



LifeTimes™

Your guide to lifelong health

Summer 2022

Health and wellness or prevention information



The Role a Primary Care Provider (PCP) Plays in Your Child's Health

A PCP is a primary care physician or a primary care provider. Your child's PCP is the main doctor who can help with most of your child's health care issues. In most cases your child's pediatrician will be their PCP. If a child has a health issue that needs more specialized care, the PCP will refer you to a specialist.

You should use in-network providers. STAR members need a referral from their PCP to see an in-network specialist.

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COVID-19: At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX), the health, safety and well-being of our members is our top priority. We want to help you stay informed about COVID-19 and get the care you need. For more information, visit www.bcbstx.com/medicaid/coronavirus-information.

Have you been on your BCBSTX Medicaid Plan longer than 12 months during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, it's time to renew at www.needcoveragenowtx.com.



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What do PCPs do?

The PCP's office is the place to get treatment for a non-emergency problem, like a cold or minor injury. Children should also visit their PCP each year for a physical or well-child checkup to see if their health has changed, or if they have any risk factors for having health problems in the future.

Pediatricians can watch children's chronic health problems like asthma, high blood sugar, or mental health issues. A PCP will also arrange care with specialists for chronic health problems or if your child goes to the hospital. This means the specialist or hospital shares the child's health information and any treatments prescribed with the PCP.

Planning care is one of the most vital tasks of a PCP. When health information is in one place, PCPs can make sure that other providers and specialists are not ordering more tests, procedures or prescriptions than your child needs.

Get the most out of your child's visit with the pediatrician:

- Write down questions before your visit.
- Tell the doctor about any new symptoms, prescriptions, supplements or allergies your child has.
- Ask for fact sheets about your child's health problems or diagnosis, and a list of treatment options.
- Let your child's PCP know if you have ideas about any treatment options you have not talked about.
- Save your child's PCP's contact information in your phone or on your refrigerator, so you can find it quickly. Give the information to family, day care and schools.
- Do not forget to plan a visit with your child's PCP after going to an urgent care facility or ER.

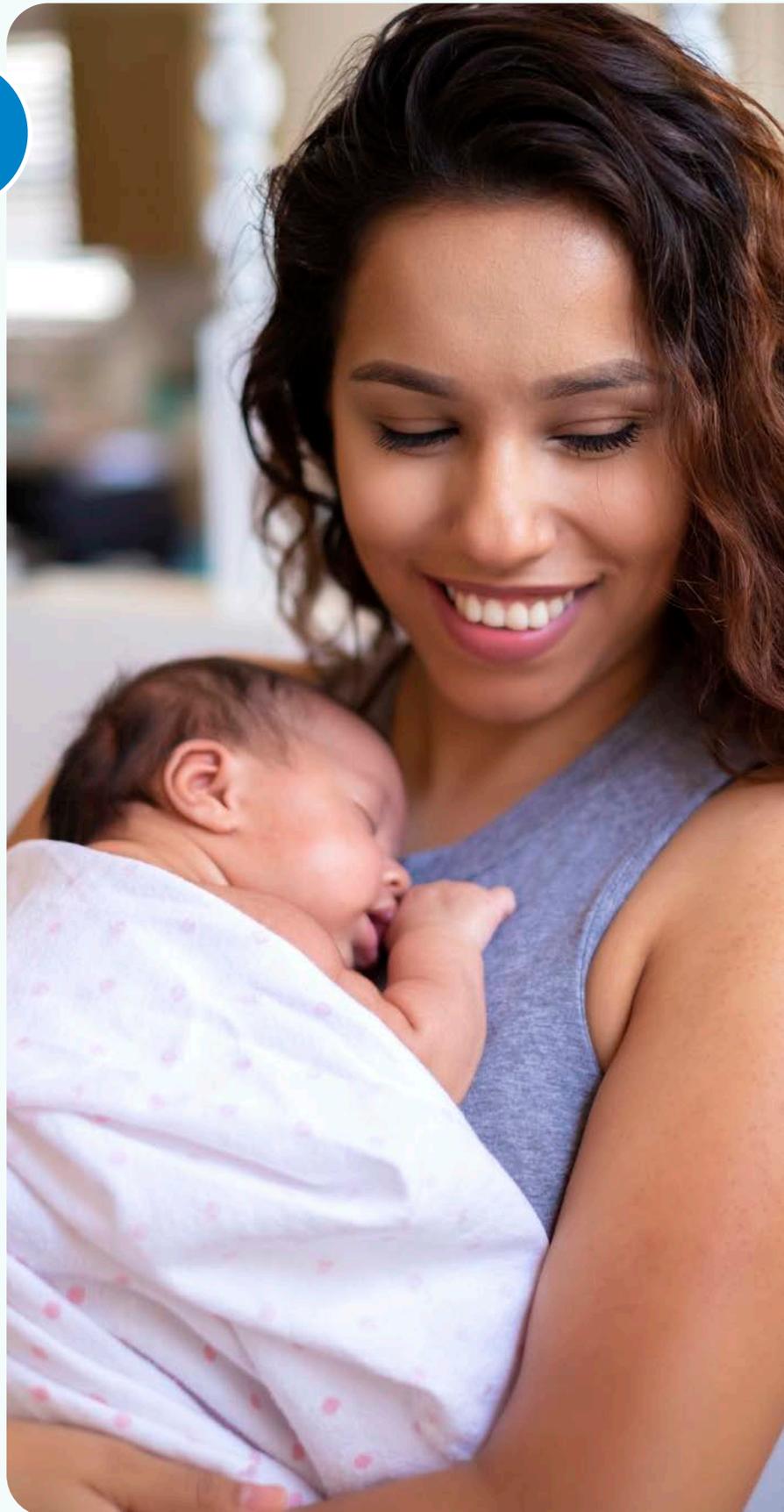
If your child has not had a checkup this year, make an appointment today. When you schedule this visit, write down the date and time to remind yourself.

