



healthy**NOW**

WINTER 2008

GETTING YOUR **Prescription Drugs**

Did you know that some prescription drugs must be approved before you can get them filled? This approval is called a **prior authorization**. Always ask your doctor if a prescription requires prior authorization. If it does, ask if there is a different drug that doesn't require approval.

If the medicine requires prior authorization, your doctor must fill out a request form and return it to First Choice before it can be filled. Our Pharmacy Department will review the request and make a decision. If it is denied, you have the right to appeal the decision. You can file an appeal with a Member Services representative by calling **888.276.2020**. Remember, you can always call Member Services with any questions you have about your prescription drug benefits and prior authorizations. ■



Diabetes AND THE **Holidays**

The holidays can be hard if you have **diabetes**. There are a lot of parties and family meals with cakes, cookies, gravies and sauces. Use these tips to help keep your blood sugar under control during the holidays.

- 1. Check your blood sugar often.**
It will keep you on target.
- 2. Exercise more.** Take an extra walk around the block. Ask your family to join you.
- 3. Fill up on healthy foods.** Make sure to fix lots of raw or steamed vegetables so that you will have good options. Roast turkey (without the skin) can be a healthy choice as well.
- 4. Watch your alcohol intake.** Alcohol contains a lot of calories and can interfere with medicines.

- 5. Watch the fats you add to your meals.**
This includes butter or margarine, salad dressings and other fats.
- 6. Plan ahead.** If you know you are going to be tempted at a party, eat something healthy at home before you go. This will help cut down your cravings.
- 7. Watch your portion sizes.** If you really want dessert, try just a small piece. It will probably satisfy your craving.
You can enjoy the holidays and control your diabetes. Call the *In Control* diabetes program at **888.559.1010** to speak with a diabetes nurse. ■



2008 Preventive Health Guidelines

Children's Health

Well-Child Exams

Children from birth to 2 years should be examined at the following ages:

2 weeks	6 months	15 months
1 month	9 months	18 months
4 months	12 months	24 months

Children ages 3 to 21 years old should be examined every year.

Immunization Schedule

Children should get immunizations (shots) at the following ages:

1 month	12 months	2-3 years
2 months	15 months	4-6 years
4 months	18 months	11-12 years
6 months	19-23 months	

Adult Health

Adults should get a physical exam every one to three years. More frequent exams may be needed based on age, gender and risk factors. These tests include:

- Cholesterol
- Tuberculosis

- Routine lab (UA, CBC, blood chemistry, STD screening)
- Fecal occult blood
- Colonoscopy
- Rubella titer (used to find out if you have immunity to Rubella)
- Blood pressure
- Testicular
- Skin

Immunizations

- Hepatitis A and B (for high-risk people)
- Diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (once every 10 years)
- Rubella (for women of child-bearing age who are not immune)
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (for infants and children)
- Flu vaccine (for at-risk people)

Preventive Counseling

- Tobacco cessation
- Alcohol/drug treatment
- Diet and exercise
- Injury prevention
- Skin cancer

- Dental health
- Folic acid
- Self-examinations
- Depression

Women's Health

Well-woman exam (yearly)—Pap test, pelvic exam and breast exam

Home breast exam (monthly)

Mammogram

- Women ages 35 and older with risk factors (every year)
- Women ages 40 to 50 (every 1 to 2 years)
- Women ages 50 and older (yearly)

Prenatal Care

A woman's doctor determines the number of prenatal visits. Usually, a woman with an uncomplicated pregnancy should see her doctor every 4 weeks for the first 32 weeks. She should see her doctor every 2 to 3 weeks until the 36th week and then weekly after that. Some women with medical problems may need visits more often. ■

You Can Make a Difference IN YOUR HEALTHCARE!

Your health and the care you receive are important. We measure these through a tool called HEDIS (Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set). This tool looks at things such as the claim forms from your doctor. Each year, First Choice uses the HEDIS tool to find out if members are getting appropriate checkups and care in areas such as: child-well visits, mammograms, Pap tests, diabetes tests, and prenatal and postpartum visits. The results from HEDIS are important to us and your doctor because they let us know if you and your family are getting the right care.

This year, we are proud to say that the care and checkups that our First Choice



members received improved in the following areas:

- Women who received Pap tests
 - Children and teens who received well-child exams
 - Pregnant women who received regular prenatal exams and postpartum visits
- We continue to have opportunities to

improve in the following areas:

- Women getting mammograms
- Members getting the recommended test(s) for diabetes

To help make sure you are getting the right care, you may receive the following types of notices from us:

- Letters with information about recommended tests, appropriate medicines and checkups
- Telephone messages letting you know that you or a family member may be due for an important health screening
- Telephone calls encouraging you to follow up with your primary care doctor to have a missing health screening completed ■

Member Rights and Responsibilities

It is up to you to:

