

# Emphasize the importance of prenatal and postpartum care

 [pages.azblue.com/Recommended-care-visits-for-new-moms---May-2021.html](https://pages.azblue.com/Recommended-care-visits-for-new-moms---May-2021.html)

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HEDIS<sup>®</sup> measures<sup>1</sup> address a broad range of important health issues. Among them is the Prenatal and Postpartum Care (PPC) measure.<sup>2</sup>

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## **Measure by measure: Encouraging a continuum of care through the “fourth trimester”**

The PPC measure assesses the timeliness of women’s access to care:

- The percentage of deliveries in which women had a prenatal care visit in the first trimester, on or before the enrollment start date or within 42 days of enrollment with Blue Cross<sup>®</sup> Blue Shield<sup>®</sup> of Arizona (BCBSAZ).<sup>2</sup>
- The percentage of deliveries in which women had a postpartum visit on or between 7 and 84 days after delivery.<sup>2</sup>

The stakes are high: Each year, 25% of women who give birth in the U.S. have complications during pregnancy, delivery, or the period after birth. They can be initiated by the pregnancy, or result from preexisting health conditions or life situations. Pregnancy-related complications—including maternal

obesity, gestational diabetes mellitus, anemia, pregnancy-induced hypertension or pre-eclampsia, as well as mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety—can have a long-term effect on the mother’s or the baby’s health, or both.

Equally alarming, nearly two-thirds of pregnancy-related deaths could be prevented if women had better access to and quality of care, and made healthier lifestyle choices.

## **Recommendations for providers**

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Avoiding gaps in care will decrease the risk of pregnancy complications and improve health outcomes for mothers and infants. Patients typically follow through on scheduling prenatal and postpartum checkups when recommended by their provider. Tips for success:

- Send reminders to new mothers about the importance of prenatal and postpartum care, and book an appointment.
- Take advantage of prenatal visits to discuss updating the mother's immunization records and to deliver flu and Tdap vaccines.
- Partner with obstetricians to ensure that prenatal and postpartum visits are scheduled in a timely manner. Pediatricians and family providers can support new mothers by reminding them to schedule a postpartum checkup during their baby's first well-child visit.

For more information about this HEDIS measure or the recommended actions for BCBSAZ network providers, visit the secure provider portal at [azblue.com/providers](https://azblue.com/providers): “Population Health > HEDIS” or contact a HEDIS coordinator at 602-864-5273.

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More than 90% of America’s health plans, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, use HEDIS to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service. HEDIS helps providers and health plans see where to focus their improvement efforts for higher-quality outcomes.

<sup>1</sup>Source: [NCQA, “HEDIS® and Performance Measurement”](#)

<sup>2</sup>Source: [NCQA, “Prenatal and Postpartum Care \(PPC\)”](#)

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