



What is a Primary Care Physician (PCP)?

A primary care physician (PCP), or primary care provider, is a health care professional who practices general medicine. PCPs are our first stop for medical care. Most PCPs are doctors, but nurse practitioners and physician assistants can be PCPs sometimes also.

A PCP is the person your child should see for a routine checkup or non-emergency medical care. If your child has a mild fever, cough or rash, or is short of breath or nauseated, a PCP usually can find the cause and decide what to do about it.

Usually, PCPs can treat conditions in their own offices. If they can't, they will refer you and your child to a trusted specialist. If your child needs ongoing treatment or is admitted to a hospital, the PCP may oversee the care, help you make decisions related to treatment, or refer you to other specialists if needed.

One of a PCP's most important jobs is to help keep kids from getting sick in the first place. This is called preventive care.

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LifeTimes is published for BCBSTX STAR Kids 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.

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For preventive care, you should:

- form a relationship with a PCP you like and trust
- take your child for scheduled checkups and vaccines
- follow your PCP’s advice for a healthy lifestyle, managing weight and getting exercise

Different types of PCPs treat kids and teens. Which is right for you depends on your family’s needs.

Types of PCPs:

- **Family doctors**, or family physicians, care for patients of all ages, from infants, kids and teens, to adults and the elderly.
- **Pediatricians** care for babies, kids and teens.
- **Internists**, or internal medicine doctors, care for adults, but some see patients who are in their late teens.
- **Obstetrician-gynecologists (OB-GYNs)** specialize in women’s health and are sometimes PCPs for girls who have started menstruating.
- **Nurse practitioners and physician assistants** are sometimes the main providers a child or teen sees at a doctor’s office.

Call your PCP first about any health-related questions or concerns that aren’t an emergency, such as:

- a high fever
- a headache that doesn’t go away
- ear pain
- a lasting cough
- belly pain
- a rash

When in doubt, call the PCP. Even if the PCP isn’t available, someone else in the office can talk with you and decide whether your child should go to the ER. On weekends and at night, PCPs often have answering services that let them get in touch with you if you leave a message.

Go to the ER if your child:

- has trouble breathing or is short of breath
- suddenly becomes unusually sleepy or hard to wake, disoriented or confused
- has a cut in the skin that won’t stop bleeding
- has a stiff neck along with a fever
- has a fast heartbeat that doesn’t slow down
- swallows a poisonous substance or too much medicine
- has had more than minor head trauma

To find a PCP, start by asking yourself what matters to you. For example, you’ll want the PCP’s office to take your health insurance and, ideally, be close to home. Also consider how helpful and friendly the staff is, how easy it is to get in touch with the PCP, and whether the office hours work with your schedule. Ask for recommendations from friends, neighbors, relatives and doctors or nurses you already know and trust.

■ Source: kidshealth.org/en/parents/primary-care-physician.html

Helpful Toll-Free Phone Numbers

Service Coordination	1-877-301-4394	(TTY: 711)
Behavioral Health Services Hotline	1-800-424-0324	(TTY: 1-800-635-2883)
BCBSTX Member Advocate		
in the Central service area	1-855-497-0857	(TTY: 711)
in the Travis service area	1-877-375-9097	(TTY: 711)
Medicaid Managed Care Helpline	1-866-566-8989	(TTY: 711)
HHSC MDCP or Deaf Blind Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Services Helpline	1-844-999-9543	

Preventing Childhood Obesity: 4 Things Parents and Children Can Do

Childhood obesity is when a child is significantly overweight for his or her age and height. It is a complex disease with many factors, such as family traits, eating patterns, activity levels and sleep routines. If the conditions where we live, learn, work and play do not support a healthy way of living, it can be harder to eat well and get enough exercise.

About 1 in 5 American children are obese. Compared to children with healthy weight, overweight children have a higher chance of asthma, sleep apnea, bone and joint problems, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Though there is no one way to solve obesity, there are many ways to help children have a healthy weight and set up lasting healthy habits at home.

1. Model Healthy Eating Patterns

Help your children get the nutrients they need by making half their plate fruits and veggies. 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.

2. Move More as a Family

Make physical activity part of your family routine. Walking the family pet before and after school, riding bikes and having races in the yard all count toward physical activity. Active chores, such as washing the car, vacuuming a room or raking leaves, also count.

3. Set Sleep Routines

Kids who don't get enough sleep are at risk for unhealthy weight gain. Good sleep helps prevent type 2 diabetes, obesity, injuries and problems with attention and behavior.