1. Establish yourself and your children with a primary care provider (PCP) within 30 days of entering the plan.
2. Not change your PCP without approval from First Choice.
3. Inform First Choice of any loss or theft of your ID card.
4. Present your ID card whenever you see any doctor or visit a hospital, clinic or pharmacy.
5. Become familiar with First Choice procedures. If you have any questions or require additional information, contact the First Choice Member Services Department.
6. See your doctor regularly for preventive services such as prenatal care, well-child visits, adult physicals and well-woman exams.
7. Provide, to the extent possible, information that First Choice and its practitioners and providers need in order to care for you.
8. Treat your PCP(s) and their staff(s) with kindness and respect.
9. Help your PCP(s) obtain all your medical records and fill out new ones.
10. Participate in understanding your health problems and follow the recommended treatment of care from your doctor. You must let the doctor know the reasons the treatment cannot be followed, as soon as possible.
11. Obtain a referral from your PCP(s) before you go to a specialist or to the hospital. Only go to the ones your PCP(s) recommended.
12. Not go to the emergency room for routine care.
13. Call your PCP(s) as soon as you or a family member feels ill. Do not wait. If you feel you have a life-threatening emergency, go to your closest hospital.
14. Be on time for all appointments. If you cannot make an appointment, please cancel at least 24 hours in advance of your originally scheduled time.
15. Notify First Choice if your or your child/children's name, address or phone number changes.
16. Inform First Choice of any change in your legal status regarding your authority to make decisions on behalf of your child or children.

You have the right to:

1. Be treated with respect and with consideration for your dignity and privacy.
2. Participate in decisions regarding your healthcare, including the right to refuse treatment.
3. Be free from any form of restraint or seclusion used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience or retaliation, as stated in the federal regulations on the use of restraints and seclusion.
4. Request and receive a copy of your medical records, and request that they be amended or corrected.
5. Receive healthcare services that are accessible, are comparable in amount, duration and scope to those provided under Medicaid Fee-for-Service and are sufficient in amount, duration and scope to reasonably be expected to achieve the purpose for which the services are furnished.
6. Receive services that are appropriate and are not denied or reduced solely because of diagnosis, type of illness or medical condition.
7. To receive all information—enrollment notices, informational materials, instructional materials, available treatment options and alternatives in a manner and format that is easily understood.
8. Receive assistance from both SCDHHS and First Choice in understanding the requirements and benefits of the plan.
9. Receive oral-interpretation services free of charge for all non-English languages, not just those identified as prevalent.
10. Be notified that oral interpretation is available and how to access those services.
11. As a potential member, to receive information about the basic features of managed care; which populations may or may not enroll in the program and First Choice's responsibilities for coordination of care in a timely manner in order to make an informed choice.
12. Receive information on First Choice services, to include, but not limited to:
 - Benefits covered
 - Procedures for obtaining benefits, including any authorization requirements
13. Receive a complete description of disenrollment rights at least annually.
14. Receive notice of any significant changes in the benefits at least 30 days before the intended effective date of the change.
15. Receive information on the Grievance, Appeal and Fair Hearing procedures.
16. Receive detailed information on emergency and after-hours coverage, to include, but not limited to:
 - What are emergency medical conditions, emergency services and post-stabilization services
 - That emergency services do not require prior authorization
 - The process and procedures for obtaining emergency services
 - The locations of any emergency settings and other locations at which providers and hospitals furnish emergency services and post-stabilization services covered under the contract
 - Your right to use any hospital or other setting for emergency care
 - Post-stabilization care services rules as detailed in 42 CFR 422.113(c)
17. Receive the First Choice policy on referrals for specialty care and other benefits not provided by the member's PCP.
18. Have your privacy protected in accordance with the privacy requirements in 45 CFR parts 160 and 164 subparts A and E, to the extent that they are applicable.
19. Exercise these rights without adversely affecting the way First Choice, its providers or SCDHHS treat members. ■

Prevent Your Baby FROM BEING BORN EARLY

Preterm birth means having your baby more than 3 weeks before your due date. Preterm birth is a serious problem that can be very dangerous for your baby. However, you can lower your risk of having a preterm baby.

Signs of Preterm Labor

- Tightening of your stomach muscles every 10 minutes or less (it feels hard like a baseball)
- Low, dull backache
- Cramps that feel like your period
- Change in your vaginal discharge
- Pressure feeling like the baby is pushing down
- Stomach cramps (with or without diarrhea)

If You Think You Have Preterm Labor

- Call your doctor first
- Drink a large glass of water
- Lie down on your left side
- Relax and try breathing deeply

Remember to get regular medical care while you are pregnant. Talk with your doctor if you have concerns about preterm birth. ■



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GET THE
CONVERSATION
STARTED—

Ask Questions

Getting the most out of your doctor's visit goes beyond making a checklist. You must ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist questions so that you can understand how to take care of your health, prepare for medical tests and take your medicines the right way.

Every time you talk with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist, ask:

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

Sometimes we ask questions and may not understand the answers. That is OK. Let your doctor, nurse or pharmacist know if you don't understand.

Don't be nervous to ask your doctor or nurse questions. They want you to let them know when you need help.

To remind yourself what you need to do and the questions you want to ask at your next medical visit, try writing them down or bringing a friend or family member with you. Doctors can be very busy, so you need to know how to get the most out of your visit. When in doubt, always ask questions. It is your right as a patient. ■

Resources: Partnership for Clear Health Communication

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR Flu Season

The flu season usually begins in December and can continue until March. All children 6 months old through 18 years old should get yearly flu shots.

Prepare yourself for the flu season by following these three steps:

- Get the flu vaccine (shot). It is the best way to protect against the flu.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water to protect against germs.
- Stay away from people who are sick. ■

Para obtener una copia de este documento en español, por favor llame al Departamento de los Servicios para Miembros al 888.276.2020.

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