Get the Flu Shot, Not the Flu

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness and sometimes death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine (shot) each year. The flu shot has been shown to lower flu-related illnesses and the risk of serious flu-related health issues that can lead to hospitalization or death.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates from October 1, 2019 through April 4, 2020 there have been:

- 39 million to 56 million flu illnesses
- 410,000 to 740,000 flu hospitalizations
- 24,000 to 62,000 flu deaths in the U.S.

continued on page 2
Who can get a flu shot?
The CDC recommends people age 6 months and older get a yearly flu shot as the first and most important step in protecting against the flu. Pregnant women and people with certain health conditions like asthma, heart disease and high blood sugar (diabetes) should also get a yearly flu shot.

Getting ready for the 2020-2021 flu season
There are many strains of the flu and they change all the time. The flu vaccine is reviewed by researchers each year and updated to match which flu strains they believe will be the most common during the next flu season.

You can get a flu shot from your doctor or local drugstore at low or no cost. You may have pain, redness or swelling at the injection site, a low-grade fever, a headache or muscle aches after getting a flu shot. All can be treated with an over-the-counter (OTC) pain reliever.

Breast Cancer Screening Exams
Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in American women, except for skin cancers. About one in eight women in the U.S. will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.

Breast cancer is usually found during screening exams or felt as a lump or mass. Many types of breast cancers are found during preventive screening exams before you have any symptoms. That is why getting routine screening tests done is the best way to find breast cancer early.

Mammograms are screening tests that take X-rays of the breast. They are the best way to find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat and manage.

When to get screened:
According to the United States Preventive Services Task Force, a group of doctors and disease experts who research and review the best ways to prevent diseases, suggests:

- Women ages 50-74 should have a mammogram every two years.
- Women ages 40-49 should talk to their doctor about when to start and how often to get mammograms.
- Women should talk with their doctor about the pros and cons of getting mammograms before age 50.
Get the Flu Shot, Not the Flu

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Everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs:

• Stay away from people who are sick.
• Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
• Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever lowers without using a fever-reducing drug.
• 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 with soap and water.

• Clean and sanitize places that may have flu germs on them.
• Get plenty of rest.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
• While sick, stay away from people as much as possible.
• Talk to your doctor if symptoms continue.

Keep in mind

It takes about two weeks for the shot to start protecting you. That is why the CDC suggests getting a flu shot by the end of October, before flu season reaches its peak. To find doctors and drugstores near you, call Member Services at 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Talk to your doctor about your overall health, risk factors and family history. These things impact what screening schedule is best for you. Your doctor can help you decide when to get screened and may want you to get screened earlier if you have a family history of breast or other cancers and risks.

Sources: U.S. Preventive Services Task Force; American Cancer Society; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Talk to your doctor about your breast health.
Caring for a Child with an Upper Respiratory Infection

The upper respiratory tract is made up of the mouth, nose, sinuses and throat. Infections of the upper respiratory tract are often called the common cold. Symptoms of the common cold are most often worse during the first three to five days, followed by a slow but steady recovery. Most upper respiratory tract infections will end in 10-14 days without antibiotics.

Why are antibiotics not useful on upper respiratory infections?
Antibiotics only work on bacterial infections and most upper respiratory infections are caused by a virus. Instead of antibiotics, treatment is focused on taking care of your symptoms and making children comfortable while their immune system fights the virus. Symptoms can include:

- Sore throat
- Being tired
- Nasal congestion
- Runny nose
- Cough
- Watery eyes

To manage symptoms, your child can:

- Rest
- Drink plenty of fluids like water, diluted juice, or caffeine-free tea to stay hydrated
- Use saline nose drops or spray to loosen nasal congestion
- Gargle with salt water to ease sore throats
- Use heated, humidified air or take a warm shower or bath

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before using OTC medicines like decongestants or cough medicines. If you are not sure what the right dose is, ask the doctor or pharmacist.

How to keep from spreading to others:

- Have the whole family wash their hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Children who have a fever should stay home and away from others until fever-free for more than 24 hours (temperature should be less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit without medicine).

Get medical care if your child has:

- A fever over 101 degrees Fahrenheit and a cough for more than 72 hours
- Symptoms lasting over 10 days and are not getting better
- Trouble breathing or a wheeze
- Pain/pressure in the chest
- Bad sinus pain
- Swollen glands in the neck or jaw
- A sore throat that lasts for more than a week

Sources: Cornell Health; eMedicineHealth
Medicaid Redetermination: Renewing Your Eligibility

What is redetermination?
A redetermination is a review of eligibility for Medicaid, All Kids, SNAP or cash assistance. Eligibility for Medicaid and All Kids must be reviewed at least once a year. The state must decide whether you still meet the rules to keep receiving benefits. Redetermination is often called ‘rede’ for short. You will get a letter telling you that your redetermination is coming up soon. About two weeks later, you will get one more letter that will have the redetermination forms you need to fill out and return.

