Sweeten Your Life in a Healthy Way!

Spring brings the sweetness of beautiful, warm days, tasty fruits and lovely flowers as the birds and bees get busy doing their work in nature. 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 and your blood sugar levels can add up fast. When using natural sweeteners such as sugar, honey, agave nectar or stevia, less is better. Artificial sweeteners such as aspartame (Equal, NutraSweet), saccharin (Sweet’N Low) or sucralose (Splenda) can help you lower the sugar in your blood, but be careful of the health risks they may cause. Know which sweeteners are safe and do not have negative effects.

Make healthier choices, such as fruits, veggies and whole grains. Check the nutrition label on your food and drinks. Make water your go-to drink. 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!

Having a sweet treat such as candy or pastry once in a while is okay, as long as you balance it by keeping the portions small and make healthier choices daily.
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 called triggers and can make your symptoms worse. Not everyone has the same triggers.

Q: What are some common triggers of asthma?
A: The following are some of the triggers that can cause asthma symptoms to flare up:

- 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 can asthma be treated?
A: Talk with your doctor about your asthma treatment and make a written Asthma Action Plan.

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 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. L.A. Care offers a free program called L.A. Cares About Asthma® to help members keep their asthma under control. To learn more about the program, please call 1.888.200.3094 (TTY 711).
Go Further With Food

March is National Nutrition Month®. This campaign was started in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to raise awareness about the importance of healthy food for good health.

This year’s theme is “Go Further with Food.” Almost 40% of all food in America is thrown away each year. “Go Further with Food” by planning out your meals and snacks one week at a time. This will help you make healthier food choices and save money, too. You also waste less food by cooking only what you will be eating for the week.

Tips for Healthy Eating

1. Include a variety of healthful foods from all of the food groups.

2. Eat the foods you have on hand before buying more at the store.

3. Buy only the amount that can be eaten or frozen within a few days.

4. Plan ways to use leftovers for lunch or dinner later in the week.

5. Pay attention to portion sizes. Eat and drink the amount that’s right for you.

6. Know and use good food safety practices.

L.A. Care Health Plan can help members plan healthy meals and snacks. You can talk to a dietitian on the phone, online through our member portal, or at our Family Resource Centers. Call Member Services today at 1.888.839.9909 to learn more about the programs and services available. It’s time to put your best fork forward!

Keep Your Healthy Smile

Your teeth are important to your health. The following tips can help keep your smile looking great:

- Brush and floss your teeth regularly. Your teeth should be cleaned after each meal, or at least twice a day.

- Avoid sugary foods and drinks. They can destroy the enamel that protects your teeth, sometimes causing the teeth to rot. Limit sugary foods such as cookies, cake, candy and sodas. They are not good for your health and can cause weight gain.

- See a dentist regularly. Your dentist will check your teeth for cavities, tooth damage and gum disease.

Learn About Dental Services

L.A. Care wants to help you keep a healthy smile. To learn more about dental services or to find a dentist near you, please call Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
My Health In Motion™ “Challenges” Starts Soon!

Do you want to start making better health choices but need help getting started?

Give L.A. Care’s My Health In Motion™ online “Challenges” campaign a try! Each week you will get an email through the My Health In Motion™ portal with that week’s health challenge. It will focus on nutrition, exercise, social support, mental health and much more. You will earn an electronic “badge” for completing each challenge.

The portal has tools to help you, such as the Steps Tracker, Food Log, workshops, and recipes. You can even talk to a health coach, dietician or trainer. Get started now by creating an account if you do not already have one. You can access the portal by logging into lacare.org and clicking on the “My Health In Motion™” tab. The “Challenges” campaign starts in April. Please watch for an email coming soon with more details!

If you have questions or need help with My Health In Motion™ call the L.A. Care Health Education Department at 1.855.856.6943.
Let’s Choose Health Together!

The L.A. Care Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are Your Centers for Health and Wellness! Our FRCs are vibrant spaces for the community to come together and learn new skills. The Centers offer health education and exercise classes that are free and open to everyone. You and your family can take CPR, Dance, Healthy Cooking, Yoga, Zumba® classes and much more at your nearest center. L.A. Care members can attend an orientation, request a member ID card, and get help choosing a doctor or making an appointment.

