

# Live healthy!

## Member Newsletter



### Message from Heather

Dear Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Health Choice Members,  
Thank you for trusting us as your AHCCCS health plan. Here are some reminders about staying healthy in school, gift cards for staying healthy, and heat safety!

#### Stay Healthy During the School Year – Well-Child Visits Are No Cost to You

Keep your child healthy with a well-child visit. These checkups help your child stay healthy and are at no cost to you. Call your doctor to schedule a visit.

##### Rewards for well-child visits

Up to \$150 annually, \$25 per visit, up to six visits

- \$25 per visit up to six visits during 0-15 months of age
- \$25 for one visit during 16-30 months of age
- \$25 annually for ages 3 to under 21
- Dentist visit (oral evaluation)  
– \$25 annually for ages 2 to under 21

##### Moms-to-Be

- Prenatal visit – first trimester (first 12 weeks of pregnancy) – \$25 annually
- Postpartum visit (7 to 84 days after delivery) – \$25 annually

#### Additional activities and screenings

- Completion of your Health Appraisal  
– \$25 annually ages 3 to 17
- Breast Cancer Screening – \$50 annually  
for women ages 40 to 74 years of age

If you are not sure who your doctor is, need help with getting a ride, or have any questions, call Member Services at **1-800-322-8670**. You can also visit [azblue.com/giftcards](https://azblue.com/giftcards).

#### Stay Safe in the Arizona Heat

No matter how long we've lived in the desert, the heat can sneak up on you quickly.

Please remember to:

- Drink lots of water
- Stay indoors during the hottest part of the day
- Wear sunscreen

If you need help finding a place to cool off, we can help connect you to local resources. Visit **heat.az.gov** to find cooling centers, places for water, and more.

We're here to support you and your family – do not hesitate to reach out if you need us!

Sincerely,

**Heather Carter**



## Welcome to the team!

**Dr. Ron Lopez, Chief Medical Officer,  
Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Arizona Health Choice**

Thank you for allowing me to introduce myself. My name is Dr. Ron Lopez, and I have joined the team as the new Chief Medical Officer.

My background is in family and sports medicine. I have taken care of patients for the last 20 years in various places from the West Coast (San Diego) to the East Coast (New York). No matter where I provide healthcare for others, my goals do not change.

I want to help you, and your family, keep healthy by making sure you have access to quality healthcare. Please remember: Annual visits, including those for children and teens under 21, are no cost to you. These checkups are so important. If we track your health and happen to find something is wrong, and we catch it early, we can treat it to prevent more serious problems.

As a father of three daughters, I know we all want our children to live happy and healthy lives. Plus, as a parent, we want to be healthy so we can be there for our kids. If your doctor recommends a screening, such as a mammogram, colonoscopy, or cervical cancer screening, please take the time to do the exam. It is no cost, and the few minutes spent checking your health is a win for everyone. And you can get gift cards for completing certain exams. Visit [azblue.com/giftcards](https://azblue.com/giftcards) to learn more.

One last item I want to touch on with my fellow parents is the importance of something we sometimes all forget about – our teeth! It is important your child sees a dentist every six months to avoid cavities. Untreated tooth decay is not only painful, but if it's left untreated it could lead to tooth loss. I hope you will take the time to read the information following my note about easy ways to keep teeth healthy, as well as information from AHCCCS on the importance of fluoride. These appointments are no cost as well.

It's a pleasure to be of service,

Dr. Ron Lopez

### Reminder About Immunizations

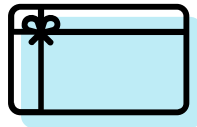
Take these steps to be sure you and your child are up to date.

- Check with your provider to find out which immunizations your child needs.
- It is not too late to catch up.
- Remember, teenagers need them too!
- Annual flu shots help kids stay healthy during flu season.





## Get \$25 for Taking Your Child to the Dentist



It can be so rewarding to see a child smile brightly. Healthy teeth are key to keeping the rest of the body healthy. For example, too many germs in the mouth can lead to respiratory (breathing) issues. This is why dental experts say children should see their dentist every six months to get a healthy start in life.

The great news is there is no cost for these visits. Plus, you can get a \$25 gift card for taking your child to the dentist through our Healthy Rewards program. Visit [azblue.com/giftcards](https://www.azblue.com/giftcards) or call Member Services with questions.

We also have some easy ways to keep your child's teeth healthy in between visits:

- Start cleaning your child's teeth as soon as they come in.
- After each feeding, wipe your baby's gums with clean, damp gauze or a washcloth.
- Never let your baby fall asleep with a bottle in their mouth, and avoid sugary drinks.
- Avoid spreading germs – don't share food, spoons, forks, cups, straws, toothbrushes, or pacifiers.
- Ask your child's dentist to apply dental sealants, when appropriate. These keep out food and germs that cause cavities.

