



healthy NOW

FALL 2009

FirstChoice
Kids



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KEEP Your Diabetes UNDER Control

Diabetes is the 7th leading cause of death in South Carolina. If you have diabetes, getting regular tests can help you catch damage early and keep your diabetes under control. First Choice and the American Diabetes Association suggest people with diabetes have the following tests:

- Hemoglobin A1C test: Every 3 to 6 months**
This test measures your average blood sugar level over the past 3 months. The goal for most people with diabetes is a blood level less than 7. Your doctor will decide on a goal that is best for you. A high number means you have a greater risk for eye, kidney and heart disease or nerve damage.
- LDL-C (cholesterol) test: At least once a year**
This blood test measures your “bad” cholesterol level (LDL). The goal for most people is less than 100 mg/dl. Bad cholesterol can build up and clog your blood vessels and cause a heart attack or stroke.

- Microalbumin test: Once a year**
This urine test tells your doctor if there is albumin in your urine. Having albumin in your urine is the first sign of kidney damage. Usually there are no symptoms until there is damage.
- Dilated retinal eye exam (DRE): Once a year—even if your vision is fine**
The exam includes dilating the pupils and vision testing. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in adults.
- Foot exam: Daily**
Look for blisters, cuts, bruising, swelling or infected areas. If you cannot see your feet, use a mirror or ask a family member to help you. Your doctor should check your feet at every visit.
- Blood pressure: At every doctor’s visit**
It is best to keep your blood pressure below 130/80 mm Hg. ■



DON'T LET **Asthma** KEEP **Your Child** OUT OF SCHOOL

Did you know that asthma is the main reason children miss school? If asthma is causing your child to miss a lot of school, ask yourself the following questions.

1. Is my child using a rescue medicine more than twice a week?
2. Is my child waking up at night with asthma symptoms more than twice a month?
3. Am I refilling my child's rescue medicine more than twice a year?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, your child needs to see his or her asthma doctor. The doctor will check your child's asthma and asthma medicine. Ask the doctor if your child is on a controller medicine. If not, ask if a controller medicine could help your child's asthma.

Controller medicines can keep your child from having asthma symptoms and flare-ups. These medicines should be taken every day. They should be taken even if your child is not having symptoms.

We will provide a second inhaler and spacer for your child to have at school.

Talk to your pharmacist about getting the second set. ■

*Breathe
easy*

To learn more about asthma and how you can help your child with asthma, call one of our asthma nurses at **888.559.1010**.



Moving? New Phone Number? CALL MEMBER SERVICES!

Did you remember to call Member Services the last time you moved, changed phone numbers or changed your other information? Often in the confusion of moving, you may become very busy and forget to call your health plan. But if you don't call us, important information and materials, such as gift cards for well visits or new ID cards, may be sent to the wrong address.

Also when you update your address or phone number with us, we let Healthy Connections (Medicaid) or

Healthy Connections Kids know so you can still get other important information, such as forms to renew your Healthy Connections or Healthy Connections Kids benefits each year. So don't forget, call Member Services today! ■

First Choice: **888.276.2020**
First Choice Kids: **866.299.9594**



PREPARE YOURSELF FOR **Flu Season!**

The flu season usually begins in December, peaks in February and may continue until March.

An annual vaccination (flu shot) for all children ages 6 months through 18 years is recommended.

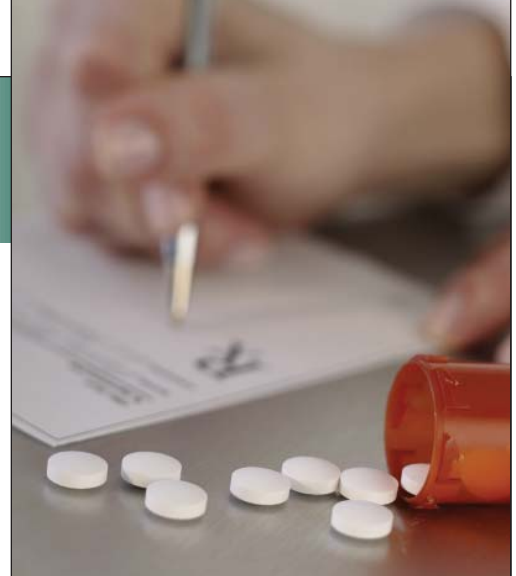
The following people are also at risk for flu complications and should get the flu shot:

- Pregnant women
- People 50 years old and older
- People with certain chronic conditions, such as **high blood pressure, diabetes, sickle cell disease, congestive heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including health-care workers and caregivers of children younger than 6 months old, since this group is too young to get the flu vaccine

Because children younger than age 9 need 2 doses of the flu shot to get full protection when vaccinated for the first time, they can get their first shot in **September** (if your pediatrician already has the vaccine). Most other children should begin getting their flu shots in **October and November**.