How Your Environment Can Affect Your Maternal Health



Illness or death of a mother during pregnancy or shortly after childbirth are indicators of a community's health and well-being. Some women experience a higher chance of maternal illnesses and death. Looking at the causes, with a focus on food, housing, employment and safety, can result in better health outcomes.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas has a maternity program for STAR members. Special Beginnings is designed to help BCBSTX members, and their babies get off to a healthy start by providing educational materials and support, pregnancy risk factor identification, ongoing communication/monitoring, and access to an online resource center. Members are supported from early pregnancy through 12 weeks after delivery. To participate in the Special Beginnings Program, please call **1-888-421-7781** to directly enroll.





What is an Asthma Action Plan?

You may have been given an asthma action plan for your child after a doctor's office visit, a trip to the emergency department, or after your child was hospitalized. Ideally, everyone with asthma should have one.

An asthma action plan helps families manage a child's asthma. The goal is to prevent asthma emergencies by preventing and controlling flare-ups.

Because asthma affects people differently, asthma action plans are personalized for your child. While every asthma action plan looks a little bit different, they all include the same major parts.

Create an asthma action plan for your child

Create an asthma action plan that you and your pediatrician have personalized for your child. Save and print it for your records. Be sure to share it with your child's school and anyone else who cares for your child.

Generally, asthma action plans include a list of the medications taken, early warning signs for asthma symptoms, and instructions on when to use the medicines and call your health care provider.

The asthma action plan format

Your child's asthma action plan will be divided into a traffic light format:

- **Green means go!** This is your child's everyday plan.
- **Yellow means proceed with caution** - this is for when your child isn't feeling quite right. Still follow everything in the green zone, but add on other options.
- **Red zone means danger!** This is urgent, when your child needs medications quickly and fast medical attention to prevent symptoms from getting even worse.

Contact information: Every Asthma Action Plan should have information about your child, including name and family contact information. It should also have the name and phone number for the doctor who takes care of your child's asthma, whether it's your pediatrician or a lung doctor.

Peak Flow: Depending on your child's age, there may be a number written on the top of your asthma action plan. This number measures how hard your child can breathe out when feeling healthy on a peak flow machine. It is a good way to see if your child's breathing effort is normal.

The zones

■ Green Zone: Every Day

The green zone represents what you should do when your child is feeling completely normal. This is what to do when your child is breathing comfortably, sleeping through the night, not having any coughing or wheezing, and can play just like other kids. It means your child's peak flow range is normal.

Your child's daily controller medication will be listed here, along with how much to take and when to take it. This is the medication that your child should take every day. Examples include inhaled steroids or anti-allergy medication.

Some children have exercise-induced asthma, or asthma symptoms that flare up when they exercise or play actively. For children with this issue, medicine they need to take before exercise will also be listed in the Green Zone.

■ Yellow Zone: First signs of illness

The yellow zone is for when your child may be starting to get sick and is at risk of having an asthma flare. Symptoms include: cough or cold symptoms, some wheezing, having a known trigger for a flare (like change in weather), coughing at night, or having a tight chest or belly pain (little kids have a hard time knowing if they are having belly pain or chest pain). The peak flow range listed will be less than normal.

Your child will need to take all of their Green Zone medication PLUS the medication listed in the Yellow zone. The Asthma Action Plan will include how much of the medicine to take and how often.

