

Spring Has Sprung! May Is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

Did you know that regular physical activity increases your chances of living a longer, healthier life? It can also help improve your mental health and reduce your risk for high blood pressure, heart disease and some types of cancer.

Physical activity is for everyone. No matter what shape you are in or your age, you can find activities that work for you. Here are some tips to help you improve your health:

- Reduce sedentary time and increase active time. For example, you can take a walk after dinner instead of being on the computer, social media or sitting and watching TV.
- Schedule specific times for physical activity. Make it part of your daily or weekly routine.
- Do an activity or sport that you enjoy. Some people might like running in their neighborhood in the mornings; others might prefer walking or doing an exercise class virtually in their home.
- Enlist your friends and/or family members to help you with motivation and support.
- Start slowly and work your way up to more challenging activities. For many people, walking is a good activity to start with. Consult with your doctor before starting any exercise program.



Together, we can improve our health during the month of May and throughout the year!

Sources: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov); [healthfinder.gov](https://www.healthfinder.gov)

L.A. Care and Blue Shield Community Resource Centers are offering free, on-demand virtual classes – fitness, healthy cooking and mental health support at [youtube.com/activehealthyinformed](https://www.youtube.com/activehealthyinformed).





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.

Message From L.A. Care's Chief Medical Officer

The COVID-19 Vaccine is the Best Way to Stop the Spread



Richard Seidman, M.D.

COVID-19 infection, hospitalization and death rates have reached alarming levels in Los Angeles County. Despite this, many started the New Year feeling hopeful after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued authorization for the use of COVID-19 vaccines developed by Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson.

While many are eager to be vaccinated against COVID-19, some are still unsure about the vaccine's safety. The FDA granted authorization for the vaccines because they were proven safe and effective after large clinical trials with more than 70,000 participants.

By January 2021, almost nine million people in the United States were vaccinated against COVID-19, giving us a chance to see the impact of the vaccines on a large portion of the population. We are now seeing first hand that the vaccines are safe.

Public health agencies and L.A. Care recommend that everyone who is eligible get the vaccine. It is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones. The vaccine is available in phases, with priority given to high-risk health workers, first responders, those at increased risk of serious illness, and essential workers. It will soon become available for members who do not fall into these categories.

L.A. Care members will be able to receive the vaccine at a variety of pharmacies, community vaccination sites and participating doctor's offices and clinics. An appointment will be required. There is no cost to L.A. Care members to receive the vaccine.

Once vaccinated, it is important to continue taking the basic precautions of washing your hands, wearing a mask, and keeping your distance, to ensure we stop the spread of COVID-19.

For updates on the availability of the vaccine, please visit lacare.org/vaccine. If you are in need of support or resources during this time, please visit communitylink.lacare.org.

Coping With COVID Fatigue

Did the Safer-At-Home Order have you feeling sad, frustrated, stressed or depressed? You are not alone. After many months of staying at home, limiting our movement in the world and doing our best to minimize interactions with family and friends, it is perfectly normal to feel this way. There is even a phrase created to describe these feelings, COVID Fatigue. It is another way of saying tired and emotionally exhausted due to the pandemic.

Socially distanced restrictions can create feelings of isolation and anxiety. After all, we benefit emotionally, mentally and physically from social interactions with others. Do not be hard on yourself. Talking to a family member, clergy or a **Beacon Health Options** mental health professional at **1.877.344.2858** (TTY **1.800.735.2929**) may help you to express your feelings.

While we wait for life to return to “normal,” here are a few tips and healthy ways to help you cope with the pandemic.

Exercise: Wear a mask and run, walk or jog outdoors at a park or around your neighborhood. If you belong to a gym, see if they have virtual classes. The L.A. Care and Blue Shield Community Resource Centers are offering free, on-demand virtual classes – including fitness, healthy cooking and mental health support at [youtube.com/activehealthyinformed](https://www.youtube.com/activehealthyinformed).

Connect With Others: Social distancing from loved ones can be difficult, but we live in the best possible time to do so safely. Technology can help us stay connected with FaceTime interactions from home on our computer or laptops, smartphone or other devices. Find other ways to interact, through online platforms like Zoom or social media. Happiness, purpose and belonging are just some of the benefits from maintaining an active social connection.