Prepare yourself for flu season by following these 3 steps:

1. **Get the flu shot.** A flu shot is the best way to protect yourself and your family against the flu.
2. **Protect yourself against germs.** Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
3. **Stay away from people who are sick.** ■

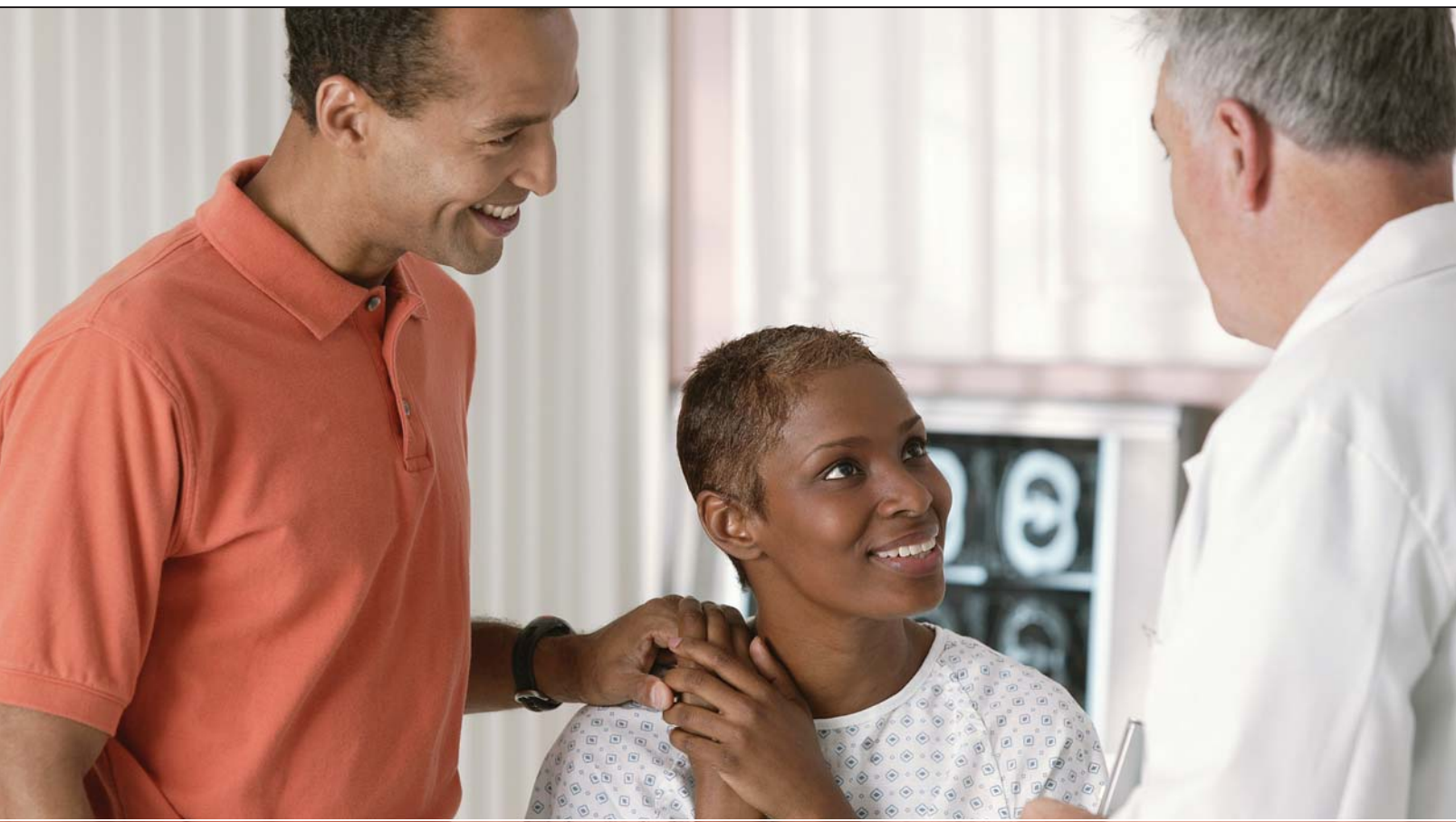


YOUR **Pharmacy News**

First Choice and First Choice Kids have a preferred drug list. The list contains the medicines that we cover. Because new medicines come out all the time, we often change or add to the list. You can find the list on Select Health's website, www.selecthealthofsc.com.

When your doctor gives you a new prescription, ask if the medicine requires prior authorization (approval). If it does, ask if there is another medicine that can be used that does not require approval.

Prior authorization requires action by your doctor before you can get the medicine. A prior authorization form must be filled out and returned to us. If the request is approved, a notice is sent to your doctor. If the request is not approved, you will get a letter telling you why it was not approved. If you disagree with the reason, you can file an appeal. For help filing an appeal or if you have any questions, call First Choice: **888.276.2020** or First Choice Kids: **866.299.9594**. ■



WORK WITH **Your Healthcare Team** TO **Prevent Errors**

The best way you can prevent confusion and medical errors is to be active in your healthcare. That means taking part in every decision about your health and the care you receive. The more involved you are, the easier it will be to take care of your health, prepare for medical tests and take your medicines the right way. The following tips can help you take ownership of your health.

- **Keep all your doctors informed.** Make sure that all healthcare professionals involved in your care have important health information about you and your family. Don't assume your doctors know everything they need to. Keep your medical information up-to-date and be honest with your doctors.
- **Ask for written information about your medicines in a way you can easily understand.** This includes information about the side effects of your medicines. You will know what to expect and be better prepared to handle any problems. That way, you can report the problem right away and get help before it gets worse.
- **Talk with your pharmacist.** He or she can help you use your medicines correctly. Your pharmacist can help

you keep track of the medicines you are taking to prevent harmful drug interactions. If you have any questions about the directions on your medicine labels, ask your pharmacist.

