


FirstChoice
by Select Health of South Carolina
Your Hometown Health Plan


Healthy Connections 

FALL/WINTER
2019–2020

Healthy NOW

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Screenings
every man
should have

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Member
Scholarship
see page 3

Notice of Non-Discrimination

First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. First Choice does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

First Choice provides free aids and services to people with disabilities, such as qualified sign language interpreters and written information in other formats (large print, Braille, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats). We provide free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages.

If you need these services, contact First Choice at **1-888-276-2020** (TTY **1-888-765-9586**). We are available Monday – Friday (8 a.m. – 9 p.m.) and Saturday – Sunday (8 a.m. – 6 p.m.).

If you believe that First Choice 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:

- Grievance Supervisor First Choice Member Services
P.O. Box 40849, Charleston, SC 29423-0849
1-888-276-2020 (TDD/TTY **1-888-765-9586**)
Fax: **1-800-575-0419**
- You can file a grievance by mail, fax, or phone. If you need help filing a grievance, First Choice Member Services 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 (TDD: **1-800-537-7697**)

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



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SH-162106

Language services

English: If your primary language is not English, language assistance services are available to you, free of charge. Call: **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Spanish: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Arabic: إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم **1-888-276-2020** (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: **1-888-765-9586**) (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Portuguese: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Russian: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Vietnamese: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Brazilian Portuguese: Se você fala português do Brasil, os serviços de assistência em sua língua estão disponíveis para você de forma gratuita. Chame **1-888-276-2020** (TTY : **1-888-765-9586**).

Chinese: 如果您說中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**)。

Falam: Falam tawng thiam tu na si le tawng let nak asi mi **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**) ah tang ka pek tul lo in na ko thei.

Hindi: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं, तो आपके लिए मुफ्त भाषा सहायता सेवाएँ उपलब्ध हैं। काल करें: **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**)।

Korean: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**)번으로 전화해 주십시오.

Chin: Hakha holh a hmangmi na si ahcun man lo in holh leh piaknak lei bawmchanh khawh na si. Auh khawhnak: **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

French: Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le **1-888-276-2020** (ATS : **1-888-765-9586**).

Karen: နမ့်ကတိံ ကညီ ကျိာ်အယိံ, နမုန့် ကျိာ်အတိံမတဲလဲ တလဲာ်ဘျုးလဲာ်စ့ နီတမံဘဲာ်သ့န့ာ်လီ။ ကိး **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**) .

Amharic: ማስታወሻ: የሚናገሩት ቋንቋ ኣማርኛ ከሆነ የትርጉም እርዳታ ድርጅቶቻችን በነጻ ሊያግዝዎት ተዘጋጅተዋል። ወደ ሚከተለው ቁጥር ይደውሉ **1-888-276-2020** (መስማት ለተሳናቸው: **1-888-765-9586**)።

Burmese: အကယ်၍ သင်သည်မြန်မာစကား ကို ပြောပါက၊ ဘာသာစကား အကူအညီ၊ အခမဲ့၊ သင့် ငဲ့အတွက် စီစဉ်ဆောင်ရွက်ပေးပါမည်။ ဖုန်းနံပါတ် **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**) သို့ ခေါ်ဆိုပါ။



Member scholarship winner and future vet

First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina member José was recently awarded one of our First Choice Member Scholarships. He graduated from Pelion High School in Lexington County and is now attending Clemson University. “It was so unreal getting the acceptance letter to Clemson,” said José. “This scholarship helps so much. It helps make it feel more realistic to get a college degree.”

During his senior year of high school, José had an internship at a local veterinary office. He did so well that they offered him a summer position. “I know now that this is what I want to do,” said José. “I had considered nursing school, but I grew up around animals. This is a way to combine the medical field with my love of animals.”

José is excited to be at Clemson and working toward becoming a veterinarian. “This scholarship means a lot, and it’s really a lot of help for our family,” said José. “My mom is so proud and that makes me happy.”



José is now attending Clemson University.

We want to get to know you

At First Choice, we want to help make sure you get the best care. We would like to know more about your cultural background and what language is easiest for you to speak and understand when you are getting primary care. The better we know you, the better we can work to meet your health care needs. To help us serve you and your family, please:

1. Call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.
2. Answer 5 questions about your cultural background and language preferences.

