

WHOLE you

2026 | Q2 BULLETIN



Brightside Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health refers to mental health and substance use (alcohol and drug). Just like physical health, we all have to take care of our mental health to feel good.



Nebraska Total Care Health & Wellness Resources

Recovery and Resiliency

Building recovery and resiliency skills will help you overcome difficulties. This will give you power in your own life. It will help you have feelings of belonging, self-esteem, meaning, and hope.

Recovery is a process of making changes that improve your health and quality of life.

Resiliency is being able to bounce back when there are challenges in your life.

There are things that can help you create resiliency.

- **Know your strengths.** Give yourself grace! Use your strengths when things are hard.
- **Build relationships.** Connect with loved ones and friends. Connect with providers who can provide support and develop healthy relationships.
- **Find your purpose.** Knowing our purpose gives us reasons to focus on our health. It might be spiritual, helping others, or being with people we love.
- **Accept the highs and lows.** Celebrate your success and be kind to yourself when you struggle.

Even with recovery and resiliency skills, we can still

need help. When you need extra help, call Brightside or Nebraska Total Care. We can give you support to avoid a crisis.

How do you know if you need help?

- Upset stomach
- Daily life feels overwhelming.
- You feel hopeless.
- You have strange thoughts, like hearing or seeing things others do not.
- You think about hurting yourself.
- You cannot stop using alcohol or other drugs, even though they are hurting you

You do not have to wait for an emergency to get help. Use the QR codes or call us. Helping you be healthy is our most important goal.

 **Brightside Health**



415-360-3348 Brightside.com/NETotalcare

Healthy Habits During Your Period



Menstruation is often called a “period”. Menstrual hygiene is important for your health. It can help prevent infections, reduce odors, and keep you comfortable during your period. These hygiene practices can help you stay healthy and comfortable during your period:

- **Wear lightweight, breathable clothing** such as cotton underwear. Tight fabrics can trap moisture and heat, allowing germs to grow.
- **Change your menstrual products regularly.** Trapped moisture provides a breeding ground for bacteria and fungus. Wearing a pad or period underwear for too long can lead to a rash or an infection.
- **Keep your genital area clean.** Wash the outside of your genitals and bottom every day. When you go to the bathroom, wipe from the front of your body toward the back. Use only water to rinse.
- **Use unscented toilet paper, tampons, or pads.** Scented products can irritate the skin and impact your natural pH balance.
- **Drink enough liquids.** This can help wash out your urinary tract. It helps prevent infections, like yeast infections.
- **Track and monitor your period.** Your menstrual cycle is a valuable marker for your overall health. Irregular periods can be a sign of conditions like diabetes, thyroid problems, and celiac disease. You can track your period on a calendar. There are also phone apps designed for this purpose.
- **Visit a healthcare provider for your annual check-up.** An annual wellness exam is a full check-up that includes a pap smear, a pelvic exam, and a breast exam. These exams are needed for good reproductive health. They can catch early signs of cancer or other health issues.

USING MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

You can choose many types of menstrual products to absorb or collect blood during your period. These include sanitary pads, tampons, menstrual cups, menstrual discs, and period underwear.

Follow these tips when using menstrual products, in addition to instructions that come with each product:

- **Wash your hands** before and after using the restroom. Wash before and after using a menstrual product.
- **Discard used disposable menstrual products properly:** wrap them with toilet paper, a tissue, or other material and then toss in a trash bin. Do not flush menstrual products down the toilet.
- **Sanitary pads:** Change sanitary pads every few hours, no matter how light the flow. Change them more frequently if your period is heavy.
- **Tampons:** Change tampons every 4 to 8 hours. Do not wear a single tampon for more than 8 hours at a time. Use the lowest-absorbency tampon needed. If you can wear one tampon for up to 8 hours without changing, the absorbency may be too high.
- **Menstrual cups:** Clean cups every day after use. Sanitize menstrual cups after your period is over by rinsing them thoroughly and then placing them in boiling water for one to two minutes.
- **Period underwear:** Most reusable period underwear is machine washable. Follow product directions on the best way to clean.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control



WELL-WOMAN EXAMS

Your annual wellness exam is a covered benefit. This includes a full check-up, pap smear, pelvic exam, and a breast exam. Due for your exam? Call your provider to schedule your visit.

Allergy Season is Back

Allergy season is back.

When you have allergies, spring can be a mixed bag. Mild weather...yay. Pollen and allergens that make you sneeze and your eyes water...not so much. Try these tips to get a little relief and make it through allergy season more comfortably!

1 ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT A TEST.

Allergy testing has come a long way in the past decade. Find out what specific triggers your body responds to.