Eat healthy, well-balanced meals: Your body and brain function best when they receive healthy foods that contain a balance of vitamins and minerals. Be sure to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and lean proteins such as chicken and turkey. Stay hydrated by drinking lots of water and limit sugary drinks and fatty, fried foods.



Mental Health Access

L.A. Care provides mental health and substance use disorder services through your Primary Care Physician (PCP), Behavioral Health Specialists from Beacon Health Services, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH), and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH).

Beacon Health Options provides services for mild and moderate mental illness. L.A. Care members may contact the Beacon Health Call Center at **1.877.344.2858**. You **do not** need a referral from your primary care provider. Members are connected to a mental health provider (non-physician) within 10 business days of request for services.

Benefits may include:

- Individual and group mental health evaluation and treatment (psychotherapy)
- Psychological testing (referral required)
- Medication support services for monitoring drug therapy and psychiatric consultation, as needed
- Outpatient laboratory, drugs, supplies, and supplements

Treatment services for substance abuse and for severe mental illness are provided by the Los Angeles County system of care.

- Substance abuse is treated by DPH, which can be reached at **1.844.804.7500**.
- Serious mental illness is treated by DMH, which can be reached at **1.800.854.7771**.

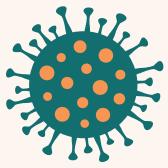


See the Benefit Descriptions section of your L.A. Care Member Handbook to learn more about Mental Health Services.



Go Green and Get *Live Well* electronically!

Would you like to get *Live Well* by email? Please sign up on our website at **lacare.org/live-well** to receive it by email. Be sure to like us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

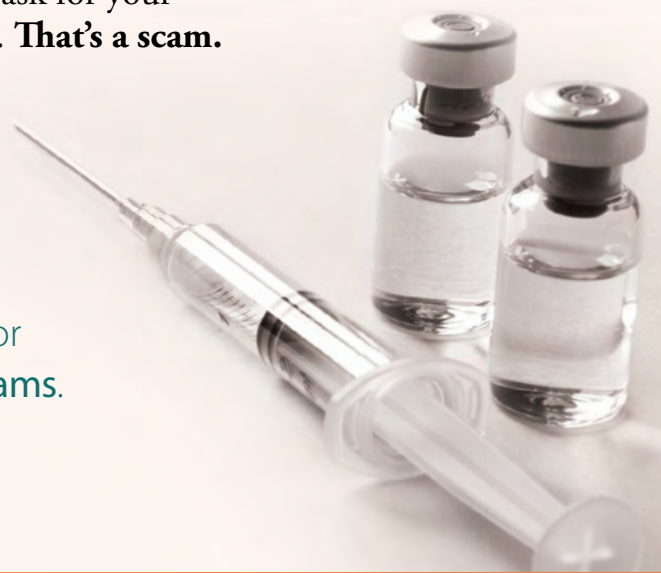


Three Ways to Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine Scams

While vaccination details are being worked out, here's what you can be sure of:

- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine. **That's a scam.**
- You can't pay to get early access to the vaccine. **That's a scam.**
- No legitimate agency will call about the vaccine and ask for your Social Security, bank account, or credit card number. **That's a scam.**

Ignore any vaccine offers that say different, or ask for personal or financial information. Learn more at: www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams or consumerresources.org/beware-coronavirus-scams.



Wear a Mask.
Stop the Spread.

Health Services

L.A. Care Health Plan is committed to providing programs and services to help members live a healthier life. Visit our website at lacare.org to learn about wellness programs, activities and resources to manage your health.

Diabetes Prevention Program Now Available on a Digital App

Great news! You can now join the L.A. Care Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) from your phone. L.A. Care has partnered with Solera Health to offer this program using a digital app.

