



# LifeTimes™

Fall 2023

## Your guide to **lifelong health**

Health and wellness or prevention information



## Know where to go when you need care

**Below are recommendations for who to call when you are not feeling well.**

If you need health advice, our registered nurses are on call to answer your questions, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

24-Hour Nurseline: **1-844-971-8906** (TTY **711**)

24/7 Behavioral Health Services Hotline:  
**1-800-327-7390** (TTY **1-800-735-2988**)

### **Doctor's/Counselor's Office**

Your doctor is the best person to treat illnesses and health concerns that are not emergencies or immediately life-threatening.

Visit your doctor for:

- Check-ups or physicals
- Ear or sinus pain
- Eating disorders
- Feeling sad or lonely
- Medication refills or changes
- Sore throat
- Stomach ache
- Struggling with an addiction
- Vitals (body temperature, blood pressure, pulse and breathing rate)

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*LifeTimes* is published for BCBSTX STAR members. Each issue brings you news about your health plan and staying healthy, along with important phone numbers for you to keep. If you have questions or need help, call the Customer Advocate Department. Articles in *LifeTimes* are meant to educate. They are not meant as medical advice. Please check with your doctor for any advice about your health.

BCBSTX makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding third-party vendors and the products and services offered by them.

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**Urgent Care**

When you need to go to an urgent care facility or emergency room, follow up with your doctor after the visit. Reasons for urgent care visits include:

- Back pain
- Burning with urination
- Asthma with constant wheezing not resolved with your inhaler
- Minor fractures
- Pink eye
- Cuts that need stitches
- Flu or cold-like symptoms
- Rash without fever

**Emergency Visit**

If you have an emergency, call **911** immediately. Emergencies include:

- Stroke (sudden weakness of one side, slurring of speech, trouble swallowing, blurred vision)
- Shortness of breath or severe trouble breathing
- Severe vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Drug or alcohol overdose
- Severe injuries, broken bones
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Chest pain
- Having thoughts of harming self or others

**Helpful Toll-Free Phone Numbers**

|                                    |                       |                               |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Behavioral Health Services Hotline | <b>1-800-327-7390</b> | (TTY: <b>1-800-735-2988</b> ) |
| 24-Hour Nurseline                  | <b>1-844-971-8906</b> | (TTY: <b>711</b> )            |
| Maximus Enrollment Broker          | <b>1-800-964-2777</b> | (TTY: <b>711</b> )            |
| Medicaid Managed Care Helpline     | <b>1-866-566-8989</b> | (TTY: <b>711</b> )            |
| Service Coordination               | <b>1-877-214-5630</b> | (TTY: <b>711</b> )            |

# Coping with Depression

Not feeling yourself? Depression is different for everyone, and it can happen at any time. Learn the signs. If you think you have depression, talk with your doctor as soon as possible.

## Signs of Depression

- Lasting feelings of sadness, anxiousness and helplessness
- Lack of interest or joy in activities
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- No energy
- Problems focusing and thinking
- Suicidal thoughts

## Signs of Postpartum Depression

(Occurs after having a baby)

- Crying more than usual
- Feelings of anger
- Withdrawing from loved ones
- Feeling distant from your baby
- Worrying or feeling overly anxious
- Thinking about hurting yourself or your baby
- Doubting your ability to care for your baby



## You don't have to go through it alone.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has resources for you. We are here to help.

Our Service Coordination Team is here to link members to care providers and resources.

- If you are pregnant and experiencing postpartum depression, call Special Beginnings® (SB) at **1-888-421-7781** (TTY **711**) to talk with a SB Service Coordinator Coordinator.
- For the Behavioral Health Hotline, call **1-800-327-7390**. Members with hearing or speech loss may call the Magellan TTY line at **1-800-735-2988**.
- If this is a behavioral health crisis, call **988**.
- To talk with a nurse, call the 24-Hour Nurseline at **1-844-971-8906**.
- Contact the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline at **1-833-9-HELP4MOMS (1-833-943-5746)** or online at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/national-maternal-mental-health-hotline>.
- Learn to Live is a no cost online health program. It is offered to members and caregivers. If you have mild to moderate mental or emotional health concerns, Learn to Live gives self-paced mental health solutions and access to 24/7 therapy coaches for members. It can help with common challenges like stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia and substance use. To start, register at [www.learntolive.com/welcome/BCBSTXMedicaid](http://www.learntolive.com/welcome/BCBSTXMedicaid) (Access Code: **TXMed**).



