



L.A. Care
HEALTH PLAN®

For A Healthy Life

SPRING 2023

be
well

A Publication for L.A. Care Members

Sweeten Your Life in a Healthy Way!



The season can also be a reminder to sweeten your life in a healthy way by choosing the right amount and type of sweets that you eat.

Foods sweetened with sugar may taste good, but the calories can add up fast and make it difficult to keep your blood sugar at a healthy level. When using sweeteners such as sugar, honey, and agave nectar, less is better. The American Heart Association recommends limiting added sugar to 9 teaspoons (36 grams) per day for most men and 6 teaspoons (25 grams) per day for most women and children.

Make healthier choices, such as fruits, veggies and whole grains. Check the nutrition label on your food and drinks. On food labels look for words ending in “ose”, this can identify types of sugar such as sucrose (table sugar), fructose (fruit sugar found in food products such as juice, candies, and popsicles), and maltose. Sugar substitutes

such as sugar alcohols (sorbitol, xylitol), saccharine (Sweet N Low), aspartame (Equal), sucralose (Splenda) and stevia extracts (Truvia), do not have significant calories or raise the sugar in your blood, but they may impact your health with increased hunger and gut discomfort. If you decide to use these, use them in small amounts.

Sodas, juices and other energy drinks are loaded with sugar. Every 4 grams of sugar is equal to 1 teaspoon of sugar. A 12-ounce can of a regular soft drink has an average of 39 grams of sugar or a little over 9 teaspoons of sugar! Make water your go-to drink. There are many ways to flavor your water such as infusing it with mint, basil, and rosemary. A lemon wedge or a slice of cucumber also gives water a nice zing!

Having a sweet treat such as candy or pastry occasionally is okay, as long as you balance it by keeping the portions small and making healthier choices daily.



Ask the Doc: What You Need to Know About Asthma and Allergies



Q: What is asthma?

A: Asthma is a disease of the lungs that narrows airways and makes it hard to breathe. It causes coughing, wheezing and tightness in the chest. Things that cause your asthma symptoms to flare up are *triggers* and can make your symptoms worse. Not everyone has the same triggers.

Q: What are allergies?

A: Allergies occur when the body reacts to something harmless around you like certain foods, trees, dust or the family pet. It causes sneezing and itchy eyes. Both asthma and allergies have triggers – things that cause your symptoms. Allergies can make asthma symptoms worse.

Q: What are some common allergy and asthma triggers?

A: Some triggers that can cause symptoms to flare up are:

- Grass, trees, plants and weeds
- Dust and molds
- Some insects
- Household pets
- Smoke, colds or flu
- Changes in the weather
- Some foods
- Strong smells

Q: How are allergies and asthma treated?

A: Talk with your doctor about allergy and asthma treatment. There are prescription and over-the-counter allergy medicines that may give you relief from your symptoms.

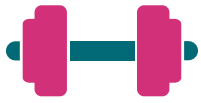
Make a written **Asthma Action Plan with your doctor**. You will likely take medicines using an inhaler. **Controller medicines** are taken every day even when you feel well, to reduce airway inflammation and help prevent asthma symptoms. **Quick-relief medicines** (sometimes called rescue medicines) are taken as soon as you have any warning signs of an asthma attack.

To avoid allergy and asthma attacks, know what triggers your symptoms and avoid them when you can. See your doctor often to review your triggers, medicines and treatment plan.

Health is much more dependent on our habits and nutrition than on medicine.

– John Lubbock





Lose Weight with the Diabetes Prevention Program

Spring is a great time to refocus on your health and L.A. Care is here to help.



Members now have access to the Diabetes Prevention Program from the convenience of their home.

This program includes a full year of support from health coaches to make small changes to your food choices and activity levels. These changes can have a big impact on your health.

This is a free program to you. To qualify you must:

- Be at least 18 years old and
- Be overweight based on your height and weight
- Not have diabetes
- Have other risks of developing diabetes, like family history or a history of gestational diabetes

To see if you qualify, call Diabetes Care Partners at **1.877.227.3889** (TTY 711), Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. PST.

Medi-Cal Renewals Are Coming Back

You may need to take action to keep your coverage. Updating your contact information will help the county use the most current information for your case. You can update your information online at **benefitscal.com** or by calling the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) at **1.866.613.3777** (TTY 711).

