



**L.A. Care**  
HEALTH PLAN®

SUMMER 2017

**be**  
*well*

A Publication for L.A. Care Members



## Get Outside For Summer Fun - Let's Get Active!

Regular physical activity can help you live a longer and healthier life. It can also help lower your stress and your risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, and some types of cancer. No matter what shape you are in, you can find activities that work for you, and your schedule. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- Reduce inactive time and increase active time. Take a walk after dinner.
- Schedule specific times for physical activity; make it part of your daily or weekly routine.
- Do things that you enjoy such as dancing, swimming, or water aerobics.
- Enlist your friends or family members to help you with motivation and support.
- Start slowly and work your way up to more physically challenging activities.

The L.A. Care Family Resource Centers offer free health education and exercise classes. Sign up today for Aerobics, Dance, Tai Chi, Yoga and Zumba® classes and much more. For more information call, 1.877.287.6290 (TTY 711) or visit [lacare.org/frc](http://lacare.org/frc). Always talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Enjoy a fun-filled, active summer and get fit at the same time!

Live a healthy lifestyle with...

*ONE workout at a time*

*ONE day at a time*

*ONE meal at a time*

**Chalene Johnson**



# Ask the Doc: Controlling Blood Pressure

## Q: What is high blood pressure?

**A:** Blood pressure is the force blood puts on artery walls as it moves through the body. A blood pressure reading has two numbers, one on top of the other, such as 120/80. The higher number on top is the force of blood when the heart beats. The lower bottom number is when the heart rests between beats.

According to the American Heart Association a **normal blood pressure** is when the top number is between 90 and 120 and the bottom number is between 60 and 80. When blood pressure stays high for too long, it is called hypertension. Untreated hypertension can lead to health conditions such as heart disease and stroke. If you don't know your numbers, ask your doctor at your next visit.

## Q: Who is at risk for high blood pressure?

- A:** You are more likely to have high blood pressure if:
- You have a family history of high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes
  - You are African-American
  - You are over age 55
  - You are overweight or do not exercise
  - You drink too much alcohol
  - You use tobacco
  - You eat foods high in salt

## Q: What does high blood pressure feel like?

**A:** Often high blood pressure has no signs or symptoms. Most people feel fine and don't know they have it until a routine doctor visit. That's why hypertension is called the "silent killer".



## Q: What can I do to control blood pressure?

**A:** You have the power to prevent or control high blood pressure. Lifestyle choices, such as the foods you eat and how much you move your body, make a big difference. Start today!

**Quit smoking.** Talk to your doctor about how to quit for good.

**Eat a heart healthy diet.** Eat more fresh vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Limit salt and sodium.

**Move your body.** Aim for being active at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week.

**Lose weight** if you need to. Losing even a little can make a big difference.

**Limit alcohol.**

**Take medicine** as prescribed by your doctor. Refill your prescriptions on time.

Don't wait until you're sick to make an appointment to see your doctor. Preventive care such as health screenings and vaccinations can help you stay well. You can also call L.A. Care's Health Education Department at 1.855.856.6943 (TTY 711) to find a class near you or to speak to a health coach. For more information on high blood pressure, please visit:

**National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute**

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hbp>

## Nurse Advice Line Can Help You

Start your summer off right by protecting your skin. The skin is our body's largest protective organ and can be easily damaged by sunlight. Sunburn occurs when our skin is overexposed to sunlight. The sun's rays can damage the skin in less than 15 minutes. Sunburn can also occur on cloudy days because the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are strong enough to pass through the clouds. It can lead to skin cancer, regardless of skin color.\*

Get helpful tips about protecting your skin from the sun by calling the Nurse Advice Line at 1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711). Talk to a nurse 24 hours, 7 days a week. You can also chat with a nurse online for free or listen to the audio library to learn more about many different health topics. 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 their 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

# Keep Track of Your Medications While on Vacation

Whether at home or traveling, always take your medications as prescribed by your doctor. The following important tips will help you enjoy your vacation and stay healthy!