If you choose to share this information with us, it will stay private and safe by law. We will use it only to better meet your needs.

You can learn more at www.selecthealthofsc.com. Go to the **Members** section, click on **Information for You**, then **FAQ**. Thank you for helping us improve our services!

We have employees who speak Spanish and are ready to help you.

Dreaming of college or a trade school? Check out the First Choice Member Scholarship.

If you are hoping to go to college or continue your education, First Choice has a scholarship for members that could help make your dream possible.

Visit our website at www.selecthealthofsc.com/community/member-scholarship for more information. If you have questions, please call **1-803-254-5601**. Applications are due by March 1, 2020.

See page 7 for other education-related benefits from First Choice!

Our Quality Improvement program works for you

First Choice has a Quality Improvement program dedicated to excellence in clinical and service areas that are important to you. Each year, the team evaluates our programs and identifies ways we can improve clinical and service areas to support our mission to help people get care, stay well, and build healthy communities. To learn how the Quality Improvement program supports you behind the scenes, visit www.selecthealthofsc.com or call Member Services toll free at 1-888-276-2020.

Your rights and responsibilities

As a First Choice member, you have many rights and responsibilities. For example, you have the right to be treated with respect. You also have the right to take part in choices about your health care. Please visit www.selecthealthofsc.com to see the full list of member rights and responsibilities. Under the **Members** tab, click on **Information for you**. Then select **Member rights and responsibilities**. You can also find it in your Member Handbook. Or call Member Services toll free at 1-888-276-2020.

Your notice of privacy practices

If you would like a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices, call Member Services at 1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. You can also download it at www.selecthealthofsc.com/member/english/info-for-you/privacy-practices.aspx.

Help us better help YOU!

First Choice sends out a **Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems** (CAHPS) survey each year to evaluate services important to you. Around the start of each year, the survey is mailed to a random sample of members. The survey tells us how you feel about your health care providers, our plan, and the care you receive. It helps us improve our programs to better support our mission to help people get quality care, stay well, and build healthy communities.

We will mail the next CAHPS survey in early 2020. If you get one, please fill it out and mail it back in the prepaid envelope provided. For more information, visit www.selecthealthofsc.com or call Member Services toll free at 1-888-276-2020.

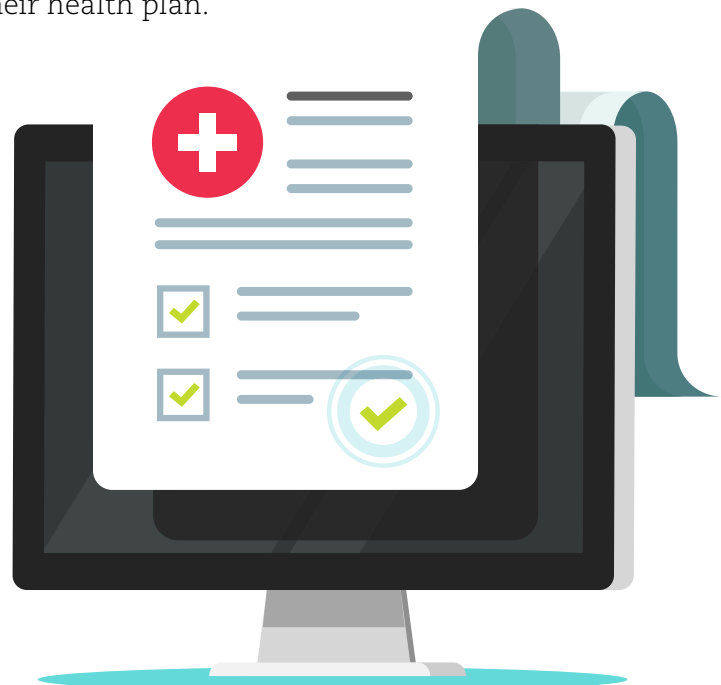
Your opinion matters

The 2019 child survey showed many good results. The parents or guardians of our child members responded as follows:

- 95% surveyed said they received care quickly.
- 93% said they had a good experience with their doctors.
- 93% said they are pleased with First Choice as their health plan.