- **When you leave the hospital, ask your doctor to explain the treatment plan you will use at home.** This includes learning about your medicines and finding out when you can get back to your regular activities.
- **Take responsibility for your healthcare.** Don't be afraid to ask questions. It is your right as a patient. Bring a notebook, tape recorder or note keeper with you to the visit. This will help you to focus on your visit with your doctor. If English is not your preferred language, let your doctor know that you need an interpreter.
- **Learn about your condition and the treatments recommended by your healthcare team.** It is a good idea to find out why a test or treatment is needed and how it can help you. Sometimes you may not understand what your healthcare provider wants you to do. That is OK. Let your doctor, nurse or pharmacist know if you don't understand. ■

Prenatal Care MAKES A DIFFERENCE

*Healthy Moms
and babies*

Do you think you might be pregnant? If so, call your doctor today for a pregnancy test. The sooner you find out you are pregnant, the sooner you can get the prenatal care you need to have a healthy pregnancy.

It is best to see your OB/GYN doctor as soon as you find out you are pregnant—at least by the 12th week. The doctor will do an exam and some lab work. You can usually find out your due date at this time. The doctor will make sure you are taking prenatal vitamins and that you have everything you need to have a healthy baby.

You should see your OB/GYN doctor each month for the first 7 months. Then, you should go every 1 to 2 weeks until you deliver. It is important to go to all your doctor visits. Your doctor will be able to find problems early—before they harm you and your baby.



Six to 8 weeks after delivery, you should see your doctor for a postpartum visit. If you had a C-section, you should see your doctor about 2 to 3 weeks after delivery to make sure you are healing OK.

Early and regular prenatal care makes a difference in a healthy pregnancy. If you don't have a doctor, call Member Services at

888.276.2020 (First Choice members) or **866.299.9594** (First Choice Kids members). They will help you get one.

Nurses are available to answer any questions you may have about your pregnancy or your new baby. Just call **888.559.1010** and ask to speak to someone in the Healthy Moms and Babies program. ■

BENEFITS OF **Vitamins and Minerals**

Be sure your family gets the right vitamins and minerals to stay healthy. A daily multivitamin pill can help, if your doctor says to take one. A better source of vitamins and minerals is the food you eat.