Your asthma action plan will also list when to call your child's doctor if the symptoms are not improving or getting worse.

■ Red Zone: This is urgent!

The red zone is for when your child is sick and their asthma flare is dangerous: medicine is not helping, you notice your child is breathing hard and/or fast, you can see your child's ribs while they are breathing, your child's nose is opening wider when they breathe (called 'nasal flaring'), or your child cannot talk because they are having a hard time breathing. The peak flow range listed will be low.



Call your doctor immediately! If it is after the office is closed, go to the emergency department or call **911** if you cannot take your child there yourself.

You should also give all the Green Zone medications AND whatever rescue medications are in your Red Zone. Your asthma action plan will also include how much of the medicine to take and how often. It may be a higher dose of the Yellow Zone medication that you also give more frequently.

If you have any questions about the asthma action plan, or you do not have one but think your child could benefit, please talk with your child's pediatrician.

Source: www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/allergies-asthma/Pages/What-is-an-Asthma-Action-Plan.aspx

Your Coronavirus (COVID-19) Questions Answered

The CDC recommends that everyone 12 years and older get a COVID-19 vaccination to help protect against COVID-19.

In the face of COVID-19, every question, answer and vaccination is important. That's why we're sharing information to answer concerns you may have about your child getting an approved COVID-19 vaccine. Using facts from the CDC, we hope to answer your questions and arm you with the knowledge you and your children deserve so you can feel comfortable with your decision.

Visit Blue Cross and Blue Shield Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates at www.bcbstx.com/medicaid/coronavirus-information for more COVID-19 coverage and benefit information.



Q&A: The COVID-19 vaccine for pre-teens and teens

Can schools require COVID vaccines for students to attend? It depends on whether your child attends a public or private school. Private schools, day care centers and camps can decide whether to require students to be vaccinated as a condition of returning to school or the facility. Vaccine requirements for public school largely depend on the state. While all 50 states have legislation requiring specific vaccines for students, no state currently requires children to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to return to school. Exemptions to school immunization requirements vary, but all states grant exemptions to children for medical reasons and many grant exemptions for religious or philosophical reasons.

If my child recently got another vaccination, can he/she still get the COVID vaccine?

COVID vaccines and other vaccines can be given on the same day. The CDC previously said children and adults should wait two weeks before or after a COVID vaccine to receive any other vaccine as a precautionary measure in the early days of the vaccine distribution. The CDC's most recent guidance states that COVID vaccines and other vaccines can be given without regard to timing. If multiple vaccines are administered at a single visit, the injections may be given in different parts of the body.

Should my child get the vaccine if he/she has allergies? Tell the doctor or nurse about any allergies your child may have. Children should not get the vaccine if they have a history of severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine. The vaccine does not contain eggs, preservatives or latex. If your child has severe allergies to other substances (medications, bee stings, foods), plan to stay at the vaccination site after injection for 30 minutes, rather than the recommended 15.

Will my child experience side effects from the vaccine? Are they different than the side effects for adults?

Similar to adults, the most commonly reported side effects in adolescent participants were pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, chills, muscle pain, fever and joint pain. Side effects usually last one to three days. Fevers were slightly more common in 12- to 15-year-olds compared to adults in the adolescent clinical trials.

For more information about COVID-19 topics and how the pandemic can affect you and your family, visit www.cdc.gov/COVID19. You can also contact your pediatrician's office or your local health department for additional COVID-19 vaccine information.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that vaccine recipients or their caregivers are provided with Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) fact sheets to help make informed decisions about vaccination. The EUA fact sheet is specific to each authorized COVID-19 vaccine, is developed by the manufacturer of the vaccine, and is authorized by the FDA. Links to the fact sheet documents are available at www.CDC.gov.

Source: www.bcbs.com/coronavirus-updates/stories/your-questions-answered-the-covid-19-vaccine-pre-teens-and-teens

Summer Crafts



Butterfly Bunch

Make colorful butterflies from toilet and/or paper towel tubes.

What You'll Need:

- Toilet and/or paper towel tubes
- Gesso (optional, for brighter color)
- Craft paint
- Hot glue (an adult's job) or adhesive dots

Directions:

1. If desired, prime tubes inside and out with gesso; let dry. Then paint; let dry completely.
2. Flatten the tubes and use scissors to cut them into slices. For a large butterfly, you'll need five $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide slices. For a small butterfly, you'll need two $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide slices and one $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide slice (eyeball it).
3. To make the small butterfly: Fold two $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wide slices in half; unfold. Add a dot of glue to the inside center of each and refold to make a set of wings. Glue the two sets of wings to the sides of the $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide "body."
4. To make a large butterfly: Add a dot of glue to the inside center of one of the $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch slices and squish it together to make a "body." Add a dot of glue to the flat side and press on another slice for a wing. Repeat for the other three wings.