If you don't know who your child's dentist is or want to change to another dentist, please call Member Services at **1-800-322-8670, TTY: 711**.

## Don't Forget Fluoride

Fluoride is like a vitamin topping for your child's teeth. It should be applied twice a year by either your doctor or dentist. It is painted on top of the teeth. Fluoride varnish is safe and will not harm your child.

A primary care provider (PCP) can apply fluoride as often as every three months between the ages of 6 months up to 5 years of age, after the first tooth comes in.

Additionally, your child can receive one fluoride treatment every six months starting at age 12 months and up to 21 years at their dentist.

We encourage parents and guardians to request the application of fluoride varnish at their child's next dental or well-child visit. It can't, and won't, hurt! Sometimes it is reported in the news and on social media that fluoride is not safe. We want to share more information from the experts at AHCCCS about why they recommend it.

# Fluoride Facts



Fluoride is a natural mineral that may be found in many water sources – even oceans and lakes. It helps keep teeth strong and healthy by making the outer surface of your teeth even harder, which helps prevent the acid in the foods and beverages we eat and drink from causing cavities. Fluoride can also help repair weakened tooth structure before cavities can form in both children and adults.

- Studies show water fluoridation reduces cavities by at least 25% in children and adults. It especially benefits people who are not able to get regular dental care.
- It is safe and effective. Fluoride, like calcium and sodium, is another mineral that contributes to a healthy body. Adding fluoride to water is much like adding vitamin D to milk.
- More adults are keeping their natural teeth throughout their lifetimes due in part to the benefits they receive from water fluoridation.
- By preventing tooth decay, community water fluoridation has been shown to save money, both for families and the healthcare system.

## What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a coating painted on teeth with a brush or cotton swab. This helps prevent new cavities from starting and stop the spread of cavities that have already started. Fluoride now comes in flavors children like and is painless. All a child needs to do is not eat or drink for 30 to 60 minutes to let the fluoride harden.

## Who should get fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is important for all children. This is very important for children who do not have fluoride in their water and eat a lot of food with sugar like cookies, candy, and cake.

The younger the child is when the varnish begins to be applied to the teeth, the better. Your baby should see the dentist for a checkup and fluoride as soon as the first tooth comes in. Fluoride can be painted on the teeth then and put on again every three to six months to make sure teeth stay healthy.

If you have a very young child who has not had their first dental visit, your medical doctor might apply varnish and recommend following up with a dentist.

## Other ways to get fluoride:

- From drinking fluoridated tap water
- When it is put onto the tooth's surface such as with fluoride-containing toothpaste
- Over-the-counter fluoride mouthwashes
- Fluoride varnish application by your dentist

To prevent cavities, it is best to get a little bit from all sources.

## Healthy Smile Tips

- Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth daily with floss.
- Eat a healthy diet that limits sugary beverages and snacks.
- See your dentist at least twice a year for prevention and treatment of oral disease.





## Tips for Self-Managing Prediabetes

If your provider says you have entered the danger zone and have prediabetes, you can take control and reverse course. Prediabetes means your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but they are not yet high enough to be type 2 diabetes.

Below is a summary of risk factors and ways to keep healthy.

Risk factors for prediabetes include:

- Being 45 years or older
- Being overweight
- Having a close relative with type 2 diabetes
- Being physically active fewer than three times a week
- Having a history of gestational diabetes

Prediabetes can often be reversed, and blood sugar levels returned to a normal range, with simple lifestyle changes.

### Manage your weight

Losing a small amount of weight can help reduce your risk of diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends losing 5 to 7% of your body weight, which is 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person.

### Get active

Regular exercise can help you lose weight and regulate blood sugar levels. The CDC recommends getting at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week. That's 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Remember to check with your provider first before starting any exercise program.

### Eat a healthy diet

Take small steps by trying these ideas:

- Forget frying. Try roasting, broiling, grilling, steaming, and baking instead.
- Cut out drinks with added sugar, like soda and fruit juice.
- Keep a food diary to keep track of what you're really eating. It can be eye-opening.
- Take some time to plan meals each week. See where you can swap in healthier options, like brown rice in place of white rice or a quick salad instead of a fast-food meal.
- Focus on produce, whole grains, and lean protein, like chicken and fish.

# Family Planning Services

## Family planning services are available to you.

You can get family planning services from any primary care provider (PCP), maternity provider, or appropriate family planning provider. You do not need a referral for these services. There are no copayments for these services.

## What Is Birth Control?

Birth control means keeping the egg and the sperm from meeting or preventing the fertilized egg from attaching to the lining of the uterus. Some birth control methods are better than others.

## Who Should Use Birth Control?

You should use birth control if you have sex or plan to have sex and you want to prevent pregnancy. Your PCP will help you decide what the best birth control method is for you.