From the 2019 adult survey, we have found some areas we can work to improve:

- 88% of our members said they got excellent customer service.
- 88% of members said they had a good experience with their doctor.
- 83% of members said they are pleased with First Choice as their health plan.



Stay #FirstChoiceFit together this holiday season

Looking for ways to stay well and spend some quality time with family this holiday season? Get together to cook and enjoy eating a fun, healthy meal! It is OK to keep it simple.

Brooke Brittain, a registered dietitian with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's SNAP-Ed Program, shares these tips for making healthy cooking a breeze:

- Use frozen veggies instead of fresh ones. That way, you do not have to worry about using all of them before they go bad. It can also save you time since most are cut in pieces.
- Make more of some ingredients than you need for the recipe. In the recipe on this page, rice is a good choice. Then you will have it ready for use in meals later in the week.

Watch videos of Brooke Brittain and Marcus Lattimore cooking up Chinese chicken and veggies and other meals! Learn more at www.selecthealthofsc.com/firstchoicefit.

Chinese chicken and veggies

Replace chicken with firm tofu for a meat-free option!

Ingredients

1 cup brown rice	6 oz. boneless chicken pieces or firm tofu
1 medium carrot	
½ lb. broccoli	
2 medium celery stalks	¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
1 small jalapeño or other chili pepper	1 tbsp. brown sugar
1 clove garlic	1 tbsp. cornstarch
	2 tbsp. canola oil
	½ tsp. ground ginger

Directions

Cook rice following package directions. Cover and set aside. While rice is cooking, peel carrot. Rinse and chop peeled carrot, broccoli, and celery into pieces of the same size. Rinse and mince jalapeño. Peel and finely chop garlic. Remove any skin from chicken. Cut chicken or tofu into small pieces. In a small bowl, stir together soy sauce, brown sugar, and cornstarch. Add 1 teaspoon of minced jalapeño. Stir.

Heat oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add ground ginger and stir. Add chicken. Stirring occasionally, cook until chicken is no longer pink and turning slightly golden, about 2 minutes. Add chopped veggies. Stir often. Sauté until veggies are tender and chicken is completely cooked, about 5 to 7 minutes.

Add soy sauce mixture. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer until sauce is slightly thickened, about 2 minutes. Serve over warm brown rice.

Per serving

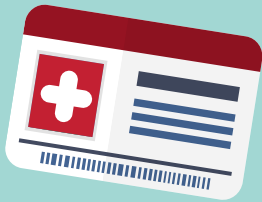
Serves 4. Each 1 ½ cup serving provides: 330 calories, 80 calories from fat, 9 g total fat (1 g saturated fat, 0 trans fat), 20 mg cholesterol, 490 mg sodium, 50 g total carbohydrate, 4 g dietary fiber, 7 g sugars, 13 g protein.

Source: Brooke A. Brittain, M.S., R.D., L.D., C.H.E.S., C.L.C., SNAP-Ed Program Coordinator, S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.



Top-rated* care at your fingertips

By app, text, social media, and more!



Standard messaging and data fees may apply. Only post images with parent/legal guardian permission.

*First Choice by Select Health is rated higher by network providers than all other Medicaid plans in South Carolina, according to an independent provider satisfaction survey conducted by Morpace Market Research & Consulting, a National Committee for Quality Assurance-certified vendor, Nov. 2018.

First Choice now has even more ways to help you stay connected! These new tools put our top-rated* care at your fingertips, making it easier and faster to access First Choice and important information to help you be healthy.

Download our new app! Visit the Google Play or Apple App Store and search for **FCSH Mobile**. After downloading the app, you will be able to:

- See an electronic version of your ID card, and fax it from your phone to your health care provider.
- Find a health care provider or pharmacy near you.
- Use one-touch calling and get directions powered by Google.
- Access the Member Handbook and online preferred drug list.
- Send a message to First Choice Member Services.

Get text reminders and updates in real time! You can get texts about routine well visits, tests, and screenings to help keep you healthy, along with yearly eligibility review reminders. You can also request two-way texting with your Care Manager.