Here are some important vitamins and minerals and where you can find them in food:

- **Vitamin A** helps promote healthy skin and growth. You can find it in dairy products (milk and cheese) and yellow vegetables.
- **B vitamins** help make red blood cells. To get B vitamins, eat poultry (chicken and turkey) and soybeans.
- **Vitamin C** helps wounds heal. You can find this vitamin in citrus fruits, such as oranges and grapefruits.

- **Vitamin D** helps teeth and bones grow. It can be found in dairy products. You can also get vitamin D from sunlight.
- **Calcium** helps keep teeth and bones strong. Make sure to drink milk and eat cheese to get your calcium.
- **Iron** helps red blood cells carry oxygen to muscles and organs. It can be found in meats and dates. ■





Calendar of Community Events

Fall 2009

UPSTATE

Asthma Back-To-School Splash

August 15, 1–4 p.m.
Caine Halter Family YMCA,
721 Cleveland Street,
Greenville, S.C.
864.331.1340



3rd Annual Beautiful Jamboree

August 22
Chapman Cultural Center
864.582.7588, extension 336

Red Ribbon Breakfast

August 31, September 1 and 2,
9–11:30 a.m.
Greenville Family Partnership,
Greenville, S.C.
864.467.4099

Greenville Family Partnership's Red Ribbon Auction/Party

September 20, 6–9 p.m.
Greenville Marriott
864.467.4099



Michelin Red Ribbon Classic

September 21, 10 a.m.
Green Valley Country Club
www.greenvillefamilypartnership.org

8th Annual Health Ministry Empowerment Tour

October 24
Presented by IMARA Woman and
Select Health of South Carolina
803.252.0647

LOWCOUNTRY

9th Annual Legs for Life: Free Peripheral Arterial Disease Screenings

September 12, 8 a.m.–noon
Bluffton Medical Services
843.522.5570

September 19, 8 a.m.–noon
Beaufort Medical Plaza
843.522.5570



8th Annual Health Ministry Empowerment Tour,

October 3
Presented by IMARA Woman and Select Health of South Carolina
803.252.0647

Safe Kids Car Seat Check

October 6, 4–6 p.m.
Babies “R” Us,
North Charleston, S.C.
843.792.5327

National Women and Girls Summit

October 16–18, 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
North Charleston Convention Center, 5055 International Boulevard, North Charleston, S.C.
866.982.NWGS (6947)

Health Fair

October 24, 6–10 p.m.
Morris Street Baptist Church, Charleston, S.C.
843.723.0408

Fight for Air Asthma Run/Walk

October 31, 9 a.m.
Brittlebank Park, Charleston, S.C.
843.556.8451, extension 1802

Safe Kids Car Seat Check

November 3, 4–6 p.m.
Babies “R” Us,
North Charleston, S.C.
843.792.5327

11th Farm City Festival

November 14, 10 a.m.–noon
Hampton County Recreation Department, Hampton, S.C.
803.943.2857

World AIDS Day Candlelight March

December 1, 5:30 p.m.
Marion Square Park,
Charleston S.C.
843.747.AIDS (2437)



PEE DEE

13th Annual Diabetes Walk & Health Fair

July 11, 7 a.m.–noon
Choppee Health Complex,
Georgetown, S.C.

Free Diabetes Self-Management Class

Every Tuesday, 10 a.m.–noon
Choppee Health Complex,
Georgetown, S.C.

Child Safety Seat Check

August 20, 4–7 p.m.
Kohl’s, Florence, S.C.
Healthy Hoops Pee Dee
August 29, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
South Florence High School,
Florence, S.C.

Healthy Hoops Pee Dee Challenge

August 29
South Florence High School, 3200
South Irby Street, Florence, SC
843.460.0972

Child Safety Seat Check

September 17, 4–7 p.m.
Kohl’s, Florence, S.C.

A Taste of Health: A Community Conference About Living Better

September 19, 9 a.m.
Fisher Hill Community Baptist Church, Family Life Center,
Cheraw, S.C.

Child Safety Seat Check

October 15, 4–7 p.m.
Kohl’s, Florence, S.C.

Lunch and Learn: Fall into Good Health

October 14, 11 a.m.
Williamsburg County Health Complex, Kingstree, S.C.