What do I need to do?
The form you get will have the most recent information the state has in their case records for you or your family members. If any of the information is wrong, you must make the corrections. If anything on the form has changed, such as your income, you should make corrections and attach any proof of changes. The redetermination form will tell you when it is due back and how you can return it. The form must be returned even if you do not have anything to change.

Why is this important to me?
It is very important you fill out and return your redetermination forms on time. If the forms are not returned on time or if you do not provide information that is asked for, your case will be cancelled. If your case is cancelled, you will no longer get Medicaid benefits, which may cause a delay in your health care services.

Who do I contact for questions or more information?
If you have questions about Medicaid redeterminations or need help with the forms, please contact your caseworker. You can visit the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) website at http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ABE for more information. Select ‘Manage My Case’ to submit renewals, report changes and check the status of your benefits. If you have other questions, contact your local DHS office.

Stay on Top of Your Health with a Yearly Checkup
If you have not had a yearly checkup, it is time to schedule a visit with your doctor. During this visit, you can talk about your overall health, risk factors and family history. These are things that affect what health screenings and exams you need and when you need them.

Routine health exams and screenings can help find problems before they start. They can also help spot health issues early, when your chances for treatment and a cure are better. By getting the right exams, screenings, and treatments, you are taking steps to help your chances for living a longer, healthier life. Your age, health and family history, lifestyle choices (what you eat, how active you are, whether you smoke) and other factors impact what kind of health care you need and how often care is needed.

If you need help finding a doctor, call Member Services at 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
The Care You Need for Diabetes

More than 34 million Americans have diabetes (about one in 10 people), and about 90%-95% of them have Type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes most often develops in people over age 45, but more and more children, teens and young adults are also developing it.

When it comes to diabetes, small changes in your diet and lifestyle can have a big payoff. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the three major causes of diabetes are often within our control. These causes are:

- **Extra weight**, mainly around the waist.
- **Not being active**. Find ways to get your body moving.
- **Sleep problems**. Poor sleep can raise the risk of obesity and high blood sugar.

**What is diabetes?**

When we eat, most of our food is turned into glucose or sugar, which the body uses as energy. Diabetes is a disease in which the blood sugar level, or blood glucose, is too high. The sugar is moved around the body to our cells by a hormone, called insulin, which is made in the pancreas. For a person with diabetes, the body either does not make enough insulin or the body is not able to use the insulin it does make. In either case, sugar builds up in the blood. Over time, this may lead to heart attacks, high blood pressure, stroke, blindness and more problems.

**Two types of diabetes:**

- **Type 1**: The body does not make any insulin. People with Type 1 diabetes need to take insulin each day.
- **Type 2**: The body does not make enough insulin or does not use it well. This is the most common form of diabetes and is the type that can benefit from lifestyle changes.

There is also a condition called prediabetes, in which the blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

Many people do not know they have prediabetes. The good news is — prediabetes can be reversed. Through a study called the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), the NIH found that millions of high-risk people can put off or avoid developing Type 2 diabetes by losing weight through routine exercise and a diet lower in fat and calories.

**Easy ways to put off and prevent diabetes**

Of course, exercising more and eating better are messages that have been told for years. So, how do you do it? There are many small things you can do that will help. Here are a few ideas:

1. When you can, use the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
2. Walk in place while watching TV.
3. When you are running errands, park a little farther away or get off the bus a stop earlier.
4. Eat an orange instead of drinking orange juice.
5. Drink plain water instead of juice, soda, flavored water or diet drinks.
6. Cut down your salt. Try cooking with more spices.
7. Never grocery shop without eating first.
8. If you need to snack between meals — choose whole foods like grains, fruits or veggies. Even popcorn without salt can take care of those hunger pains.

Putting off diabetes with healthy changes is the first step to prevention. You can also talk with your doctor about any family history of high blood sugar and getting your blood sugar tested.

**Sources:**

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month.

Take charge of your health and ask your doctor about your risk for high blood sugar.
Taking Your Meds as Directed

About three out of four Americans do not take their medication as directed. Medicine only works when you take it regularly, and when people with health conditions do not take medicine as directed, it can lead to severe health problems. So, make sure you talk to your doctor before you stop taking any medication.

People may not take their medication as directed because they:

- Forget
- Do not think the medication is useful or working
- Fear the side effects
- Have a hard time taking the medication
- Think it is too costly

Taking your meds as directed gives you the best chance to manage your health condition(s) and have the best possible health. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about the medications you are taking. They can give you tips on how to manage your medications, such as what to do if you miss a dose, if you can take them with other meds or vitamins, foods to avoid and any likely side effects.