Use our searchable website to find no-cost or reduced-cost local services for medical care, food, job training, and more. First Choice members can get help from trained resource navigators, too.

Follow @firstchoicebyselecthealth on Facebook and Instagram! Be the first to know about events and activities near you. Get recipes, wellness and exercise tips, health information, and more!

Post a selfie being healthy!
#FirstChoiceFit



Marcus Lattimore, former University of South Carolina star running back and San Francisco 49er.

Online resources for you!

Go to www.selecthealthofsc.com to find resources like the Member Handbook, Copayment Reference Guide, and online Provider Directory for your First Choice plan. If you need a printed copy of these items, please call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**. You can also find our online calendar of community events at the bottom of our community web page.

Your First Choice: Extra benefits to help you stay healthy!

First Choice offers all of the standard Medicaid benefits plus extra benefits for every stage of your and your family's life:

- **Rewards**, such as gift cards, for completing healthy behaviors.
- **No-cost maternity support program:** regional baby showers with car seats, diaper bags, and more for qualifying members; newborn circumcision up to 6 months old; and Keys to Your Care texting* for expectant moms.
- **No-cost educational assistance programs:** college scholarships for selected qualifying members, GED vouchers for qualifying members, reading assistance services, books for children, and back-to-school events with school supplies and haircuts for grades K–12 (while supplies last).
- **First Choice Fit camps** with Marcus Lattimore for qualifying members.
- **State-of-the-art community center:** access to no-cost services provided by valued partners such as financial literacy classes, cooking demos, exercise classes*, legal assistance*, tax appointments, Benefit Bank services with certified counselors, and more.
- **Access to member-only technology resources** such as our mobile app and texting, as well as social media platforms. Searchable website to find no-cost or reduced-cost local services for medical care, food, job training, and more.
- **Well-woman services** including mobile mammography.
- **Swimming lessons*** for qualified members at regional YMCA locations with a First Choice voucher.
- **Regional member appreciation events.***



Coming in 2020!
Visit our website
www.selecthealthofsc.com
to learn more!

Keeping your First Choice and Healthy Connections benefits

Every year you may need to verify your Healthy Connections (Medicaid) eligibility and choose a health plan. This process means filling out the Annual Review Form from Healthy Connections and returning it within 30 calendar days from the date on the form. We want to keep YOU as a member!

Be sure to fill out your form completely. You will need to choose First Choice to keep getting benefits from us. We want to be there for you. Make us your first choice. If you have questions or need help with the form:

- Go to www.SCDHHS.gov.
- Call the South Carolina Healthy Connections Member Services Center at **1-888-549-0820**.
- Call First Choice Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.

Return the Annual Review Form to:
SCDHHS—Central Mail
P.O. Box 100101
Columbia, SC 29202-3101

If you have questions or need a form sent to you, call South Carolina Healthy Connections Member Service Center at **1-888-549-0820** or First Choice Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.

“I really encourage other moms to use First Choice because the benefits are so great and the people are so helpful. I know that there’s always someone I can call to help me navigate through the services my children need.

First Choice absolutely helps me take better care of my children.”

—Sonya Coe



Taking antidepressant medicines

Many people benefit from antidepressant medication. Once you have decided to treat your depression with medication, you will need to know how it works and how to take it.

It can take 2 to 6 weeks at the right level for your antidepressant to start working, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. At first, your sleep may improve. After that, your mood may also improve. While you may still feel the same kinds of troubles or concerns as before, now they may not seem as overwhelming. Keep taking the medicine and stay in close contact with your health care provider.

If you have taken your medicine for months and feel it is not working, contact your health care provider. You may need to have your dosage increased, add an

additional medicine, or change to a different antidepressant.

Never stop taking your pills without help from your health care provider. Stopping suddenly may make you feel nauseated, dizzy, and unable to sleep. It could also give you headaches and nightmares. Your depression symptoms may also return.

Call your health care provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Vomiting that will not stop.
- Not able to pass your urine.
- Can't do your usual activities.
- Illness that makes you stop taking your medicine.
- Extreme anxiety or changes in mood or behavior.
- Thoughts of, or intent to, harm others.
- Thoughts of, or intent to, harm yourself.