## Texas Health Steps Visits

We encourage children and adolescents to visit their primary care provider (PCP) regularly for their health and development. STAR members up to age **21** qualify for an incentive gift card after completing a well-child checkup exam while active on our plan. Call your doctor right away if you have not scheduled a well-child visit for your child this year.





## Six ways to take care of your mental health and well-being

- 1. Talk to someone you trust.** Talking to someone you trust—such as a friend or family member – can help. You may feel better if you are able to openly share what you are going through with someone who cares about you.
- 2. Take care of your physical health.** Taking care of your health helps your mental health and well-being. Be active for at least 30 minutes daily. Try running, walking, yoga, dancing, cycling or gardening. Eat healthy. Make sure to get enough sleep.
- 3. Do activities you enjoy.** Try to do things you like, such as cooking for yourself or your loved ones, playing with your pet, walking in the park, reading a book or watching a movie or TV series. Having a routine with these things that make you feel happy will help your mental health.
- 4. Stay away from harmful substances.** Don't use drugs, alcohol or tobacco to cope with what you're feeling. These substances can make you feel worse. They are unsafe and can put you and those around you at risk of diseases or injuries.
- 5. Take two minutes to focus on the world around you.** Help free yourself of swirling thoughts by reconnecting with where you are at this moment in time. Take three slow deep breaths, feel your feet grounded on the floor and ask yourself:
  - What are five things I can see?
  - What are four things I can hear?
  - What can I smell?
  - What does it feel like to touch my knees or something else I can reach? How does it feel underneath my fingers?
- 6. Seek professional help.** If you feel like you cannot cope with the stress you are facing, seek help by calling your local mental health helpline or contacting your counselor or doctor. Remember you are not alone and there are things you can do to support your emotional wellbeing.

# Childhood Obesity

About 1 in 5 American children has obesity. Childhood obesity is a complex disease with many contributing factors, including genetics, eating patterns, physical activity levels and sleep routines.

Compared to children with healthy weight, children with obesity are at a higher risk for asthma, sleep apnea, bone and joint problems, type 2 diabetes and risk factors for heart disease such as high blood pressure.

Adults with obesity have higher risks for stroke, many types of cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, premature death and mental illness, such as clinical depression and anxiety. Children with obesity are more likely to have obesity as adults. Where we live, learn, work and play can also make healthy eating and getting enough exercise hard.

However, there are many ways parents and caregivers can help children have a healthy weight and set up lifelong healthy habits at home.

## Eat Healthy

Healthy eating patterns as a family help children reach and keep a healthy weight as they age. Eating vegetables and fruits, whole grains, lean protein foods and low-fat and fat-free dairy products follows nutrition guidelines and sets your family up for good health.

Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are often less expensive than fresh and still good for you. Help kids rethink their drink by replacing sugary drinks, such as soda, fruit drinks and flavored milk, with water, 100% juice or plain low-fat milk.

## Move More as a Family

Going for a walk or doing active chores together such as washing the car can help your children move more.

## Have a Sleep Routine

Good sleep helps prevent type 2 diabetes, obesity, injuries and problems with attention and behavior. Children who do not get enough sleep are at risk for unhealthy weight gain. Sticking to a sleep schedule, even on weekends, can help children sleep better.

## Replace Screen Time with Family Time

Too much screen time can lead to poor sleep, weight gain and poor mental health. Turning screens off an hour before bed and not having screens in children's bedrooms can help cut screen time and improve sleep.

If you are worried about your child's weight, talk with your child's doctor about any health risks related to excess weight.

■ Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/features/childhood-obesity/index.html>



## We want to see you!

BCBSTX Outreach staff hosts member meetings and community events that provide important health information and resources for our members.

Go to <https://www.bcbstx.com/medicaid/pdf/chip-star-community-calendar-tx.pdf> to view a list of upcoming events near you. If you need assistance completing your STAR renewal packet, come out and see us, we can help!





## Prevent Type 2 Diabetes in Kids

Until recently, young children and teens almost never got type 2 diabetes, which is why it used to be called adult-onset diabetes. Now, about one-third of American youth are overweight, a problem closely related to the increase in kids with type 2 diabetes, some as young as 10 years old.

These factors also increase kids' risk for type 2 diabetes:

- Having a family member with type 2 diabetes.
- Being born to a mom with diabetes while pregnant.
- Being African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American/Alaska Native, Asian American or Pacific Islander.
- Having one or more conditions related to insulin resistance.