If you receive a renewal packet or a notice asking for more information, please respond as soon as possible. You may submit the information by mail, phone, in person or online.

If you have any questions, or need help with accessing your Medi-Cal coverage, or if your Medi-Cal coverage was discontinued, please contact DPSS or visit **benefitscal.com**.



If you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI), please report any changes in contact information, address or phone number, by calling **1.800.772.1213** (TTY 711) or contact your local Social Security office.

How Long Should I Wait for My Appointment?

Did you know L.A. Care has rules about how long you should wait to get a doctor appointment? Appointments must be offered within the timeframes listed below*:

Primary Care Doctors

- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 10 business days
- Urgent appointment (no authorization required): 48 hours

Specialists

- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 15 business days
- Urgent appointment (requiring prior authorization): 96 hours

Behavioral Care

- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 15 business days (physicians)
- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 10 business days (non-physicians)
- Non-Urgent Follow-Up Appointment: Within 10 business days of prior appointment (Non-Physicians)
- Urgent appointment: 48 hours
- Life threatening emergency: Immediately
- Non-life threatening emergency: 6 hours
- Emergency Care: Immediate, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week

After-hours

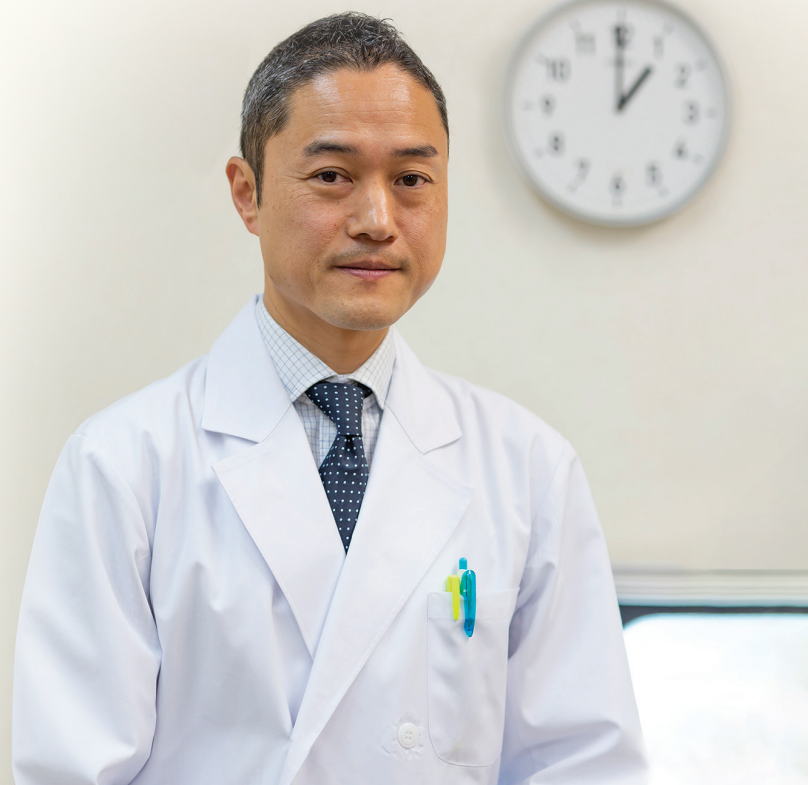
- Access - After Hours recording or answering service must state emergency instructions to address medical emergencies
- Access - After Hours recording or answering service must state a way of contacting the provider
- Timeliness - Recording or live person must state that provider will call back within 30 minutes

You can get health advice when your doctor's office is closed and on weekends or holidays.

- L.A. Care doctors must be available, or have someone available, to help you at all times.
- If you need to talk with your doctor when the office is closed, call your doctor's office phone number. Follow their instructions.
- A doctor or nurse should call you back within 30 minutes.

If you have trouble reaching your doctor, call the L.A. Care **Nurse Advice Line** at **1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711)** 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. A nurse will give you the health information you need. Remember, if you have a medical emergency and need help right away, dial **911** or go to your nearest emergency room.

*The applicable waiting time for a particular appointment may be extended if the referring or treating health care provider has determined and noted in the patient record that a longer waiting time will not have a detrimental effect on the health of the member.