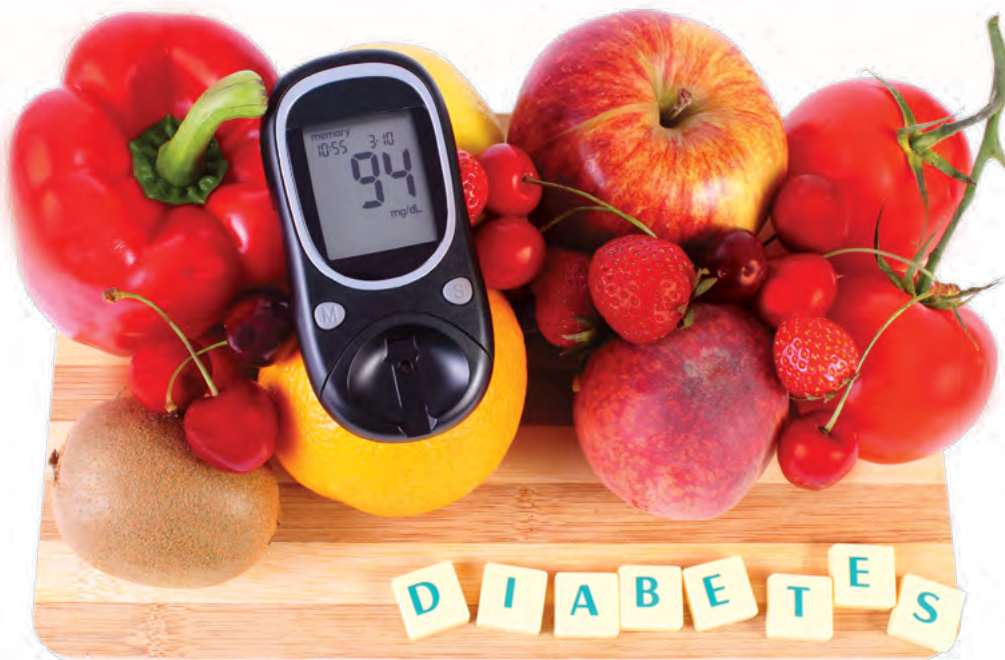
The partnership is a one-year program that will help you make small changes to your food choices and exercise level. It can have a great impact on your health and help prevent diabetes. You will have access to a health coach to help you.

After four weeks in the program, you can get a free Fitbit to help you track your exercise.

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 a blood test in the prediabetes range or have had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)

To learn more, go to solera4me.com/lacare or call **1.866.690.6202** | TTY 711, Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m.





Community Resource Center

Food Pantry Events Continue

In 2020, our Community Resource Centers hosted a number of free food pantry events across Los Angeles County. Based on the large turnout, it was clear that the COVID-19 pandemic increased the community's need for food resources. While the COVID-19 vaccine has created hope for the end of the pandemic, we know far too many are still feeling financial hardships caused by it. That is why L.A. Care and Blue Shield Promise are bringing back drive-thru food distribution events in 2021. To learn when a free food pantry event is happening near you, visit **activehealthyinformed.org** for details – and help us spread the word!

New Community Resource Center Opens in Wilmington

We are excited to share that a brand new Community Resource Center will open its doors soon in Wilmington, located in the Harbor region of Los Angeles! The resource center will be the sixth one as part of the collaboration between L.A. Care and Blue Shield Promise. Our goals are to address social needs and improve health outcomes for members and the entire community. Due to the ongoing pandemic, select services will be offered by appointment only. To learn more about the Community Resource Centers, including how to make an appointment, visit **activehealthyinformed.org**.



Remember you can enjoy free on-demand classes such as exercise, healthy cooking and more at **youtube.com/activehealthyinformed**.

