sure to complete your renewal.

You may need to complete the renewal process once or twice a year to keep your Medicaid benefits. This process is called redetermination.

Steps to complete your renewal:

1. Go to abe.illinois.gov and click 'Manage my Case.' You will need to create an account and/or log in to manage your benefits.
2. Verify your address. Be sure to keep your address current to keep using Medicaid.
3. Know your due date. This is also called a redetermination date. To find your due date, check the 'Benefit Details' tab at abe.illinois.gov.
4. Watch your mail. The Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) will mail you a notice if you must renew. You will get a renewal notice one month before it is due.
5. Complete your Medicaid renewal right away.
6. **Submit your Medicaid renewal by either:**
 - Clicking Manage My Case at abe.illinois.gov
 - Mailing or faxing your form according to the letter HFS sent you
 - Calling the Department of Human Services at **1-800-843-6154**

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**

For more information, visit the Keeping My Care page on the BCCHP website <https://www.bcbsil.com/bcchp/join-our-plan/keeping-my-care>.



Breast and Cervical Cancer: Brave the Facts and Join Forces with a Provider

Breast cancer - the facts:

- A woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the U.S. every two minutes.
- Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women ages 20 to 59.
- In Illinois, about 11,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year.
- **40 to 74-year-old women are recommended to have a breast cancer screening by mammogram every other year. Depending on your history, your provider may recommend more.**

The risks:

- Being a woman
- Increased age
- Family history/genetics
- Hormone therapy including birth control pills
- Starting menstruation before age 12
- Starting menopause after age 55
- Drinking alcohol
- Obesity and lack of physical activity

Ways to reduce risk:

- Keep a healthy weight.
- Be physically active.
- Choose not to drink alcohol, or limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Talk to your provider about the risks of hormone replacement therapy and birth control pills.
- Breastfeed your children if possible.
- Get yearly mammograms if you have a family history of breast cancer.

Does a mammogram hurt?

A mammogram has pressure and may be uncomfortable but should not be painful. Every person's pain tolerance is different, but the staff should keep you as comfortable as possible.

Watch for warning signs:

- New lump in breast or underarm
- Thickening or swelling in part of the breast
- Irritation or dimpled breast skin
- Redness or flaky skin in nipple or breast area
- Pulling in of the nipple or pain
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk including blood
- Any change in size or shape of breast
- Any pain in breast

Any signs or symptoms worry you? See your doctor right away.

Women's Health Care Just Got Easier in BAM

Visit our new, online **Women's Health Care Center** in our secure, member portal – **BAM**. View providers, next appointments, plus all your coverage including mammograms and Pap smears. You can also research any health questions or topics with hundreds of articles available in different languages.

Breast and Cervical Cancer: Brave the Facts and Join Forces with a Provider

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Cervical cancer - the facts:

- About 13,360 new cases of cervical cancer were diagnosed in the United States in 2024.
- About 4,320 women will die from cervical cancer.
- More than 20 percent of cervical cancers are found in women over 65.
- The death rate in Black women and Native American women is about 65 percent higher than in White women.

The United States Preventive Service Task Force recommends the following Pap testing schedule:

- **Under 21 years old:** Not needed even if sexually active
- **21-29 years old:** First Pap test at age 21, then test every three years.
- **30-65 years old:** Get both an human papillomavirus (HPV) and Pap test every five years.
- **65 years old or older:** Talk to your doctor to find out if screening is still needed.

What causes cervical cancer?

Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by HPV. At least half of all sexually active people will become infected with HPV at some point in their lives. Most HPV infections heal naturally in a year.

A high-risk HPV infection lasts for years and can go unnoticed. It will lead to changes in your cervical cells that cause cancer. You cannot tell you have it unless you complete a test.

The risks:

- Tobacco smoking
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- Any chronic health condition
- Multiple partners
- Other sexually transmitted infections

Ways to reduce risk:

- Get the HPV vaccine.
- Regularly screen with Pap and HPV tests.
- Use condoms.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Abstinence

Does a Pap smear hurt?

A Pap smear should not hurt, but it may feel uncomfortable. You might experience light bleeding, but you should not feel intense pain or cramping.

Watch for warning signs:

- Vaginal bleeding after sex
- Vaginal bleeding after menopause
- Vaginal bleeding between periods or periods that are heavier and longer than normal
- Vaginal discharge that is watery and has a strong odor or contains blood
- Pelvic pain or pain during sex

Note that all of these symptoms may be caused by something other than cervical cancer.

Any signs or symptoms that worry you? See your provider right away.