How much sleep do kids need? Preschoolers need 11 to 13 hours of sleep per day, including naps. Children aged six to 12 years old need nine to 12 hours of uninterrupted sleep a night and youth aged 13 to 18 years old need 8 to 10 hours of sleep. Sticking to a steady sleep schedule can help children sleep better.



4. Replace Screen Time with Family Time

In young people, too much screen time can lead to poor sleep, weight gain, lower grades in school and poor mental health. Reducing screen time frees up time for family activities and can remove cues to eat unhealthy food.

Turning screens off an hour before bed and removing them from bedrooms can help cut screen time and improve sleep.

■ Source: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/features/childhood-obesity/index.html

Asthma Action Plan

Everyone with asthma needs an Asthma Action Plan. Work with your health care provider to create a plan that works for you. Your goal is to prevent and control your asthma attacks.

Doing Well

- I don't have cough, wheezing, chest tightness or trouble breathing at any time.
- I can do all the things I usually do.
- When I use a peak flow meter, my peak flow* is 80 percent or more of my best peak flow.

Action: Continue taking your long-term control medicine.

Asthma Is Getting Worse

- I have some cough, wheezing, chest tightness or trouble breathing; *or*
- I wake up at night because of my asthma; *or*
- I can't do some of the things I usually do; *or*
- When I use a peak flow meter, my peak flow* is half to three quarters of my best peak flow.

Action: Add your quick-relief medicine and continue your long-term control medicine. If your symptoms get better after an hour, keep checking them and continue your long-term control medicine.

Medical Alert!

- I have a lot of trouble breathing; *or*
- My quick-relief medicines don't help; *or*
- I can't do any of the things I usually do; *or*
- I was in the yellow zone for 24 hours and I'm not getting better; *or*
- When I use a peak flow meter, my peak flow* is less than half of my best peak flow.

Action: Add the other medicines your doctor has prescribed and call your doctor. If your symptoms don't get better and you can't reach your doctor, go to the hospital.

*Peak flow measurement is a quick test to measure air flowing out of the lungs.

■ Source: www.cdc.gov/asthma/actionplan.html

Get STAR Kids Updates Sent Straight to Your Phone!

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

You can opt in to get text messages sent to your phone by texting **STAR Kids** to **33633**. Once you join the program, you may get up to four text messages per month.* To cancel STAR Kids text messages, text **STOP** to **33633**. To learn more about our texting program, call Member Outreach at **1-855-497-0857** if you are in the Central service area or **1-877-375-9097** if you are in the Travis service area.

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



Developmental Screenings

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) wants to help keep your children healthy. From birth until age three, there are 10 scheduled well visits to check growth and progress and to get needed vaccines for your child. At age three, well visits lower to one time a year.

Early treatment of developmental delays can help children improve their skills and learn new skills. If you are worried about your child's development, talk with your child's doctor. Below are the ages and types of development testing that your child should get.

Get your copy of the screening chart at www.onlineordersff.com/images/pdfs/26027.pdf

Tell Us What You Think!

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

Every three months, we invite STAR Kids members to attend a MAG 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. MAG meetings are now offered by phone and online meetings.

You can visit www.bcbstx.com/starkids to see a schedule of MAG meetings or call a BCBSTX Member Advocate in the Central service area at **1-855-497-0857** (TTY: **711**) for details and to register for a meeting. For a Member Advocate in the Travis service area, call **1-877-375-9097** (TTY: **711**).

Family Food Favorites



Balsamic Cucumber Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 large English cucumber, halved and sliced
- 2 cups grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 medium red onion, halved and thinly sliced
- ½ cup balsamic vinaigrette
- ¾ cup crumbled reduced-fat feta cheese

Directions:

In a large bowl, mix cucumber, tomatoes and onion. Add vinaigrette; toss to coat. Refrigerate, covered, until serving. Just before serving, stir in cheese. Serve with a slotted spoon.

■ Source: www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/balsamic-cucumber-salad/



Your Voice Matters, You Matter

We want to hear from you!

You will soon be receiving a package from us asking for your participation in a survey about your health care experience with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas and your health care providers. We are committed to promoting your health and wellness and want to know how we can better serve you. An important part of this is hearing from you. We will not see your responses, the survey is being handled by an independent firm, which ensures your responses will be kept private. The survey may take 10 minutes or less and you can take it by phone, mail or on a computer using the internet.

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 Kids Customer Advocate Department at **1-877-688-1811** (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 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, ໂດຍບໍ່ເສັຽຄ່າ, ແມ່ນມີພ້ອມໃຫ້ທ່ານ. ໂທ 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711).