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

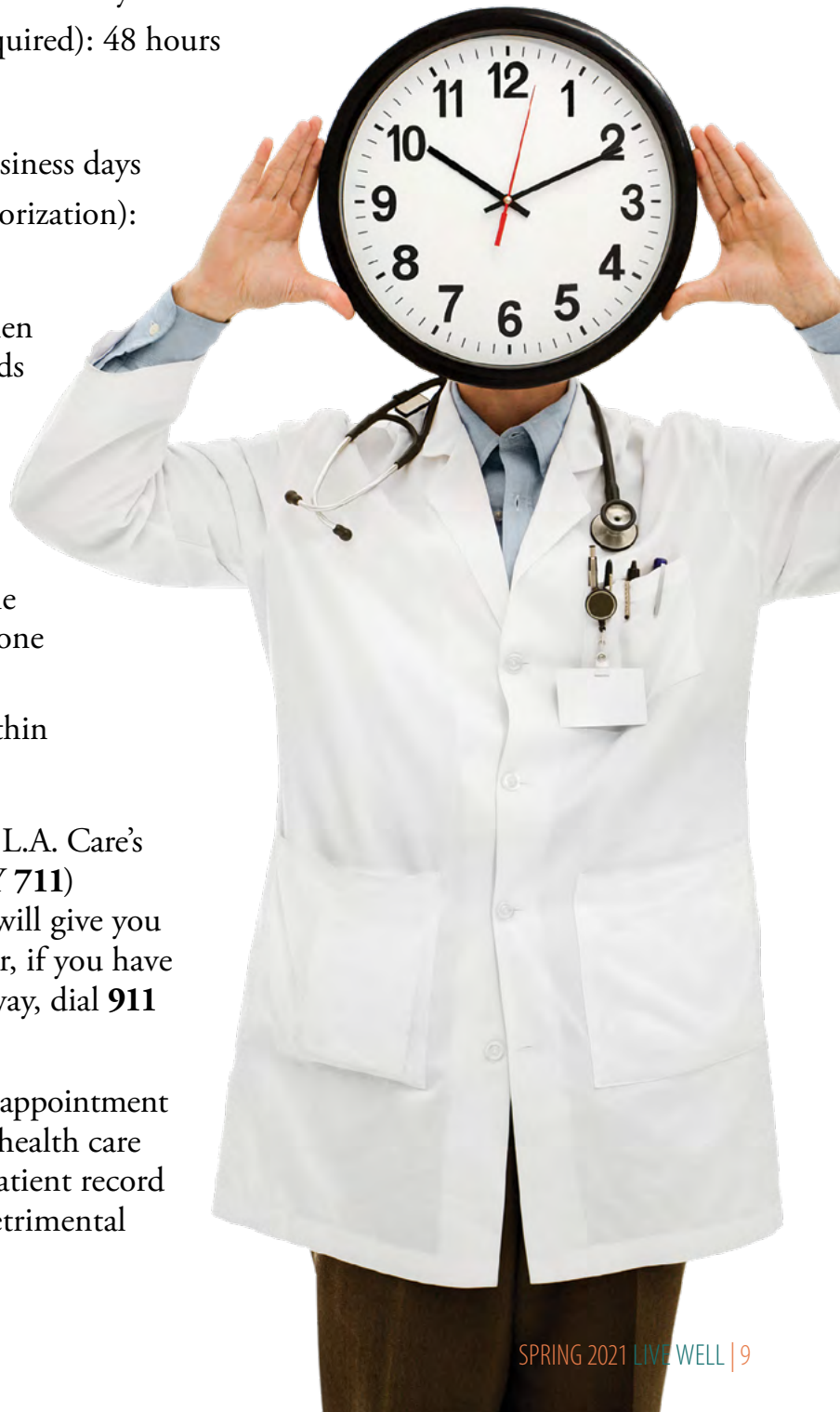
- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 15 business days
- Urgent appointment (requiring prior authorization): 96 hours

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. 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.



Pharmacy News

Prescription Drugs Listed on the L.A. Care Website

To find out more about the L.A. Care list of covered drugs called the Formulary, and monthly updates, visit the L.A. Care website at **lacare.org**. You will also find information about limits or quotas, generic and brand medications, restrictions, on medication coverage, the medication request process, drug preferences and procedures on how to use the Formulary.

Call **1.888.839.9909**
for questions about your
pharmacy benefits.



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 (TTY 711)**, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.



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 **1.888.522.1298** (TTY 711) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays. Also, visit our website and member portal at **lacare.org**.



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 for free. To access the nurse chat function, go to **lacare.org** and click on “Member Sign In” to log on.



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)

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 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 (TTY 711)

L.A. Care Covered™

1.855.270.2327 (TTY 711)

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'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

OTHERS

Transportation Services

(No Cost Medi-Ride to the Doctor)

1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)

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