Mental Health Deserves a Front Row Seat

A physical crisis often gets immediate attention, but mental health needs sometimes go in the back seat. But that is unkind and unwise.

If you or a family member have recently been in the hospital for a mental health concern, follow up with your doctor or mental health professional after discharge to make sure you have what you need to keep improving.

Behavioral Health Care Coordinators can help you get started:

- They will find providers and help you coordinate care with other providers, mobile crisis and other community supports.
- Link you to community resources, in-network referrals and explain your health benefits
- Help you or your family understand your health conditions, medications and treatment
- Call **1-855-334-4780** to reach a Behavioral Health Care Coordinator today.

Children on mental health meds need regular checkups:

Children and teens sometimes take two or more medicines to help with mood, behavior and thinking. These medicines can have side effects leading to high blood sugar or high cholesterol.

Watch for:

- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling tired
- Blurry vision
- Weight gain

Parents may not notice changes right away. This is why regular health checks and blood tests are important, even if your child says they feel fine. Talk to your child's doctor about the right test.

- Blood sugar test: Blood Glucose or HBA1c (diabetes test)
- Cholesterol (lipids) test: LDL-C or cholesterol test



A Strong Smile Starts with Children's Dental Visits

Every child deserves a healthy smile. Because problems in the mouth can affect the rest of the body. Good oral health leads to good overall health for children and teens between ages two to 20 years old.

Proper oral hygiene can reduce the need for dental work and lower the risk of oral cancer. Poor oral hygiene can lead to:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Stroke
- Infection of the heart's inner lining (Endocarditis)
- Pneumonia

Take care of your mouth every day:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day, two minutes each time.
- Clean between your teeth daily with floss or a water flosser.
- Limit sugary beverages and snacks.
- See a dentist at least once a year for checkups and cleanings.
- Drink fluoridated water.
- Contact your dentist if you notice any oral health problems.

Schedule a dental appointment today

Find a dentist by calling Member Services at **1-877-860-2837** (TTY-TDD: **711**), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Self-service or a voicemail can be used 24/7, including weekends and holidays.

Need a ride to the dentist?

Call Modivcare at **1-877-831-3148**. Call at least three days before you need a ride or download the Modivcare app to schedule your ride.

Modivcare is an independent company that has contracted with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois to provide transportation services for members with coverage through BCBSIL.

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

Tips for Babies:

- Wipe your baby's gums twice a day with a soft, clean cloth after the first feeding in the morning and right before bed. This wipes away bacteria and sugars that can cause cavities.
- When teeth appear, start brushing twice a day with a soft, small-bristled toothbrush and plain water.
- Take your baby to the dentist by their first birthday to spot problems early.
- Ask your dentist about putting fluoride varnish on your child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears.

For children younger than 2 years, consult your doctor or dentist before using fluoride toothpaste.

Tips for Children

- Help your child brush their teeth until they have good brushing skills. If your child is younger than 6, watch them brush. Make sure they use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and always spit it out rather than swallow.
- Ask your child's dentist about applying dental sealants when appropriate.

Breathe Freely - Learn about Asthma Triggers and Make an Asthma Action Plan

Asthma is a common disease that causes airways to become sensitive and makes it hard to breathe. Sometimes asthma can cause coughing, wheezing or tightness in the chest. When asthma is under control, you can have a full, active life.

Common asthma triggers are:

- Dust mites
- Pet dander
- Pests like rodents and cockroaches
- Cigarette smoke
- Mold
- Bleaches
- Pollen
- Air pollution

Study what asthma triggers you face throughout your day. Keep track of your symptoms and where you are when they occur. Talk with your doctor on how to manage these symptoms.

One of the best tools is an Asthma Action Plan. The plan is a map that shows you what to do every day, what to do if you start to feel sick and what to do if your asthma gets bad. It uses green, yellow and red—just like a traffic light—to help you know when to keep going and when to stop and get help.

Your PCP can help you make your Asthma Action Plan. They will listen to your symptoms, check your lungs and give you the right medicine. With their help, your plan keeps you safe at school, at home and even while playing sports.

Having your asthma under control means fewer sick days, more energy and more fun! Contact your PCP and discuss the Asthma Action Plan if you haven't already.

Know Your ASTHMA ZONES

The colors of a traffic light will help you know when to use your asthma medicines.



GREEN means Go Zone!

Take your control or preventive medicines as directed if prescribed.

YELLOW means Caution Zone!

Take your quick-relief medicines.

RED means Danger Zone!

Take your quick-relief medicines and get immediate medical attention.

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).