If your child is overweight and has any two of the risk factors listed above, talk to your doctor about getting his or her blood sugar tested.

Testing typically begins at 10 years old or when puberty starts, whichever is first, and is repeated every three years.

### Make changes as a family

Parents can do a lot to help their kids prevent type 2 diabetes. Set a new normal as a family—healthy changes become habits more easily when everyone does them together. Here are some tips to get started:

#### Mealtime Makeover:

- Drink more water and fewer sugary drinks.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Eat at the dinner table only, not in front of the TV or computer.
- Don't insist kids clean their plates.

#### Getting Physical:

- Limit screen time.
- Move more in and out of the house.
- Turn chores into games.
- Keep it positive—focus on progress.

■ Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevent-type-2/type-2-kids.html>

# Oral Health For You and Your Children

Good oral health habits are important for everyone. Babies, children and adults, including pregnant women, should have regular dentist visits. Texas Health Steps dental checkups are recommended every three to six months, starting at six months of age. Adults should have a cleaning and oral exam at least every six months.

The good news is that cavities are preventable and fluoride varnish can prevent cavities in the primary (baby) teeth. Brushing every day, with fluoride toothpaste and getting dental sealants can also prevent cavities.

Medicaid offers dental health services to children and young adults who have STAR benefits. These include:

- Preventive services such as dental exams, cleaning and applications of sealants.
- Treatment services like dental restorations, oral surgery and care for root canals, gum disease and dentures.
- Emergency dental services for infections and injuries.

## Gum and Tooth Care for Babies

- Wipe gums twice a day with a soft, clean cloth in the morning after the first feeding and right before bed to wipe away bacteria and sugars that can cause cavities.
- When teeth come in, start brushing twice a day with a soft, small-bristled toothbrush and plain water.
- The pediatrician will check the gums and any teeth during the baby's Texas Health Steps Visits.
- Take babies to the dentist before the first birthday so the dentist can spot any signs of problems early.
- Talk to your dentist or doctor about putting fluoride varnish on your child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears.



- For children younger than age 2, first ask your doctor or dentist if you should use fluoride toothpaste.

## Caring for Children's Teeth

- Children should brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Help your child brush their teeth until they have good brushing skills. If your child is younger than age 6, watch them brush to make sure they are practicing good habits. They should use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and spit it out when brushing is done.
- Ask your child's dentist to apply dental sealants if they are recommended.
- If you are concerned that your drinking water doesn't have enough fluoride, ask your dentist, pediatrician, family doctor or nurse if your child needs oral fluoride supplements.

## Dental Care When You are Pregnant

You should see a dentist even when you are pregnant. Pregnancy can increase your risk for gum disease and cavities which can affect the health of your baby. Also:

- Brush your teeth twice a day.
- Floss each day.
- If you have nausea and get sick, rinse your mouth with 1 teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of water. This rinse helps wash stomach acid away that could damage tooth enamel.

# Value Added Services

With Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas, you get all the health care included with STAR, plus these services at no extra cost. Explore our VAS list below to find out what has changed as of September 1, 2023.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.bcbstx.com/star/plan-details/value-added-services>

## Resources and Supplemental Services

24-Hour Nurseline:

**All members**

Learn to Live: Online Behavioral Health Resources: **All members**

Extra Help Getting a Ride:

**All members**

Online Community Resource Platform:

**All members**

Blue365® Pharmacy Program:

**All members**

In-Home Meal Delivery Services after Qualifying Hospitalization:

**All members**

Dental Services for Adult Members:

**Over age 21**

## Pregnant Members

Special Beginnings® Education Materials

Prenatal Class with Incentive Diaper Bag

Fresh and Healthy Produce

Prenatal Care Incentive with Infant Car Seat or Pack-and-Play Playard

**Change:** Prenatal Incentive Care Gift Card: **Increased to \$50**

\$25 Postpartum Care Gift Card

## Children and Adolescents

**Change:** Birth-15 months: Texas Health Steps Child Checkup Incentive Gift Card: **Increased to \$120**

**Change:** \$25 Child and Adolescent Texas Health Steps Incentive Gift Card. **New age group: 2-21**

Enhanced Eyewear for Kids:

**Up to age 18**

**New:** HPV Vaccine Incentive Gift Card: **Ages 9-13**

Sports and Camp Physicals:

**Up to age 18**

**Change:** Gift Card for Follow-up Care after a Behavioral Health Inpatient Discharge: **Increased to \$50**

Health and Wellness Activity Reimbursement: **Up to age 18**

**New:** \$25 Asthma Prescription Refill Gift Card Incentive

Learn to Live provides educational behavioral health programs. Members considering further medical treatment should consult with a physician. Learn to Live, Inc. is an independent company that provides online behavioral health programs and tools for members with coverage through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. BCBSTX makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding third-party vendors and the products and services offered by them.