Medicine updates

Please visit www.selecthealthofsc.com for up-to-date pharmacy information. This includes changes approved by the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee. This committee meets 4 times a year. Committee members vote on changes to the preferred drug list, including which medicines to add or remove. The website also includes:

- Preferred drug list updates. These are in the **Member tools** area of the website.
- New prior authorization criteria and procedures for submitting a prior authorization request. Click on **Benefits**, then **Prescription Benefits**. Finally, click **Prior Approvals and Authorizations**.
- Pharmacy benefit restrictions. Find these by clicking **Benefits** and then **Prescription Benefits**.
- Drug recall information. Find this in the **Information for You** section.



Get help now.
 If you are feeling suicidal, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255**. You can also chat with a trained crisis worker online at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Health screenings *every man* should have

Screening tests can find diseases early, when they are easiest to treat. Talk with your doctor about which preventive medical tests you need for good health. If you need any help making appointments, please call Member Services at 1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586).

VISION DISORDERS — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends having a dilated eye exam at least every 2 years starting at age 60. You may also need a glaucoma check. Start at age 40 if you are African-American. If you have diabetes, have this eye exam each year.

HEART HEALTH — Starting at age 20, you should have a fasting lipoprotein profile done every 4 to 6 years, according to the American Heart Association. The blood test looks at LDL, HDL, and total cholesterol. Your cholesterol may need to be checked more often if you have an increased risk for heart disease or stroke.

COLORECTAL CANCER — The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends testing for colorectal cancer if you are age 50 to 75. You and your doctor can decide which test is best. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need to be tested before you turn 50.

DEPRESSION — If you have felt down or hopeless for 2 or more weeks or you have little interest in things you usually enjoy, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) urges you to talk with your doctor. Depression is one of the most common mental health issues in the U.S. and is treatable, according to the NIMH.

BLOOD PRESSURE — Starting at age 40, you should have your blood pressure checked each year, says the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. High blood pressure increases your chance for stroke and heart and kidney disease. If you have high blood pressure, you may need medicine to control it.

OTHER CANCERS — Ask your doctor if and when you should be tested for prostate, lung, oral, skin, or other cancers.

Athlete and former South Carolina Gamecock football star Marcus Lattimore encourages men to get health screenings.

5 tips to help new moms during baby's first year

As a new parent, you are often learning as you go. From sleeping to teething, these tips can help you not only survive baby's first year, but even thrive.

1 Put your baby down drowsy but awake. Doing so will help your baby learn how to fall asleep without being held or rocked. That way, when he or she wakes at night, returning to sleep without help will be easier.

2 Ask for help. Babies cry. That is a fact. But when nothing seems to work, crying can take a toll on you, especially if you are exhausted. Do not be afraid to ask for help. Call a friend or family member. You and your partner can take turns trying to calm the baby. If needed, set your baby down in a safe space, such as the crib. Then step away for a few minutes to take deep breaths before picking the baby up again.

3 Wear your baby. Holding your baby will not spoil him or her. In fact, it helps babies feel safe and supports parent-baby bonding. But sometimes you need your hands free. That is when baby-wearing can help. Wraps and other baby carriers keep your baby close and calm while you work on your to-do list.

4 Read together. Introducing your baby to books early on can help support important skills, such as literacy, down the road. The times you spend reading with your baby may become some of your favorite memories.

5 Soothe tender gums. Between 6 and 12 months, your baby begins sprouting teeth. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), you can offer your baby a teether made of solid rubber to chew on. This may reduce discomfort. The AAP warns not to use liquid-filled or frozen teething rings or numbing gels. They are not safe for babies.

When you have questions about your baby's health or safety, be sure to reach out to your child's doctor.

Schedule your postpartum follow-up exam with your OB-GYN provider to take place within 3 to 8 weeks of your delivery date. It is best if this visit includes a postpartum depression screening. Talk with your OB-GYN provider about this. If you need help making appointments, please call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.

Do you need a mammogram?

Getting regular mammograms might help you save a breast or even your life. These images can show breast changes years before physical symptoms of cancer start. This allows doctors to find breast cancer early, when it is most treatable.

