



Healthy and Connected Member Newsletter - Oct. 19, 2020

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Healthy and Connected is the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (SCDHHS) member e-newsletter. Healthy and Connected features tips and tools to help you and your loved ones connect to resources and live healthier lives.

Learn About Flu Season

It is important, now more than ever, to be proactive in preventing the flu by getting a flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend a flu vaccine each year as the best way to protect against the flu. The flu shot does not prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), but it can help you stay out of the doctor's office, urgent care or hospital. People at greater risk from the flu are like those at greater risk for COVID-19. This includes those over 65 years-old, and high-risk individuals like those with asthma, diabetes or heart disease. Besides getting your flu shot, the best ways to stop from spreading the flu are also the best ways to stop COVID-19. This includes staying home when you are sick and covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Learn more about the differences between the flu and COVID-19 [here from the CDC](#).



Healthy Connections Medicaid full-benefit members can receive a free flu shot at many places across the state. Children can receive their flu shot from their pediatrician or their primary care physician. Adults can receive their flu shot at any in-network pharmacy or through their primary care physician. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has a list of other places you can get your flu shot on their website. Check out this list and learn more about flu season in South Carolina below.

[See Tips and Find a Vaccine Clinic](#)

It is Important to be on the Same Page as Your Doctor

October is Health Literacy Month. More than 40% of Americans have a hard time understanding healthcare information from their healthcare provider. Clear communication is an important part of staying healthy. To support Health Literacy Month, SCDHHS recommends the tips below when visiting your doctor or provider.



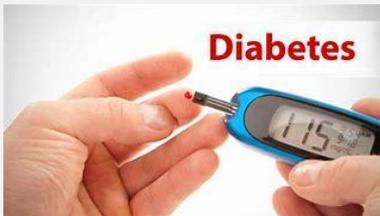
Tips for talking with your healthcare provider.

- **Write down** questions or concerns before your visit.
- **Ask** specific questions that relate to your situation or medical condition.
- **Repeat** information and instructions given by your healthcare provider back to them to make sure you understand them.

October is Health Literacy Month

Understanding your healthcare provider and asking questions is very important to staying healthy and getting better.

Reducing the Rate of Diabetes and Prediabetes in South Carolina



November is Diabetes Awareness Month. Nearly 30 million Americans have some form of diabetes. Diabetes is a disease that affects how your body turns food into energy.

There are three main types of diabetes, type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes. Type 1 is usually diagnosed in children and young adults. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes. It can affect people of any age but is most common in those over age 45.

Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes that is first found when a woman is pregnant.

Diabetes management services are a covered benefit for Healthy Connections Medicaid members. This includes type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes. There are also ways you can prevent diabetes. If you are pregnant, your doctor will talk to you about gestational diabetes. Most people who have type 2 diabetes, first had prediabetes. Prediabetes is common in adults, but it can be reversed. Creating a nutrition plan, setting fitness goals and tracking your progress all can help reverse prediabetes and prevent type 2 diabetes. The Diabetes Advisory Council of South Carolina has helpful information regarding diabetes and ways to prevent it. Visit their "In It Together" website by clicking on the button below.

[Visit In It Together SC](#)

Dental Hygiene Helps More Than Your Mouth

October is National Dental Hygiene Month. Taking care of your teeth is very important for a healthy mouth and body.

Did you know that cavities and gum disease can cause medical problems or make other problems worse? Keeping a healthy mouth is simple and easy.

Here are some tips:

Visit the dentist for regular check-ups and cleanings.

- A dental visit can start as early as the first tooth is in.
- By age one, each child should have had a dental check-up.
- Pregnant women should have a dental check-up during their pregnancy.
- Everyone should visit the dentist at least once a year.

Brush your teeth twice a day and floss daily.

- Make brushing and flossing a family event, especially for your children.
- Change the brush every three or four months.
- Use toothpaste with fluoride in it.

Prevent cavities from forming by eating a healthy diet. Limit the use of sugary drinks and foods such as sodas, juices or candy and sweets.

Do not smoke, vape or chew tobacco.

Healthy Connections Medicaid covers dental services for both kids and adults.

- In the dental office, kids can get dental check-ups and cleanings two times per year. They can also get fluoride varnish and dental sealants that help prevent cavities.
- Kids can also get a fluoride varnish applied by their doctor's office during their check-up visits. Children up to seven years-old can get up to four applications per year.
- Adults can get one dental check-up and cleaning per year, along with fillings or tooth extractions if needed.

Having a healthy mouth starts with you. Take charge of your and your family's dental health today. Learn more tips from the American Dental Association (ADA) below.



[Watch the ADA's Mouth Healthy Video](#)

October is Safe Sleep Month



Safe Sleep, supported by the South Carolina Birth Outcomes Initiative focuses on things you and others can do to help protect your baby. Through the Safe Sleep Initiative, you can learn the ABCs of safe sleep.

Alone- babies should sleep alone in their own safe sleep space such as a crib, bassinet or play yard with a firm, flat mattress. Sleeping alone means no other people, pets or objects are in the same sleep area. This means all toys, soft objects, bumper pads, blankets and pillows need to be removed from a baby's

crib. These items are choking and suffocation hazards. Also, never lay a baby down on adult beds, chairs, sofas, waterbeds, air mattresses, pillows or cushions.

Back- always put your baby to sleep on their back, both for naps and at night. Placing babies on their backs to sleep is one of the most important ways to prevent sudden unexpected infant death (SUID). Often a baby is put to sleep safely at first, but then is moved to an unsafe sleep position after awakening in the night.

Crib- a crib, bassinet or play yard is safer than having a baby sleep next to you in bed. But what's just as important is making sure the crib or bassinet is safety approved by the Consumer Products Safety Commission and that the crib is bare.

It is important for all caregivers, not just parents, to know about safe sleep. Learn more about safe sleep through the brochure below.

[Safe Sleep, Every Sleep Brochure](#)

Now is the Time to Quit Tobacco

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Did you know tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death in the U.S? Smoking harms nearly every organ of your body and can cause many diseases. Quitting smoking has immediate as well as long-term benefits for you and your loved ones. Secondhand smoke exposure contributes to about 41,000 deaths among nonsmoking adults and 400 deaths in infants each year.

E-cigarettes also known as "e-cigs," "vapes," "e-hookahs," "vape pens" and "electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)" carry risks too. E-cigarettes will increase health risks for youth, young adults, pregnant women and adults who do not currently use tobacco products.

Your Healthy Connections Medicaid benefit covers things that can help you quit tobacco and lower your risk for lung cancer. This includes counseling and medication that can help you quit. DHEC also has tools that can help you quit. Learn more about DHEC's free resources, including their S.C. Tobacco Quitline, by clicking on "I'm Ready to Quit" below.



[I'm Ready to Quit](#)

Thank you for reading Healthy and Connected, the next edition is scheduled for early 2021. Follow SCDHHS on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for regular updates. You can also view the Medicaid Member Handbook [here on SCDHHS' website](#) to learn more about what is covered, where to go to ask questions and more.