There are five FRCs conveniently located throughout Los Angeles County:

**Boyle Heights**
The Wellness Center at the Old General Hospital
1200 N. State St. Ste., 1069
Los Angeles, CA 90033
Phone: 213.294.2840
Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sat 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**Inglewood**
Corner of Century and Crenshaw
3111 W. Century Blvd. Ste., 106
Inglewood, CA 90303
Phone: 310.330.3130
Mon-Thur 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Fri 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Sat 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Open 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
every 4th Sat

**Lynwood**
In Plaza Mexico
3180 E. Imperial Highway
Lynwood, CA 90262
Phone: 310.661.3000
Mon-Fri 10 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Sat 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Pacoima**
In the Zocalito Plaza
10807 San Fernando Road
Pacoima, CA 91331
Phone: 213.438.5497
Mon-Fri 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Sat 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Palmdale**
In the Towne Square
2072 E. Palmdale Blvd.
Palmdale, CA 93350
Phone: 213.438.5580
Mon-Fri 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Sat 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

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

- John Lubbock
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

Did you know 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 to 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 L.A. Care’s 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. Please remember, if you have a medical emergency and need help right away, dial **911** or go to your nearest emergency room.
What Is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force blood puts on your artery walls as it moves through the body. Your blood pressure changes during the day, depending on what you are doing. If your blood pressure stays high for too long, you have hypertension (or high blood pressure) that can cause health issues.

Know Your Numbers

Normal blood pressure is 120/80. Most times high blood pressure has no signs or symptoms. That is why it’s important to have your doctor check your blood pressure and to know your numbers.

Tips to Manage Blood Pressure

If you have high blood pressure, there are several things you can do:

• Take your blood pressure medicine as your doctor prescribes
• Get your blood pressure medications refilled regularly
• Eat a healthy diet (low salt, low cholesterol)
• Be at the right weight for your body
• Don’t smoke
• Be active (walking, riding a bike, swimming)

L.A. Care offers a free program called L.A. Cares About Your Heart® to help members control their blood pressure and cholesterol. To learn more about the program, please call 1.855.707.7852 (TTY 711).
Getting Connected With L.A. Care’s Formulary

L.A. Care uses a list of covered drugs called a Formulary, which have been reviewed and approved by a team of pharmacists and doctors and is updated monthly. The Formulary, updates, and procedures are on the L.A. Care website at lacare.org. Click on the For Members tab. Under Member Services, select Pharmacy Services and you can check the Formulary to see if your drug is covered. You can get a copy of the Formulary in your language, large print or in audio. For questions about the Formulary, call Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711).

Formulary Restrictions

- Certain covered drugs have restrictions such as Step Therapy (ST), Quantity Limits (QL), and prior authorization (PA). To see a full list and explanation of the restrictions, visit lacare.org.
- If your drug is non-Formulary, or has Formulary restrictions, your doctor will need to submit a request to L.A. Care. The request can be approved if there is a documented medical need.

Where to Pick Up Your Medication

- You can fill your prescription at any pharmacy that partners with L.A. Care. Visit our website to locate one. You can use the mail order pharmacy for drugs used to treat chronic conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. Always follow your doctor’s instructions when you take your medication for safe and effective therapy.

What is a Specialty Pharmacy?

- Some drugs need to be filled at our specialty pharmacies. They handle drugs with special storage needs. These are called “specialty drugs”.
- Specialty drugs are only available for up to a one-month supply.
- Specialty pharmacies that work with L.A. Care are listed on the Formulary.
- Kroger Specialty Pharmacy and Luminera Specialty Pharmacy are the main pharmacies for L.A. Care.

How Do I Use the Formulary?

- Generic drugs are listed by their generic names. The brand name is next to the generic name in CAPITAL letters. If a drug only comes as brand, only the brand name will show.
- Both brand name and generic medications are covered by L.A. Care. When available, FDA approved generics will be used.
- You can search for a brand or generic drug in the Formulary by pressing “Ctrl + F” on your computer, or by using the index on the Formulary page. If you cannot find a drug on the Formulary, it is non-Formulary and not covered unless your doctor submits a request to L.A. Care and the request is approved (see below).
Nurse Advice Line: Available to Help You With Your Health Care Needs

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. You can also use the audio library to learn more about many different health topics. Call 1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711) or chat with a nurse online for free. Please visit lacare.org and log onto the member sign-in to access the nurse chat function.

If you are a Medi-Cal member with one of our Plan Partners, you can call the Nurse Advice Line at:

**Anthem Blue Cross:** 1.800.224.0336 or TTY 1.800.368.4424

**Care1st Health Plan:** 1.800.609.4166 or TTY 1.800.735.2929

**Kaiser Permanente:** 1.888.576.6225

Medical Identity Theft: Protect Yourself!