Mammography is an important tool. But its benefits and limits vary based on your age and risk for breast cancer. Experts have different recommendations for mammography. Currently, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force says women ages 50 to 74 should be screened every 2 years.

Women at high risk for breast cancer because of their personal or family histories may need mammograms earlier and more often. Talk with your doctor about your risk for breast cancer before deciding when to start getting mammograms and how often to have them.



Important vaccinations for your family

Vaccinate against HPV

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a group of more than 150 viruses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also warns that HPV infections are very common. In fact, about 1 in 4 Americans has an HPV infection.

The HPV vaccine, or shot, can keep girls **and boys** from getting certain HPV strains. Yet the CDC reports that 51% of adolescents have not had all of the recommended doses.

HPV causes cancer

As well as getting rid of the HPV virus, the CDC says clinical trials show the HPV shot provides nearly 100% protection from precancers.

Every year, cancer caused by HPV affects 12,100 males, according to the CDC. This includes cancer of the throat and penis. There are no tests to detect these cancers, which are very tough to treat in their late stages.

Flu shots: Who needs 2?

The CDC recommends children who are 6 months old through 8 years old get 2 flu shots. Infants and young children are at high risk for serious flu complications. According to the CDC, thousands of young flu patients end up in the hospital each year.

Talk to your child's health care provider about timing and dosing of flu vaccines. Also ask about the availability of flu shots at local participating pharmacies with no copay for First Choice members who are 12 and older.

When to have key shots

You can help your child stay healthy. Ask your preteens' primary care provider about the HPV vaccine and other important shots. The CDC suggests:

- **HPV at 9 to 12 years old.** A second shot should be given 6 to 12 months after the first shot.
- **Meningococcal conjugate (MCV4) at 11 to 12 years old.** A booster shot should be given at age 16.
- **Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap) at 11 to 12 years old.**

We are here for you!
For help with appointments, transportation, and your medicine, please call Member Services at
1-888-276-2020
(TTY 1-888-765-9586).



Measles vaccine: Children need 2 doses

Measles spreads easily through coughs and sneezes. According to the CDC, up to 9 out of 10 people exposed to measles will become infected — unless they are protected. The CDC recommends that children get their first dose of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine between the ages of 12 and 15 months. They should have the second shot between the ages of 4 and 6 years.

First Choice is here for you! This newsletter and other materials are translated into Spanish and can be found on our website at www.selecthealthofsc.com. If you need help with translations of other documents, or in other languages, please call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.

Disponibilidad de traducción

¡First Choice está aquí para usted! Este boletín informativo y otros materiales están traducidos al español, y se pueden encontrar en nuestro sitio de Internet en www.selecthealthofsc.com. Si necesita ayuda con traducciones de otros documentos, o en otros idiomas, llame a Servicios al Miembro al **1-888-276-2020**.

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Good cholesterol levels? Why you still might need a statin

If you have diabetes or a history of cardiovascular problems, your doctor may prescribe a medicine called a statin, even if you do not have high cholesterol. Here is why.

What is LDL cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy material your body uses to break down fatty foods and make hormones. Your liver makes all the cholesterol your body needs. Extra cholesterol comes from eating foods like meat, poultry, and full-fat dairy products. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad,” cholesterol can build up on the walls of your arteries causing them to narrow and become

clogged. This raises your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Statin are medicines that reduce how much LDL cholesterol the liver makes and is already in your blood.

Should I take a statin?

Your doctor may prescribe a statin if you have a high risk of developing cardiovascular disease in the next 10 years. To figure out your risk, your doctor looks at your LDL level and your:

- Age, gender, and race.
- Blood pressure.
- Family history of premature cardiovascular disease.

- Smoking habits.
- Medicines, such as drugs for high blood pressure.

According to the American Heart Association, doctors may want people older than age 21 to take a statin if they have a very high LDL level, of 190 mg/dl or more. The AHA says doctors may also advise taking a statin if you have diabetes or have had a heart attack, stroke, or peripheral artery disease (PAD). Talk with your doctor about whether or not a statin is right for you.



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