MIDLANDS

Clarendon County Kid’s Day

September 26, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Manning High School, Manning, S.C.
803.435.8141

8th Annual Health Ministry Empowerment Tour

October 17
Presented by IMARA Woman and Select Health of South Carolina
803.252.0647

The Annual Diabetes Symposium

October 31,
8 a.m.–noon
Val Diabetes Education Program
Lexington Medical Center, 2720 Sunset Boulevard,
West Columbia, S.C.
803.936.8942



RENEWING YOUR **Healthcare Benefits**

Most Healthy Connections (Medicaid) and Healthy Connections Kids members must renew their benefits every year.

You should get a renewal form each year that must be returned to your caseworker in order to keep your benefits. It is very important that you fill out and return the form as soon as possible. You can simply mail the form back to your caseworker.

When filling out the form, make sure that you answer all the questions. If you don't return the form quickly or fill it out completely, you could lose your benefits, including important medicines and other healthcare. Forgetting to return the form could mean paying for these items on your own.

Also, you may still qualify for Healthy Connections or the new Healthy Connections Kids program even if you have had changes to your family or income. So make sure you return the form even if you think you might not qualify.

If you need help filling out the paperwork or if you have questions, call our Member Services Department toll-free:

First Choice: **888.276.2020**
First Choice Kids: **866.299.9594**

Remember, it is much easier to complete and return the renewal form instead of filling out a new application to get your benefits back. ■



WELL-VISIT **Rewards**

Well-child visits are regular medical checkups that are important for all children from birth to age 21. Well-child visits help make sure your child is growing up healthy. If a doctor finds a problem, it can be treated early and watched.

Getting a well-child visit is easy. Call your child's primary doctor to make an appointment. When you call, tell them that your child is a First Choice or First Choice Kids member. If you need help or have problems making an appointment, call Member Services. ■

Did you know that we will reward you for taking your child to a checkup? The visit is **free**, and you can get a \$10 gift card after your child has had a well visit.



DID YOU Wash Your Hands?

How many times did you hear that growing up? As it turns out, that was a pretty good question.

Lately, we have heard a lot about germs. They can make us pretty sick with a cold, flu, skin infection or upset stomach. Even though we now have fancy cleaners and disinfectants, nothing prevents the spread of germs better than good old-fashioned hand washing.

In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of infection.**

How to Wash Your Hands

- Use soap and warm water (not too hot—you might get burned).

- Rub hands together to make the soap lather.
- Be sure to scrub between your fingers and under your nails.
- Continue to rub and scrub for about 20 seconds. (This is about the time it takes to sing the alphabet song.)
- Rinse hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands with a clean towel.

