

WHOLE you

2023 Fall Bulletin

Flu Prevention

It is that time of year.

Fall means seasonal flu is on its way, and with it can come millions of sick people and tens of thousands of deaths. Some of the people most at risk for the flu are those 65 and older, pregnant women and people with medical problems like asthma, diabetes, heart or lung disease, HIV, hepatitis, and cancer. Here are some steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- Get your flu shot. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine.
- If you cough or sneeze, always cover your mouth. Try to cough into your sleeve or use a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with alcohol in it.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- If you or someone else is sick, keep your distance.
- If you are sick, stay home from work, school or errands.
- Keep things around you clean too — especially places you touch a lot (like doorknobs and counters).

At work and at school:

- At your work and your child's school or childcare, ask about their plan for when there is a flu outbreak, and ask if they offer flu vaccines on-site.
- Make sure they keep up with cleaning things that get touched a lot (like doorknobs, keyboards and phones).
- Make sure they have a good supply of tissues, soap, paper towels, hand sanitizers and wipes.
- Ask how sick students and staff are kept away from others and about the absence policy for sick students, staff and workers.
- If you start to feel sick at work, go home as soon as you can.

MEDICAID RENEWAL

Do not forget about your Medicaid redetermination. It is the eligibility process you must go through to keep your Medicaid coverage. You will get a notice from the state about the steps you need to take to renew your coverage. (You may not need to do anything at all.) You can also visit [Access Nebraska](#) to see if you still qualify for Medicaid. If you no longer qualify, our [Ambetter](#) plans may be an option.



WHOLE you

Are you at risk for diabetes?

Diabetes and prediabetes are serious health conditions. Let's take a look at your risks and what to do if you think you might have one of these conditions.



ABOUT PREDIABETES: More than 1 out of 3 American adults have prediabetes, which means your blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes. Prediabetes is a warning that you are at an increased risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Symptoms are not always obvious, and 90% of people with prediabetes do not know they have it. The good news is that a simple blood sugar test can tell you. Get the test if you have any of these risk factors:

- Being overweight
- Being 45 years or older
- Having a parent, brother or sister with Type 2 diabetes
- Physically active less than three times a week
- Having gestational diabetes during pregnancy
- Giving birth to a baby weighing over 9 pounds
- Having polycystic ovary syndrome
- African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, and some Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans are at particularly high risk for Type 2 diabetes.

If you have any of these risk factors, call your doctor to schedule a prediabetes screening.

ABOUT DIABETES: Diabetes affects the way your body turns food into energy. When you eat, your body breaks down the food into sugar and sends it into your blood. That signals your pancreas to release insulin, which lets the sugar into your cells so they can use it for energy. With diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or has trouble using it. That means too much sugar stays in your blood, and that can cause problems like heart disease, blindness, kidney disease and more. While there is no cure for diabetes, losing weight, healthy eating and exercise can help. It's also important to take any medicine your doctor prescribes and keep all your doctor's appointments.

PREVENTING DIABETES: Here are some things you can do to prevent diabetes as well as ways you can take care of yourself if you know you have it.

KNOW THE SIGNS.

Some signs of diabetes are being unusually thirsty, weight gain or loss, changes in vision, or having to urinate often. If you think you any of these have symptoms, call your doctor for a checkup.

EAT HEALTHY.

Healthy high-protein foods like salmon, sardines, pumpkin seeds, peanuts and almonds can help your blood sugar, while things like bread, sweet cereals and pasta can send your blood sugar levels up.

DRINK SMART.

If you have a lot of sweet, caffeinated drinks during the day, try switching just one of them for water. Then try switching two. If you put cream or whole milk in your coffee and cereal, start mixing it with 1% milk so you can slowly switch to 1% and then skim. And whole fruits are always better than fruit juice.

MOVE.

Exercise helps keep your blood glucose and blood pressure healthy — all good for weight loss and lowering your diabetes risk. Talk to your doctor before starting any new exercise plan.

WATCH YOUR WEIGHT.

If you're overweight, you can reduce your risk for diabetes by losing just 5% of your body weight. So make a plan with your doctor to help lower your diabetes risk.

Make an appointment today to talk with your doctor about your risk for diabetes.



TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS

Can we give you a lift?

Did you know you may be able to get non-emergency transportation benefits?

Getting to the care you need is important. So along with your Nebraska Total Care Medicaid benefits, you may also be able to get non-emergency transportation. That means we will get you no-cost rides to checkups and other medical visits. We can also get you rides to the drugstore and programs and services near you. You may also be able to get a monthly bus pass.

Our transportation program offers you:

- One round-trip service each month within your county.
- 4 visits each year to the YMCA or other community organizations.
- You may be able to get extra transportation benefits like social transportation: Three round trips each year for waiver members to go to nearby events and activities.