Source: American Heart Association
Find a Blue Door Neighborhood Center™ Near You

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois is opening doors to a healthier life. Let us help you learn, connect and focus on your health at one of our Blue Door Neighborhood Centers. The Blue Door Neighborhood Center offers classes and workshops to the community at no cost. Here are some of the services offered:

- Classes on healthy meal planning, exercising and relaxation techniques
- Workshops on handling health conditions, like heart disease and asthma
- Resources for understanding and using health insurance
- Tips for connecting to community services that offer food and transportation
- Low-impact classes like Zumba and yoga

Visit the Blue Door Neighborhood Center website at www.bcbsil.com/bdnc/ to find hours of operation, class availability and more information.

Visit a center near you:

**Pullman Center**
756 E. 111th St., Suites 102 & 103
Chicago, IL 60628
1-773-253-0900

**Morgan Park Center**
The Blue Door Neighborhood Center in Morgan Park will open later in 2020.
11840 S. Marshfield Ave.
Chicago, IL 60643
1-872-760-8090

**South Lawndale Center**
The Blue Door Neighborhood Center in South Lawndale will open in winter 2020.
2551 W. Cermak Rd.
Chicago, IL 60608
Blue Access for Members™

Blue Access for Members (BAM℠) is the secure member portal from Blue Cross Community Health Plans (BCCHP℠), where you can view your health plan information instantly.

It is easy to get started:
2. Click ‘Register now’ in the member login section of the homepage.
3. To accept the Terms of Use, check the box ‘I agree to these Terms of Use’ and then click ‘Next’.

To create an account:
1. Enter the member’s first name, last name and date of birth.
2. Enter the ID number from the member’s Medicaid ID card. Only use the numbers and letters after the three-digit prefix and/or before a dash (there may not be a dash).
3. If you are legally responsible for a Medicaid member under the age of 18, check the box under “Are you a Legal Guardian?” and then click ‘Next’.

Features and tools available on BAM:
• Order a new ID card and/or print a temporary ID card.
• Opt into text and email messages.
• Find doctors, health care providers, pharmacies and hospitals under the ‘Doctors and Hospitals’ tab.
• Complete a health risk screening.
• Get the most up-to-date information about your assigned care coordinator and how to reach them.
• Find out what services and medications are covered by your plan.
• Get access to a variety of health and wellness topics to help keep you healthy.
• View prior authorization information.
• Find a new doctor who is taking new patients with Provider Finder®.
• Find information about getting transportation to doctor’s visits.
• Use the form finder under the ‘Forms and Documents’ tab to easily access forms.

Explore these features and tools by registering for BAM today. If you have questions, call Member Services at 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).
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. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois:

• Provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
  ○ Qualified sign language interpreters
  ○ Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
• Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
  ○ Qualified interpreters
  ○ Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact Civil Rights Coordinator.

If you believe that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with: Civil Rights Coordinator, Office of Civil Rights Coordinator, 300 E. Randolph St., 35th floor, Chicago, Illinois 60601, 1-855-664-7270, TTY/TDD: 1-855-661-6965, Fax: 1-855-661-6960, Civilrightscoordinator@hcsc.net. You can file a grievance in person or by mail, fax, or email. If you need help filing a grievance, Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf, or by mail or phone at:

  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  200 Independence Avenue, SW
  Room 509F, HHH Building
  Washington, D.C. 20201

  1-800-368-1019, 800-537-7697 (TDD)

ATTENTION: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).


العربية (Arabic): 

हिंदी (Hindi): ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं। 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711) पर कॉल करें।


ગુજરાતી (Gujarati): સુખાનું: તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિશચયાત્મક  ભાષા સહાય સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. કોલ કરો 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).


γλώσσα (Greek): ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Αν μιλάτε ελληνικά, στη διάθεσή σας βρίσκονται υπηρεσίες γλωσσικής υποστήριξης, οι οποίες παρέχονται δωρεάν. Καλέστε 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).
**Member and Community Events**

Check out what is happening near you. You can find BCCHP member and community events on the BCCHP website at [www.bcchpil.com](http://www.bcchpil.com). You can also call us toll free at 1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711).

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**LifeTimes**
Your guide to health, wellness, and fitness

*LifeTimes* is published four times a year for Blue Cross Community Health Plans members. Each issue brings you news about your health plan and staying healthy, along with important phone numbers. If you have questions or need help, call Member Services.

Articles in *LifeTimes* are meant to educate. They are not meant as medical advice. Please check with your doctor for any advice about your health.

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**Important BCCHP phone numbers (Please have your member ID number ready)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Toll-Free Number</strong></th>
<th><strong>TTY/ TDD</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member Services</strong></td>
<td>1-877-860-2837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you have any questions, please call Member Services. We are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The call is free.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24/7 Nurseline</strong></td>
<td>1-888-343-2697</td>
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MyPrime.com is an online resource offered by Prime Therapeutics LLC, a separate company contracted by BCBSIL to administer your prescription drug benefit.

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