- At least a week before leaving, check your prescriptions to be sure you have enough to last through your vacation. If not, have your prescription(s) refilled.
- Make a list of your medications by name, strength, and directions. Do not pack the list in your luggage — keep it with you.
- Even if you use a pill box, keep your medication in the original container until you arrive at your destination. Then you can put them in your pill box.
- Keep your medication in your carry-on bags. If checked luggage is lost or delayed, you will have what you need. Don't miss a dose just because you are in transit.
- If you need to fill a prescription while traveling in the U.S., you can go to the nearest pharmacy and request a vacation supply. The pharmacy will have to call L.A. Care to get an okay to give you a vacation supply. You can get it one time per calendar year.
- If leaving the U.S., be sure your medicine is allowed in the destination country.
- Always travel with your medical insurance card.

To find out more about L.A. Care's list of covered drugs called the Formulary, and monthly Formulary updates, visit the L.A. Care website at [lacare.org](http://lacare.org). You will also find information about: Formulary limits or quotas, generic and brand medications, restriction on medication coverage, medication request process, drug preferences, and how to use the Formulary.

# Immunizations Are for Everyone!

No matter what you call them — immunizations, vaccines, or shots — we all need them at some point in our lives. Infants and small children



need a series of shots starting at birth up until about two years old. School-age children must be up-to-date with their shots before entering kindergarten. California schools are required to check immunization records (yellow card) for new students from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and all students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Immunizations aren't just for the young! It is a good idea for almost everyone six months of age and older to get a flu shot each year. It is especially important for older adults and people with a long-term health condition, such as asthma. The best time of the year to get a flu shot is *before* flu season hits as early as August or September. Older adults should get a pneumonia shot as well.

Don't wait until you're sick to go to the doctor. Seeing the doctor when you're well allows the doctor to focus on *you* rather than your illness. Well visits are a time for preventive care, including age-appropriate vaccinations.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month. It is the perfect time to make sure your children are up-to-date before school starts. It's also a good time to check in with the doctor about your own immunization status. For more information on immunizations and easy-to-read schedules for all ages, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>.



## Did You Know?

Care Management is a free service for all members.

L.A. Care has Care Managers. These are nurses who can help you get the most from your health care plan. They can schedule doctor visits and find transportation to get you there. Care Management staff can also explain your health care benefits and help you understand your medication and health concerns. Plus, they can put you in touch with other resources such as food pantries, low-income housing, and clinics in your area.

Please call Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711), 24 hours, 7 days a week, for more information and free interpreting services in your language or in braille, large print, or audio.

# Pregnancy Cycle of Care

Pregnancy can be one of the most joyous times in a woman's life. Seeing a doctor as soon as you think you're pregnant is an important first step. You, your doctor, and L.A. Care are a team that works together to ensure the health of your baby. Your doctor will assess how you and your baby are doing throughout your pregnancy. Following delivery, close the cycle of care by seeing your doctor in four to six weeks. However, women who have had a C-Section should see their doctor within two weeks after delivery. At this important postpartum visit, your doctor will check to make sure that you are healing well.

L.A. Care's Health Education Unit offers special programs for pregnant members. Through our "Healthy Pregnancy" program, we'll send you information on how to take care of yourself and give you breastfeeding tips. We can also help you make your first prenatal care appointment. Our "Healthy Mom" program encourages women who have recently given birth to *make and keep* their post-partum appointment. To learn more about these programs call Lidia Palomarez, Women's Health Coach at 1.213.694.1250, ext. 4408.



## How Long Should I Wait for My Appointment?

Your health is our top priority. We want to make sure you can get care when you need it. Here's what to expect when you request an appointment.

Appointment type	Appointment offered within
<b>Routine Primary Care</b> Checkup or follow-up	10 business days or less
<b>Urgent Care</b> For conditions that need attention quickly but are not life-threatening	48 hours or less
<b>Emergency Care</b> For life-threatening conditions that need care right away	Immediate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
<b>First Prenatal Visit</b> Checkup for pregnant women (You don't need a referral)	2 weeks or less
<b>Routine Specialty Care</b> If your Primary Care Provider (PCP) wants you to see an expert in one part of the body or type of illness, called a Specialist. Your PCP must ask for approval before you see a specialist (this is called a referral).	15 business days or less

**Please remember to call your doctor's office if you can't make it to your appointment.**

If you are having trouble making an appointment or if you have questions, please call Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays.