When to Wash Your Hands

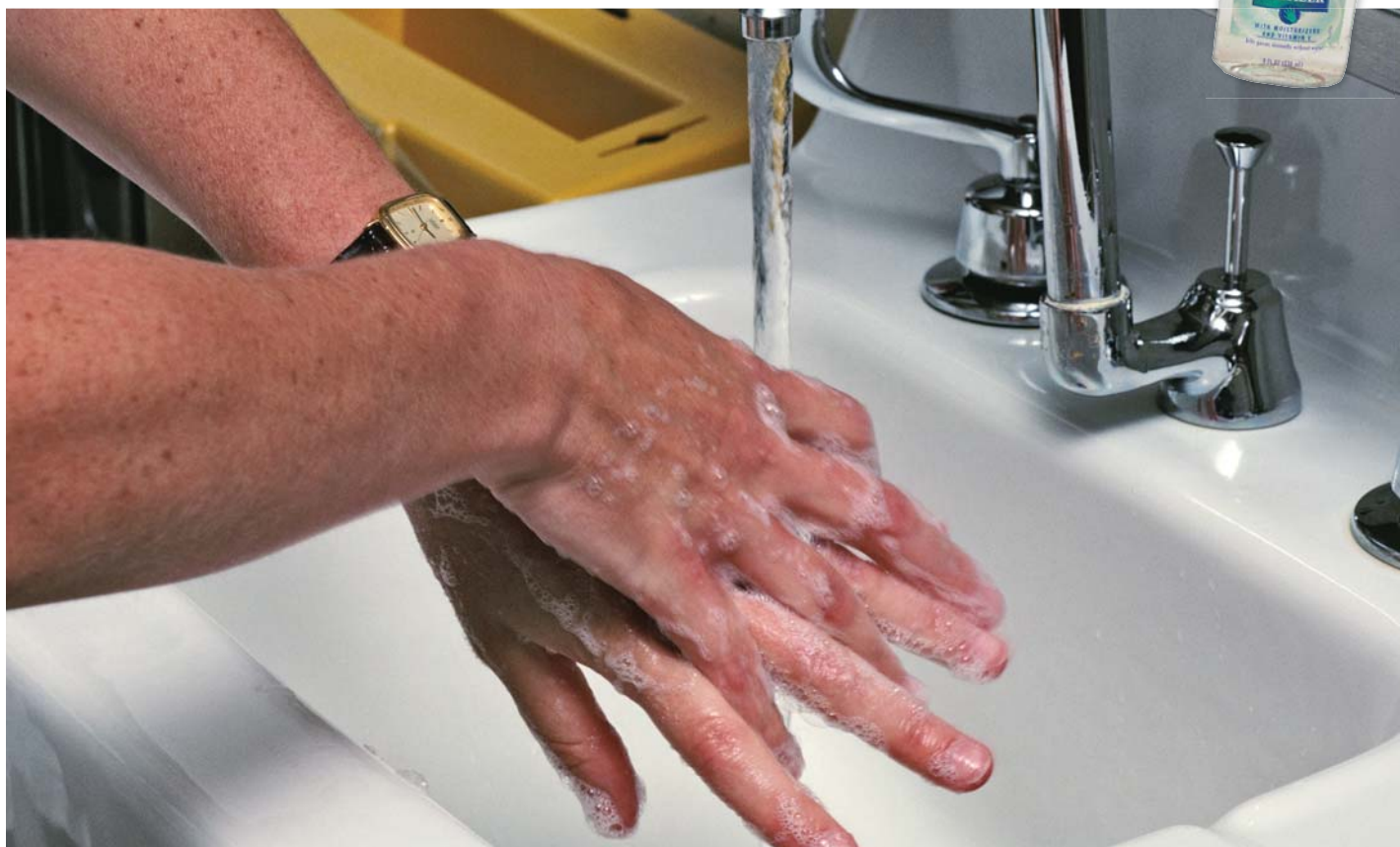
- Before eating or cooking food

- After using the bathroom
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- After touching animals, including family pets
- After cleaning house or handling trash
- Before and after taking care of any person who is sick

Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The time you spend washing your hands could save you days of being sick.

Wash those hands! ■

It's always best to use soap and water to clean your hands. If they are not available, use an alcohol-based gel.



UNDERSTANDING High Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against artery walls. Two numbers are used to measure it. The first or top number is called the **systolic blood pressure**. This is when the heart contracts, forcing blood into the arteries. The second or bottom number is called the **diastolic blood pressure**. This is when the heart relaxes.

Many people with high blood pressure don't have any symptoms and don't know that they have a problem. If you don't treat it, high blood pressure can lead to heart disease, stroke and kidney failure.

How to Stop High Blood Pressure

- Do not smoke.
- Eat a healthy diet. Keep away from foods high in fat, cholesterol and salt.
- Get regular checkups, and ask your doctor about your blood pressure.
- Always take your medicine as your doctor recommends.
- Ask your doctor about a safe exercise program. Most people should try to exercise 30 minutes a day, most days of the week.



What Blood Pressure Is Normal and What Is High?

Blood Pressure	Systolic (Top Number)	Diastolic (Bottom Number)
Normal	Lower than 120	Lower than 80
Slightly High	120–139	80–89
High	140–159	90–99
Very High	160 and higher	100 and higher

Source: For more information, visit the American Heart Association's website: www.americanheart.org.



Fall Fitness

The fall is a great time to begin an exercise program.

With the weather beginning to cool down, you and your family can spend more time outdoors being active.

Regular exercise is one of the best ways to reduce your health risks. Staying active can help prevent and control high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. It can also help strengthen bones and joints. An active lifestyle is important in keeping a healthy weight, and it can also give you more energy and help you sleep better.