2 STAY IN TO WIN.

Allergens thrive in windy, dry weather. Use this as an excuse to stay inside more this season. Get cozy with a book or TV show!

3 WHAT IS THE INDEX?

Most TV stations broadcast allergy forecasts during weather segments. There are also websites and apps that can alert you to conditions in your area.

4 BREATHE EASIER INSIDE.

Crank up the AC instead of using window ventilation.

5 FILTER OUT THE BAD.

Change air filters regularly for the best quality air flow. Keep your carpets and floors clean and dust-free.



6 CLEANLINESS IS POWER.

Take a bath or shower before going to bed to keep your sheets allergen-free.

7 DIET MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Keep an eye on your food intake. Certain foods like sugars, wheat and dairy can make your allergies worse. Take note of symptoms like nausea, headache, dizziness or an itchy throat after eating. Drink plenty of water to flush and hydrate your system.

Now you have got the tools that will help you beat your allergies this season!

Teeth Need Extra Care During Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time when your oral health needs more attention. Hormone changes during pregnancy can cause problems with teeth and gums. And they can make treatment more complicated.

HOW PREGNANCY AFFECTS ORAL HEALTH

Hormone changes in pregnancy can cause swollen, bleeding, and irritated gums. This is called gingivitis. Your gums may be very sore. Brushing and flossing may cause discomfort. If not treated, gingivitis can lead to a more serious gum disease called periodontitis. Severe periodontitis can lead to tooth loss.

Some pregnant women also have small bright-red growths on their gums that bleed easily. These are often called “pregnancy tumors.” They are not cancer. They usually go away right after birth. Talk with your dentist or healthcare provider if you have concerns.

KEEPING A HEALTHY MOUTH

- Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste. Floss at least once a day.
- If you have frequent morning sickness, rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda mixed with

water after vomiting. This is to stop the stomach acid from attacking teeth. Do not brush your teeth right after vomiting. This can remove tooth enamel.



- See your dentist for cleanings and checkups more often if needed. This is especially true in your second and third trimesters.
- Ask your dentist or healthcare provider if you should use a special mouth rinse to help prevent gingivitis.
- Tell your dentist or healthcare provider about any changes in your mouth, such as soreness or bleeding.

SAFETY CONCERNS

Make sure to tell your dentist that you are pregnant. He or she can help you stay safe. If you need to have dental X-rays during pregnancy, you will be fully protected by wearing a lead apron over your belly during the X-ray process. The apron helps block radiation from the X-rays.

If you need to take medicines like antibiotics or pain relievers for dental problems, ask your healthcare providers first. They will talk with you about the risks and benefits of taking these during pregnancy.

If you have a high-risk pregnancy, your dentist and your healthcare provider may advise you that some dental treatments should wait until after you give birth.

Find member handbooks and forms online

WHO HAS TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING HEALTH INFO?

Most adults in the U.S. have a hard time understanding health information. Only 1 out of 10 adults who speak English well can understand health information easily. The rest have some trouble, and many have a lot of trouble.

People with Medicaid often struggle the most. About 6 out of 10 people with Medicaid have very low health understanding.

It can be hard for people with low health literacy to use the health care system. For some, it's a little hard. For others, it's very hard.

People who may have the most trouble include:

- Adults who are 65 years or older
- People with low income, less education, or who live in poor areas
- People who are Latino, Black, or American Indian/Alaska Native
- People who do not speak English well or who learned English as a second language
- People who have Medicaid, Medicare, or no health insurance

Ask questions about your health. Ask your doctor to explain it in simple terms. If you are confused by test results, call the clinic. Do not be afraid to speak up.

Source: Center for Health Care Strategies

Ask Me 3[®]

Nebraska Total Health care works best when patients and doctors work together to make decisions. You know how you feel better than anyone else. You should help decide what might make you feel better.

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.

If you still need help understanding your health, please call Member Services. We have people who can help you. The phone number is 1-844-385-2192 (TTY 711).

Transportation

THE EASY WAY TO BOOK RIDES!

You may be able to get transportation for your non-emergency medical appointments. If you are eligible, rides are free. Nebraska Total Care works with MTM, Inc. to provide transportation.

Schedule Rides with MTM. You can schedule more than one ride. Please schedule your ride at least 2 working days before your appointment. You can schedule a ride up to 60 days before your appointment. Sometimes urgent medical trips can be requested with less than 2 days' notice. MTM may check with your provider to make sure the appointment is urgent.

To schedule transportation:

- Use the [MTM scheduling portal](#).
- Download the [MTM Link app](#) on your mobile device.

Need help? If you do not have access to online tools you can call MTM. The phone number is 1-844-261-7834. You can schedule more than one ride.



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, 8 a.m. to 5 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](#).