Call Member Services at 1-844-385-2192 (TTY 711) or visit our website at NebraskaTotalCare.com to learn more and see if you qualify for these services.



Bug bite remedies

Taking the sting out of bug bites.

As you enjoy the last days of summer, remember, there are still bugs out there. And while most bites are harmless, some bugs can spread bad things like Lyme disease. The best thing to do is keep bites from happening in the first place. You can do this by using bug spray or cream with at least 20% DEET on skin and clothing. Some bugs can bite through your clothes.

You can also use 0.5% permethrin to treat clothing and gear like boots, pants, socks and tents. Do not use this right on your skin. Instead, put it on your clothing and let it dry for at least two hours. The package will give you complete instructions. When you are out at night or hiking through woods, cover your skin as much as you can with long-sleeved shirts,

pants, socks and shoes rather than sandals. And if you have a young one in a stroller, put mosquito netting over the stroller.

If you do get bitten, here is what to do:

- If it hurts, like a bee sting, take acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Follow the directions on the label.
- If it itches, put an ice pack on it, or use an anti-itch cream like hydrocortisone. You can also take an antihistamine tablet (get these from your local drugstore).
- If it is swollen, put an ice pack on it.
- If you get a rash, fever or body aches, this can be serious. You need to call your doctor, urgent care or a dermatologist right away and let them know about your recent bug bite.



HPV vaccine is cancer protection for your kids.

THE HPV VACCINE IS SUGGESTED FOR ADOLESCENTS AGES 9-12 YEARS OLD. IT PROTECTS AGAINST OVER 90% OF CANCERS CAUSED BY THE VIRUS. CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST TO SCHEDULE THE 1ST DOSE!

Questions?

1-844-385-2192

*Member Services
can help.*

HPV vaccine facts:



Complete the vaccine series (2-3 shots) before the age of 13. This ensures adolescents are protected before they are exposed to the virus.



4 out of 5 people will get HPV in their lives. HPV is passed from person to person through contact with infected skin.



HPV vaccine protects against over 90% of HPV cancers. It may help prevent genital warts, cancer causing infections and cervical precancers.



24/7 MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE CRISIS LINE

If you have a mental illness or addiction crisis, do not wait to get help. Call us any time at 1-844-385-2192 (TTY 711). Press * to talk to a licensed professional. They can help with depression, substance use and other behavioral health needs.

Ask Me 3®

Unfortunately, most people have a hard time understanding words used in health care. You may have never heard the words before. Or, words you know are being used in a new way. This can make it hard to make decisions about your health.

Ask Me 3® is a way to ask questions to help you understand what your provider is telling you. This will help you make decisions about care.

Ask your provider these questions at every appointment.

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

Do not be nervous to ask your provider questions. Your provider wants you to understand your healthcare. They want to answer these questions.

There is more information for you from Ask Me 3®. Every time you talk with a health care provider [Ask These 3 Questions \(PDF\)](#). You can take this form to your appointments to help you ask questions.

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Advance Directives

An Advance Directive tells people what you want if you cannot make your own decisions. If you have a medical emergency and cannot communicate what you need, your doctors will already know. An Advance Directive will not take away your right to make your own decisions.

TYPES OF ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

Healthcare Power of Attorney: names someone who is allowed to make healthcare decisions for you if you are no longer able to communicate what you want. This can be for physical health and mental health. In Nebraska, a Power of Attorney for Health Care can be designated using the [Power of Attorney for Health Care form \(PDF\)](#).

Living Will: tells doctors what kind of medical care you want to receive (or not receive) if you are no longer able to communicate what you want. This lets you decide ahead of time which life-prolonging treatments you would want or not want. This could include:

- Feeding tubes
- Breathing machines
- Organ transplants
- Treatments to make you comfortable.

A living will is only used when you are near the end of life and there is no hope for you to recovery.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order: tells healthcare providers not to give CPR if your heart and/or breathing stop. A DNR order is only about CPR. It does not provide instructions about other treatments.

Visit our website & secure member portal

Visit [NebraskaTotalCare.com](https://www.NebraskaTotalCare.com) to create a member portal account. You can use it to:

- Complete your Health Risk Screening
- Complete your Notice of Pregnancy form (NOP)
- Change your primary care provider (PCP)
- Update your personal information
- Print a temporary member ID card
- Find pharmacy benefit information
- Send Nebraska Total Care a message
- See claims and authorization approvals
- Check rewards card balance and more!

Call Member Services

Call 1-844-385-2192 (TTY 711). Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Central. We can help you:

- Find a doctor or change your primary care provider (PCP)
- Get a new Nebraska Total Care ID card
- Understand your benefits
- Change your address and phone number
- Get translation help for medical appointments
- Get transportation to your appointments
- Get a paper copy of anything on our website

You can see authorization approvals on our [Secure Member Portal](#).