Caring For You and Your Privacy

L.A. Care knows each member is one of a kind! We want to make sure you get the health care that is right for you.



This is why we may ask you what language you prefer or your race and ethnicity. Knowing about you, including if you have a disability, your gender identity and sexual orientation helps us find the right care for you.

The information you tell us is voluntary. It is only used to make sure you feel safe and respected when getting care. We use it to improve services. It also helps in giving you materials in the language or format you like. You can choose not to answer some questions. What you tell us is protected by law. We can only share what you tell us with certain people, like your doctors. It will never be used for underwriting, or to deny benefits or care.



If you have questions about how we use this information, call **Member Services** at **1.888.839.9909** (TTY 711). You can also go to www.lacare.org/member-handbook/notice-privacy-practices and read the Notice of Privacy Practices.

What Are We Asking?

L.A. Care is now asking for members' pronouns, gender identity and sexual orientation.

When you call Member Services at **1.888.839.9909**, agents will ask for your:

- Preferred Pronouns (he/him, she/her, and they/them, etc.)
- Sex Assigned at Birth (Female, Male, Unknown)
- Gender Identity (Woman, Man, Non-binary, etc.)
- Sexual Orientation (Straight/Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, etc.)

For all options, you can also choose not to answer the questions.



Why are we asking?

L.A. Care values health equity. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) people are sometimes not treated well in health care. This can lead to worse health outcomes. Like everyone else, LGBTQ+ people deserve quality care. Asking for this data helps members get the best care and to feel safe and respected. L.A. Care supports our LGBTQ+ community!



Doula Benefit and Services Available

Are you pregnant or were you pregnant within the past year? If so, you may benefit from doula services! A doula is a birth worker who provides health education, advocacy, and physical, emotional, and non-medical support during your pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum period.

Doula services may help prevent perinatal complications and improve health outcomes for birthing parents and infants. Studies have found individuals who have doula support during their pregnancy have a decreased risk of cesarean section, shortened labor time, less use of epidurals, and improved emotional well-being.

What Is Included?

Prenatal and Postpartum Support

- Discuss your individual questions, concerns, and preferences related to your pregnancy during an initial visit with a doula. You may also develop or review your birth plan for your upcoming labor and birth.
- Up to eight additional visits with a doula during the prenatal and postpartum stages.

Labor and Delivery Support

- A doula is able to meet you where you are planning to deliver and be with you throughout your labor and delivery to provide physical and emotional support.