Blue365 is a discount program only for BCBSTX members. This is NOT insurance. BCBSTX does not guarantee or make any claims or recommendations about the program's services or products. BCBSTX reserves the right to stop or change this program at any time without notice. The relationship between the Blue365 vendors and BCBSTX is that of independent contractors.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas contracts with Magellan Behavioral Health, Inc. ("Magellan"), an independent company, to administer BCBSTX's managed mental health program.



# Family Food Favorites



## Maple-Roasted Sweet Potatoes

### Ingredients:

- 2 pounds small sweet potatoes (about 5), peeled and cut lengthwise into 1-inch wedges
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- Sea salt and freshly grated nutmeg, to taste, for serving

### Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Toss the sweet potatoes on a large, foil-lined rimmed baking sheet with the oil; season, to taste, with salt and pepper. Roast the potatoes for 20 minutes.
2. Remove the pan from the oven and toss the potatoes with the syrup.
3. Back in the oven, roast, tossing twice, until the potatoes are beginning to brown and are tender, about 15 minutes more. To serve, sprinkle warm potatoes with freshly grated lemon zest, sea salt and nutmeg to taste.

■ Source: Food Network <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/maple-roasted-sweet-potatoes-recipe-2105265>

## Tell Us What You Think!

### Community Advisory Committee (CAC) – now online or by phone

Every three months, we invite STAR members to attend a CAC meeting to give us feedback on our member education materials and Value Added Services, and get health plan program updates. CAC meetings are now offered by phone and online.

You can visit [www.bcbstx.com/star](http://www.bcbstx.com/star) to see a schedule of CAC meetings or call a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas Member Advocate at **1-877-375-9097** for details and to register for a meeting.

To get auxiliary aids and services, or to get written or oral interpretation to understand the information given to you, including materials in alternative formats such as large print, braille or other languages, please call the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas STAR Customer Advocate Department at **1-888-657-6061** (TTY: **711**).

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas provides:

- Free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
  - Qualified sign language interpreters
  - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats and more)
- Free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
  - Qualified interpreters
  - Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact the Civil Rights Coordinator.

If you believe that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with: Civil Rights Coordinator, Office of Civil Rights Coordinator, 300 E. Randolph St., 35th floor, Chicago, Illinois 60601, **1-855-664-7270**, TTY/TDD: **1-855-661-6965**, Fax: **1-855-661-6960**. You can file a grievance by mail or fax. If you need help filing a grievance, Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at **<https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>**, or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Room 509F, HHH Building  
Washington, D.C. 20201

**1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697** (TDD)

Complaint forms are available at **<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>**.

ATTENTION: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you.  
Call 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística.  
Llame al 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).

CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn.  
Gọi số 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711)。

주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다.  
1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) 번으로 전화해 주십시오.

ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اذكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم 1-855-710-6984 (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: 711).

خبردار: اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کو زبان کی مدد کی خدمات مفت میں دستیاب ہیں۔ کال کریں 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).

PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).

ATTENTION : Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement.  
Appelez le 1-855-710-6984 (ATS: 711).

ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं।  
1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) पर कॉल करें।

اب. دشاب یم مهارف امش یارب ناگیار تروص هب ینابز تلایهست، دینک یم وگتفگ یسراف نابز هب رگا: هجوت  
1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) دیریگب سامت.

ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).

સુચના: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા છો, તો નિઃશુલ્ક ભાષા સહાય સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. ફોન કરો  
1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода.  
Звоните 1-855-710-6984 (телетайп: 711).

注意事項：日本語を話される場合、無料の言語支援をご利用いただけます。1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) まで、お電話にてご連絡ください。

ໂປດຊາບ: ຖ້າວ່າທ່ານເວົ້າພາສາລາວ, ການບໍລິການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອດ້ານພາສາ, ໂດຍບໍ່ເສັຍຄ່າ, ຄຸ້ມມີພ້ອມໃຫ້ທ່ານ. ໂທ 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).