Here are some fall fitness ideas to try:

- **Walk.** Walk around your neighborhood and enjoy the cooler weather. Walk the dog or invite a friend to walk with you. A 10-minute walk after every meal adds up to 30 minutes a day.
- **Bike.** Take the family on a bike ride to look at the fall colors.
- **Garden.** Rake leaves, prune your plants, cover everything with mulch and trim the hedges. ■



Medicaid Fraud AND Your Tax Dollars

As an American citizen, your tax dollars are used to help people like yourself receive quality medical care. Unfortunately, some people take advantage of the healthcare system. It is important that your health benefits are there when you need them and that they are used properly by the **all the people and places** that provide you with medical care. Select Health of South Carolina, the company that manages First Choice and First Choice Kids, has a team of investigators who searches for and investigates potential fraud cases and reports them to the proper authorities.

It is also important that you use your benefits in the right way. Don't ever let someone else take or use your First Choice or Medicaid cards. When First Choice and Medicaid benefits are used the wrong way, your tax dollars are wasted and the law has been broken.

Here are a few things that you can do to make sure you, your doctor or someone you know is not using First Choice and Medicaid benefits the wrong way:

- Look closely at your medical bill when you get it. Look to see if your doctor has put anything, such as supplies, on the bill that you don't know about or that you didn't receive.
- Only give your First Choice and Medicaid number to the people who need to give you medical care.
- Share your medical information only with people who need to know, such as the people who work at the front desk at your doctor's office.
- Don't let anyone borrow your First Choice or Medicaid cards.
- Don't order medical care or supplies that you do not need.
- Don't sign blank medical forms.
- Hold on to copies of anything you sign.
- Think before you agree to free medical tests with the use of your First Choice and Medicaid cards. Are these tests really needed?
- Do not give out medical information to telemarketers or salespersons who visit you at your home.
- Talk only to the medical people you know and trust. Don't let others break the law and waste your tax dollars by using First Choice and Medicaid benefits in the wrong way. It is important that you let us know by calling our Corporate and Financial Investigations Unit Hotline at **866.833.9718**, or the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) at **888.364.3224** to report a suspicious activity or possible medical fraud. ■

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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ARE MY CHILD'S SHOTS **Safe?**

As a parent, safety stays on your mind. You spend a lot of time trying to protect your children from harm's way. Sometimes you do this by putting up gates, covering power outlets and locking up toxic chemicals and substances. However, there are other dangers that can be far more harmful and life threatening. These dangers are childhood diseases, such as measles and polio.

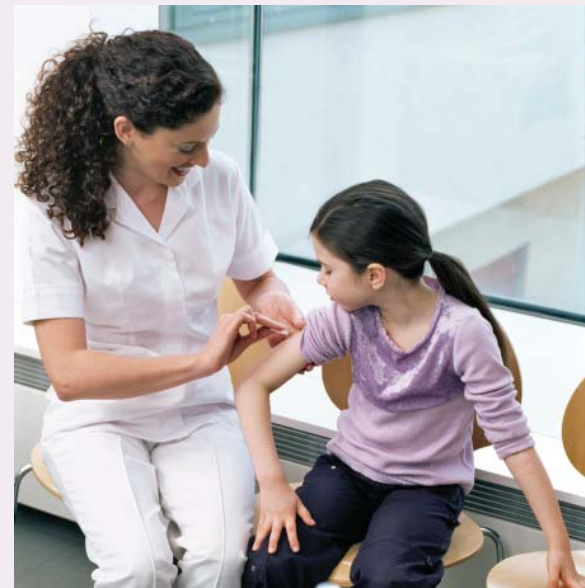
For the last 50 years, many of these preventable and life-threatening childhood diseases have been eliminated in the U.S. because of standard vaccines (or shots) for children and teens. Recently though, parents have raised questions about the safety of these vaccines. Some parents are even choosing not to have their children vaccinated because

of concerns that these shots do more harm than good.

Vaccines are checked for safety every day. Congress has even passed legislation to make sure that these vaccines follow safety measures. Vaccines are also tested and must have special licenses to be given to you and your children. The research that must be done to make sure vaccines are safe before getting a license can take up to 10 years or longer.

One of the main concerns parents have is a misunderstanding about vaccines and autism. Currently, there is no evidence showing a link between autism and immunizations, even after many studies.

So continue to protect your child from things that may be



out of your control, such as common and deadly childhood diseases. Even though we have eliminated many of these diseases, we still need your help in order to keep it that way. Call your doctor today to make sure your children have received all their shots. ■