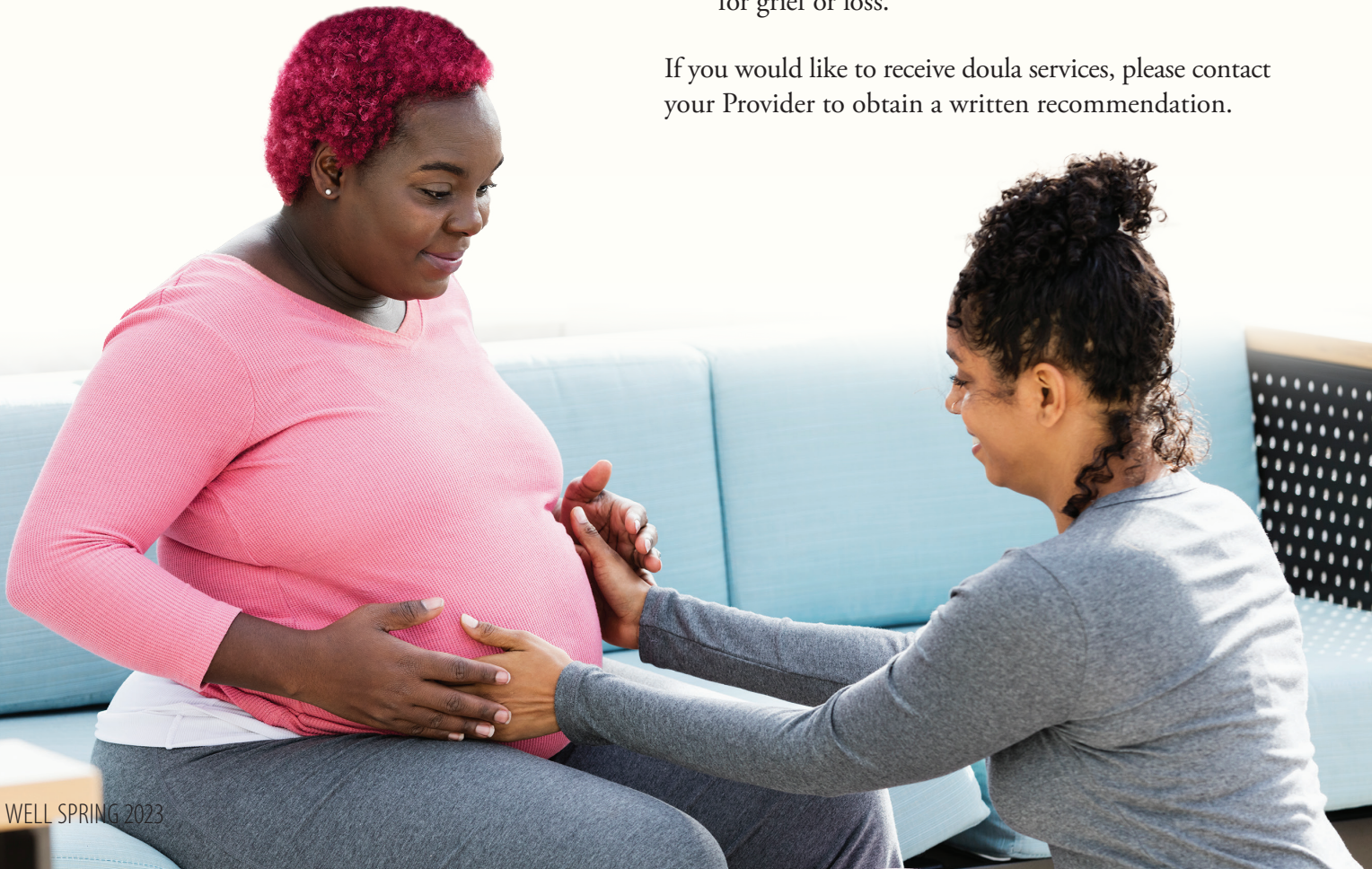
Postpartum Visit(s)

- You may receive up to two extended three-hour postpartum visits from a doula after delivery. You will also have the opportunity to talk to the doula about your birth, sleep, lactation support needs and any other questions, concerns, or worries.

Abortion or Miscarriage Support

- Experiencing loss will have a range of needs, and a doula can provide support in various ways such as:
 - Being present with you in the emergency or birth room, or at home.
 - Offering emotional support before, during, and after loss.
 - Holding space as you go through the stages of grief.
 - Providing support in creating and practicing rituals for grief or loss.

If you would like to receive doula services, please contact your Provider to obtain a written recommendation.



Resources to Support Your Child's Development

Access to developmental screening, early intervention, and diagnosis of developmental disabilities can affect a child's healthy development.



First 5 LA and Los Angeles County Department of Public Health launched Help Me Grow LA (HMG LA) to connect families to free or low-cost programs that can benefit their child's development. HMG LA also connects local services and providers to each other to better serve families.

HMG LA has a call center with trained resource liaisons who assist families in navigating the many programs and services available in L.A. County. In addition, families can visit [HelpMeGrowLA.org](https://www.HelpMeGrowLA.org) a website that offers information and resources about infant and young child developmental milestones, screenings, and community services.



Parents and caregivers can also contact the call center at **1.833.903.3972** for more information.

Medi-Cal Pharmacy Benefits are now overseen through the Medi-Cal Rx delivery system

Please visit the DHCS Medi-Cal Rx website for more information or visit L.A. Care Pharmacy Services via the following link: [lacare.org/members/getting-care/pharmacy-services](https://www.lacare.org/members/getting-care/pharmacy-services).



Community Health Workers Now at the Community Resource Centers

Do you need support understanding your health condition, accessing health care, or being connected with additional resources?

If so, you may benefit from seeing a Community Health Worker (CHW), services are available to L.A. Care Medi-Cal members at the local Community Resource Centers (CRCs).

What is a CHW? What services are provided at the CRCs?

