



Health Plan Update

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Support That's There For You... Even Before You Know You Need It!


As the saying goes, life comes at you fast. If you're like most people, you've got a lot on your mind and probably don't think about what your healthcare plan offers until you need to see a doctor or get a prescription filled. That's why the Board of Regents now offers all health-plan subscribers 360° Health, a collection of programs, interactive support and extras that, when combined, gives you a truly comprehensive information source. 360° Health gives you access to the tools, information and resources you need to better manage your health, including:

24/7 NurseLine – When you need answers right away, you have direct, round-the-clock access to a registered nurse with an average of 19 years nursing experience. Calls to the NurseLine are toll-free and always confidential. HMO members can call 1-866-724-BLUE(2583). PPO and Indemnity plan members can call 1-800-785-0006.

ConditionCare – You and/or your dependants are not alone when facing asthma, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, coronary artery disease or heart failure. You'll have your own registered nurse to help self-manage your condition and live a healthier life. HMO members and those enrolled in the High-Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) can call 1-800-638-4754. PPO and Indemnity plan members can contact the Disease State Management Program at 1-800-790-2507.

Healthy Living at www.bcbsga.com – This personalized site makes it easy for you to find reliable health information that matters and stay motivated to live healthier. Go to www.bcbsga.com and register for member access to get started.

Future Moms – This award-winning maternity program for HMO/ HDHP members gives the mom-to-be expert support and everything they need to know for every stage of pregnancy. If you're expecting, call 1-866-664-5404 today to enroll.

These and other helpful 360° Health programs coming soon are available to you at no cost, so please take full advantage of them. 

A Primer on Diabetes

November is American Diabetes Month – an opportunity to learn more about one of the leading causes of death in the United States and its risk factors. According to the American Diabetes Association, nearly 21 million Americans have this very serious disease.

What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose levels are above normal. People with diabetes have problems converting food to energy. After a meal, food is broken down into a sugar called glucose, which is carried by the blood to cells throughout the body. Cells use the hormone insulin, made in the pancreas, to help them process blood glucose into energy.

There are three main kinds of diabetes:

Type 1 Diabetes: Once called juvenile diabetes or insulin-dependent diabetes, type 1 diabetes is usually first diagnosed in children, teenagers or young adults. In this form of diabetes, the beta cells of the pancreas no longer make insulin because the body's immune system has attacked and destroyed them. Treatment for type 1 diabetes includes taking insulin shots or using an insulin pump, making wise food choices, exercising regularly, controlling blood pressure and cholesterol, and, in some cases, taking aspirin daily.

Type 2 Diabetes: Formerly called adult-onset or non-insulin-dependent diabetes, this is the most common form of diabetes. People can develop type 2 diabetes at any age, even during childhood. This form of the disease usually begins with insulin resistance, a condition in which fat, muscle and liver cells do not use insulin properly. At first, the pancreas keeps up with the added demand by producing more insulin. In time, however, it loses the ability to secrete enough insulin in response to meals. People who are overweight and inactive are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes. Treatment includes

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taking diabetes medicines, making wise food choices, exercising regularly, controlling blood pressure and cholesterol, and, in some cases, taking aspirin daily.

Gestational Diabetes: Gestational diabetes is caused by the hormones of pregnancy or a shortage of insulin. Some women develop it late in pregnancy. And although this form of diabetes usually goes away after the baby is born, a woman who has had it is more likely to develop type 2 diabetes later in life.

What Are Some Risk Factors for Developing Type 2 Diabetes?

- ◆ Having a parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- ◆ Family background (native Alaskans, American Indians, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are more prone to developing type 2 diabetes)
- ◆ Having had gestational diabetes or giving birth to at least one baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- ◆ High blood pressure
- ◆ Abnormal cholesterol levels
- ◆ Fairly inactive lifestyle
- ◆ Previous tests indicating impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG)
- ◆ History of heart disease

What Are The Signs And Symptoms Of Type 2 Diabetes?

More than 6 million people in the United States have type 2 diabetes and don't know it. Many have no signs or symptoms, and the symptoms can be so mild that they might not even notice them. And some people have symptoms but don't suspect diabetes.

Symptoms include: increased thirst, increased hunger, fatigue, increased urination (especially at night), weight loss, blurred vision, and sores that do not heal.

Could You Have Diabetes?

Anyone 45 years old or older should consider getting tested for diabetes. If you are 45 or older and overweight, getting tested is strongly recommended. If you are younger than 45, overweight and have one or more of the risk factors, you should consider getting tested. Ask your doctor for a fasting blood-glucose test or an oral glucose-tolerance test. Your doctor will tell you if you have normal blood glucose, pre-diabetes or diabetes.

Living with Diabetes Or Another Chronic Condition?

If you or a family member has diabetes (pediatric or adult), asthma (pediatric or adult), heart failure, coronary artery disease (CAD) or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), ConditionCare can help. Available at no extra charge, ConditionCare is confidential and provides 24-hour, toll-free access to registered nurses who can give you the answers and ongoing education you need to better manage your condition and achieve more optimal health.

Ready to take more control of your health? With ConditionCare, you don't have to do it alone. To enroll in ConditionCare or to learn more, use the following contact information:

- ◆ HMO/HDHP members, call ConditionCare at 1-800-638-4754;
- ◆ PPO/Indemnity members, call the Disease State Management Program at 1-800-790-2507.

Be sure to check out the Diabetes Condition Center at Healthy Living on www.bcbsga.com. This resource is filled with practical advice, quizzes and the latest news to help you manage your diabetes. You can also sign up to receive a customized weekly e-newsletter, a diabetes calendar and a monthly diabetes e-mail newsletter. 