Source: www.parents.com/fun/arts-crafts/kid/cute-crafts-that-use-recycled-cardboard-tubes/?slide=slide_c141b585-1b86-4623-8906-18ae7f316f22#slide_c141b585-1b86-4623-8906-18ae7f316f22



Popsicle Stick Puppy Puppet

Transform cardboard toilet paper tubes into a puppy puppet.

What You'll Need:

- 2 Toilet paper tubes
- Paint
- Paintbrush
- Hole punch
- Bendy plastic straws
- Yarn
- 2 Popsicle sticks
- 2 Googly eyes
- Glue
- Scissors

Directions:

1. Paint the toilet paper tubes; let dry. Cut one tube in half; one half will be used horizontally for the head, the other half will be cut for the ears.
2. For the ears, cut a single long 8-shape out of the cardboard tube half. Glue it to the top of one end of the head. Push in the cardboard where the ears are glued, creating an indent on the head to make the ears stick up.

3. Glue two popsicle sticks together to form a cross; set aside.
4. The other toilet paper roll will be used horizontally for the body. Punch four holes on the bottom of the body for the legs. Thread two 6" pieces of yarn through the leg holes (one through the front two leg holes and one through the back two leg holes). Add cut bendy straw pieces at the ends of each string for feet. Knot the yarn at the ends of each foot.
5. On the top of the body tube (opposite of feet holes), punch a hole at each end of the body (two holes). Punch a single hole in the head. Thread a long piece of yarn (approximately 24") through the body and the other end of the body and head. Tie it to the popsicle stick-cross.
6. Glue on a cut bendy straw to create a tail and stick on googly eyes.

Source: www.parents.com/fun/arts-crafts/kid/cute-crafts-that-use-recycled-cardboard-tubes/?slide=slide_c141b585-1b86-4623-8906-18ae7f316f22#slide_c141b585-1b86-4623-8906-18ae7f316f22



Healthy Summer Favorites

Foil Wrapped Veggies

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ pounds new potatoes, thinly sliced
- 1 large sweet potato, thinly sliced
- 2 Vidalia onions, sliced 1/4 inch thick
- ½ pound fresh green beans, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup olive oil

Directions:

Preheat grill for high heat.

In a large bowl, combine the new potatoes, sweet potato, Vidalia onions, green beans, rosemary and thyme. Stir in 2 tablespoons olive oil, salt and pepper to coat.

Using two to three layers of foil, create desired number of foil packets. Brush inside surfaces of packets liberally with remaining olive oil. Distribute vegetable mixture evenly among the packets. Seal tightly.

Place packets on the preheated grill. Cook 30 minutes, turning once, or until potatoes are tender.

Source: [allrecipes.com/recipe/25478/foil-wrapped-veggies](https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/25478/foil-wrapped-veggies)

Get STAR Updates Sent Straight to Your Phone!

STAR members can get text messages with plan benefit updates, notices about STAR meetings, events in your area and health care tips.

You can opt in to get text messages sent to your phone by texting **STAR** to **33633**. Once you join the program, you may get up to four text messages per month.*

To cancel STAR text messages, text **STOP** to **33633**.

To learn more about our texting program, call Member Outreach at **1-877-375-9097** (TTY: **711**).



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. One \$25 gift card per member family will be given for each meeting attended. A member family can get up to four gift cards each year, for a total of \$100 worth of gift cards. CAC meetings are now offered by phone and online meetings.

You can visit www.bcbstx.com/star to see a schedule of CAC meetings or call a BCBSTX Member Advocate at **1-877-375-9097** for details and to register for a meeting.



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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.

Helpful Phone Numbers	Toll-Free Number	TTY Line (hearing/speech loss)
BCBSTX STAR Customer Advocate	1-888-657-6061	711
Behavioral Health Services Hotline	1-800-327-7390	1-800-735-2988
BCBSTX Member Advocate	1-877-375-9097	711
24-Hour Nurse Advice Line	1-844-971-8906	711
Maximus Enrollment Broker	1-800-964-2777	711
Medicaid Managed Care Helpline	1-866-566-8989	711
Service Management/Disease Management	1-877-214-5630	711

*Message and data rates may apply. Terms and conditions and privacy policy at www.bcbstx.com/mobile/text-messaging.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas, a Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

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 હો, તો ન:શુલક 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, ໂດຍບໍ່ເສັງຄ່າ, ຄຸມມືມີ້ອມໃຫ້ທ່ານ. ໂທສ 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).