A CHW is a trained non-clinical professional who can help you address chronic conditions, preventive health care needs, and health-related social needs. The goal of CHW services is to help prevent disease, disability, and other health conditions from worsening, to prolong life and promote physical and mental health and well-being.

Health Education

- Promotes health or addresses barriers to physical and mental health care through providing information on health topics. This may include control and prevention of chronic or infectious diseases and perinatal health conditions.

Health Navigation

- CHWs can provide training, referrals, or support to assist with:
 - Accessing health care, understanding the health care system, or engaging in your own care.
 - Connecting to community resources such as medical translation/interpretation or transportation services.

Screening and Assessment

- CHWs may provide screening and assessment services that do not require a license, and assist with connecting you to appropriate health services.

Individual Support or Advocacy

- CHWs may assist with preventing the worsening of a health condition, preventing injury or violence prevention, specific to community and gang violence.

To obtain CHW services, please connect with your Provider to receive a written recommendation.





Community Resource Center

L.A. Care Health Plan and Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Community Resource Centers are here to serve you. Enjoy our in-person health and wellness classes that are fun, free and open to everyone. You will have access to a variety of health care and community resources such as health, nutrition and fitness classes.

Please remember you can also participate in free on-demand online classes such as exercise, healthy cooking and more at [youtube.com/activehealthyinformed](https://www.youtube.com/activehealthyinformed). Call **1.877.287.6290** for more information or drop by so that our CRC staff can help you get the services you need!

Building Active, Healthy & Informed Communities

- Free Food Pantries
- Free WiFi for Telehealth Services
- Linkage to Assistance Programs
- Enrollment Support for Medi-Cal and Other Health Coverage Programs



Go Green and Get *Be Well* Electronically!

Would you like to get *Be Well* by email? Please sign up on our website at [lacare.org/be-well](https://www.lacare.org/be-well) to receive it by email. Be sure to like us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Looking for L.A. Care Members to Join the Community Engagement Group!

Do you want to help improve the health care of your family? Would you like to share your thoughts on how L.A. Care can improve health services for its members? If you answered yes, then L.A. Care would like to invite you to join our Community Engagement Group (CEG).

As a CEG member, you will receive information on L.A. Care's programs, trainings on health topics and skills to help you be an advocate for your community. Best of all, you will meet other members who want to make a difference in improving the health care for over 2 million L.A. Care members in L.A. County.

If you are interested or have questions about CEG, please email coeadvisory@lacare.org. For more information, please call the **Community Outreach & Engagement Department** at **1.888.522.2732 (TTY 711)**, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.



Nurse Advice Line Can Help You

Do you have questions about your health? Need medical advice fast? The **Nurse Advice Line** is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Registered nurses will answer your health questions and help you take care of your family. Get tips on avoiding the flu, treating the common cold and so much more.



Use the audio library to listen to recorded messages on many different health topics. Call the L.A. Care **Nurse Advice Line** at **1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711)** or chat with a nurse online free. To access the nurse chat function, go to lacare.org and click on "Member Sign In" to log on.

L.A. Care Works for You

At L.A. Care, we inform, educate, and engage our members. We want to empower YOU to be well and happy with your health care. We reach more than 2 million members through mail, email, phone, websites, newsletters, and even through your doctor!

Let us help you with your health care when and how you need it. Call us at **1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays. Also, visit our website at **lacare.org**.



Important Numbers

Do you have questions about your benefits? Please see the contact information below to get help and answers.



L.A. CARE HEALTH PLAN

L.A. Care Medi-Cal Plan
1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care PASC-SEIU Health Plan
1.844.854.7272 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Medicare Plus
1.833.522.3767 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Community Resource Centers
(Your Centers for Health and Wellness)
1.877.287.6290 (TTY 711)

L.A. Care Covered™
1.855.270.2327 (TTY 711)
Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

L.A. Care Compliance Helpline
(to report fraud or abuse)
1.800.400.4889 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Language/Interpreter Services
1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Nurse Advice Line
(for non-emergency medical advice)
1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

OTHERS

Transportation Services
(No Cost Medi-Ride to the Doctor)
1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Carelon Behavioral Health
1.877.344.2858 (TTY 1.800.735.2929)
beaconhs.com
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

TelaDoc®
1.800.835.2362 (TTY 711)
(Talk to a doctor for urgent care needs)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL 911