# Do You Need Help Getting Care in Your Language?

You have the right to receive no-cost interpreting services, including American Sign Language. L.A. Care provides these services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is important to use a professional interpreter at your medical appointment. You should not use friends, family, or children to interpret for you, except in an emergency.

**How to Access Interpreting Services** - call Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711).

For in-person interpreting services, please tell us:

- Who:** Is the appointment for you, or for your child?
- What:** What kind of doctor are you seeing? Do you want a male or female interpreter?
- When:** What time is your appointment? When do you want the interpreter to be there?
- Where:** Where is your appointment? What is the address? Is there a specific building?
- Why:** What is this appointment for? Follow up? Consultation? Medical Visit?

Offering interpreting services is one way L.A. Care makes sure you understand your health and your doctor. Remember to call Member Services at least 10 business days prior to your appointment!



# 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 your 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.



# Let's Choose Health Together!



## Family Resource Centers

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)**
- **Inglewood (Corner of Century & Crenshaw)**
- **Lynwood (Plaza Mexico)**
- **Pacoima (Corner of San Fernando Rd. & Van Nuys)**
- **Palmdale (New! Towne Square Center)**

Visit an L.A. Care Family Resource Center today or view the calendar of activities on our website at [lacare.org/frc](http://lacare.org/frc) or for more information, call 1.877.287.6290.

# 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](http://lacare.org).



## Medical Identity Theft: Protect Yourself!

You could become a victim of medical identity theft if someone gets your medical ID or Social Security number. 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 Explanations 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).



## Learn About Your Coverage

When you first join L.A. Care, and then every year after, you will get a package of important information about your health care coverage. Please read it and call us if you have any questions. You can visit L.A. Care's website at [lacare.org](http://lacare.org) for the information listed below and more:

### Basic Information

- What benefits and services *are* covered
- What benefits and services *are not* covered
- How your health plan makes decisions about when new treatments will become benefits
- What care you can and cannot get when you are out of Los Angeles County or the L.A. Care network
- How to access care when you are out of Los Angeles County
- How to change or get care from your primary care physician (PCP)
- How to get information about doctors
- How to get a referral for specialty care, behavioral healthcare services or to go to the hospital
- What to do when you need care right away or when the office is closed
- What to do if you have an emergency
- How to get prescriptions filled, other pharmacy program information and updates
- Co-payments and other charges
- What to do if you get a bill
- How to keep you and your family healthy guide
- How your health plan evaluates new technology to decide if it should be a covered benefit

### Special Programs

L.A. Care has the following special programs:

- **Quality Improvement Programs** to tell us how we can improve quality of care, safety and services for our members. These programs tell us how to measure our progress so that we can meet our goals and provide quality services and decide what we may need to change
- **Care Management Programs** for members who have difficult medical problems
- **Programs to better manage diseases**, like diabetes and/or asthma

### How Decisions Are Made About Your Care

- How our doctors and staff make decisions about your care based only on need and benefits. We do not encourage doctors to provide less care than you need and doctors are not paid to deny care.
- How to reach us if you want to know more about how decisions are made about your care
- How to appeal a decision about your care

### Member Issues

- Your rights and responsibilities as a health plan member
- How to complain when you are unhappy
- What to do if you are disenrolled from your plan
- How L.A. Care protects and uses your personal health information
- How to get help if you speak a different language

If you would like paper copies, please call Member Services at 1.888.839.9909 (711 TTY), open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays.



# Getting Connected with L.A. Care's Formulary

L.A. Care uses a list of covered drugs called a Formulary. The drugs on the Formulary 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](http://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).



## 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).

## 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](http://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.

## Go green and get *Be Well* electronically!

Would you like to get *Be Well* by email? Please send your email address to [editor@lacare.org](mailto:editor@lacare.org). Be sure to like us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.



## 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 1.888.212.4460)

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)

Anthem Blue Cross: 1.800.224.0336

(TTY 1.800.368.4424)

Care1st: 1.800.609.4166

(TTY 1.800.735.2929)

Kaiser: 1.888.576.6225

#### 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