If someone gets your medical ID or Social Security number, you could become a victim of medical identity theft. Once they have it, they can use it to see the doctor, buy prescription drugs, or submit fake bills in your name. Medical identity theft can also damage your credit rating and harm your health. If false information gets into your medical records, you may get the wrong treatment. Here are some ways to protect yourself against medical identity theft:

• Do not trust strangers who offer free or discounted medical services.

• File paperwork and shred what you do not need.

• Keep your insurance and Social Security numbers safe.

• Never share your information with persons who say they are bill collectors. If they really are bill collectors, they will already have your information.

• Review your medical bills and statements (if any) and/or your Explanation of Benefits. Check for items or services you did not receive. If you see something strange or wrong, call your health care provider.

If you have questions about your bill and/or Explanation of Benefits or think there is a mistake, please call L.A. Care Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711).
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 to receive it by email. Be sure to like us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

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 and member portal at lacare.org.

How Much Do You Know About Asthma?

Match the words to their meanings.

1. Quick Relief_____  
2. Trigger _____  
3. Controller _____  
4. Asthma Action Plan_____  
5. Asthma_______  
6. Inhaler ____

a. Problems breathing due to narrowed airways  
b. A device to take medicine into the lungs  
c. The type of asthma medicine that prevents symptoms  
d. The type of asthma medicine to take if you start having symptoms  
e. Something that can bring on an asthma attack, such as stress, dust or pets  
f. A plan you and your doctor make to help you manage your asthma

ANSWERS:
1. d, 2. e, 3. c, 4. f, 5. a, 6. b
Looking for L.A. Care Members to Join the Community Advisory Committees!

Do you want to learn how the health care system works? Would you like to share your thoughts on how L.A. Care can improve their services?

L.A. Care is looking for people to join the Community Advisory Committees (CACs). As a CAC member, you can help L.A. Care meet the needs of the neighborhoods we serve. Your voice can really make a difference in improving the health care for the over 2 million L.A. Care members in L.A. County!

For more information, please call the Community Outreach & Engagement Department at 1.888.522.2732, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Important Numbers

Do you have questions about your health plan or your benefits? Call your health plan directly or call L.A. Care Health Plan.

L.A. CARE
L.A. Care Health Plan
1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)
PASC-SEIU 1.844.854.7272
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Cal MediConnect
1.888.522.1298
(TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Family Resource Centers
(Your Centers for Health and Wellness)
1.877.287.6290
L.A. Care Covered™
1.855.270.2327

L.A. Care Compliance Helpline
(to report fraud or abuse)
1.800.400.4889
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’s Nurse Advice Line
(for non-emergency medical advice)
1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

MEDI-CAL PLAN PARTNERS
Anthem Blue Cross
1.888.285.7801

Care1st Health Plan
1.800.605.2556
Kaiser Permanente
1.800.464.4000

Plan Partners’ Nurse Advice Lines
(for non-emergency medical advice)
Kaiser: 1.888.576.6225
Care1st: 1.800.609.4166
(TTY 1.800.735.2929)

Anthem Blue Cross: 1.800.224.0336
(TTY 1.800.368.4424)

OTHERS
LogistiCare
(No Cost Medi-Ride to the Doctor)
1.866.529.2141
(Spanish 1.866.529.2142)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL 911
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Health and wellness or prevention information

The benefit information provided is a brief summary, not a complete description of benefits. Limitations, co-payments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits may change on January 1 of each year. To learn more, please call the L.A. Care Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays.

Be Well is a member news publication by L.A. Care for members of L.A. Care’s Health Plan.

If you would like the information contained in this newsletter in another language or another format, please call Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays.

Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Statement

L.A. Care complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

California Department of Managed Health Care

If you have been receiving care from a health care provider, you may have a right to keep your provider for a designated time period. Please contact your HMO’s customer service department, and if you have further questions, you are encouraged to contact the Department of Managed Health Care, which protects HMO consumers, by telephone at its toll-free number: 1.888.880.2219 (1.888.466.2219), or at a TTY number for the hearing impaired at 1.877.688.9891, or online at hmohelp.ca.gov.

California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)

Office of the Ombudsman

For help with Medi-Cal, you may call the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Ombudsman Office at 1.888.452.8609. The Ombudsman Office helps people with Medi-Cal make use of their rights and responsibilities.