## Family planning services include, but are not limited to:

- Pregnancy screening
  - Birth control counseling, education, and supplies
  - Natural family planning
  - Birth control pills
  - Condoms
  - Suppositories
  - Foams
  - Creams
  - Birth control patches
  - Diaphragms
  - Cervical caps
  - Hormone shots (Depo-Provera)
  - Sterilization, regardless of gender, which includes tubal ligation or vasectomy for members age 21 years and older. Medicaid does not pay for reverse sterilization. Prior authorization from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Health Choice is required
  - Counseling, testing, and treatment for STIs
  - HIV testing, counseling, and referral to specialty provider for positive results
  - Emergency contraceptive pill (morning-after pill). This pill is taken after unplanned sex to prevent pregnancy
  - Hysteroscopic tubal sterilizations for members 21 years of age and older. Hysteroscopic tubal sterilizations are not immediately effective upon insertion of the sterilization device. It is expected the procedure will be an effective sterilization procedure three months following insertion.
- Therefore, members need to continue another form of birth control for the first three months following insertion. OB/GYN providers need to obtain a hysterosalpingogram three months after the insertion of the sterilization device to confirm that the tubes are occluded
- Associated medical and laboratory examinations and radiological procedures, including ultrasound studies related to family planning
  - Treatment of complications resulting from contraceptive use, including emergency treatment

## Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Health Choice also covers Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC), and Immediate Postpartum Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (IPLARC).

LARC and IPLARC are methods for family planning that provide effective contraception for an extended period of time. This type of birth control has little or no maintenance. LARC and IPLARC are a covered benefit. LARC and IPLARC methods include:

- Intrauterine devices (IUD)
- Birth control implants (underneath the skin)

**Remember!** In order to reduce the risk of STIs for both you and your partner, please use a condom correctly every time you have sex.

# Protecting You and Your Baby from HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)

The best way to keep an unborn baby safe from HIV is to be sure mom is tested. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says the earlier HIV is diagnosed and treated, the better for you and your baby.

Blood will be drawn during your first prenatal visit to test for HIV. If your HIV test is positive, your OB provider will send you to a specialist to treat your HIV infection. You will also be provided with counseling.

Although there is no cure for HIV, there is treatment that can help reduce the risk of passing HIV to your baby during pregnancy and birth.

HIV attacks the body's immune system. Once HIV is in your blood, it controls and kills CD4 cells (also called T cells). These cells help your immune system fight disease. If you have HIV, you're HIV-positive.

HIV is spread through infected body fluids, like blood, semen, and breast milk. Do not share things such as razors, toothbrushes, and needles as they contain blood.

**Treatment:** HIV is treated with a combination of medicines called antiretrovirals (also called ART). ART can help reduce the amount of HIV in your body (also called viral load) and keep your immune system stronger. Taking ART the right way every day can keep your viral load low and help reduce the risk of passing HIV to your baby during pregnancy and delivery.

## Will HIV affect my baby?

Talk to your maternity provider before delivery.

- If your viral load remains undetectable, it may be possible to have a vaginal delivery.
- If you have high or unknown levels of HIV in your body, a C-section can help reduce the chances of passing it to your baby.

Visit: [cdc.gov/pregnancy-hiv-std-tb-hepatitis/php/screening/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy-hiv-std-tb-hepatitis/php/screening/index.html)



## Help with Food Costs



We have some important information to share: You may be eligible to get help with food costs. Many in Arizona don't know they qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides families and individuals with money to help buy food at the store.

To apply for SNAP visit:  
[HealthArizonaPlus.gov](https://www.healtharizonaplus.gov)

## Got SNAP Already? Double Your Dollars

Already have SNAP? Did you know if you buy fruits and vegetables at farmer's markets, you can double your dollars? For example, you can get \$40 worth of fruit and vegetables for \$20. [Click here for Double Up locations](#)

You are also invited to [visit our Eat Healthy web page](#) to learn about other food resources and low-cost healthy recipes!

## Community Resources

We take pride in providing for your health and well-being.

If you need help with resources for food, housing, or bill assistance, please visit our Community Resource Guide at [azblue.com/Medicaidresources](https://www.azblue.com/Medicaidresources).

You can also get help by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting [211Arizona.org](https://www.211arizona.org). The 211 Arizona hotline is available from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., 7 days a week in your preferred language.

## Help with Medicaid Coverage

If you have questions about your AHCCCS coverage or eligibility, call us!



Our team is here to help. Call our bilingual Community Assistors Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **1-844-390-8935**.

You can also visit [HealthArizonaPlus.gov](https://www.healtharizonaplus.gov) to update your AHCCCS information.

## Important Reminders About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Health Choice Pathway coverage:

**Vaccines** – Our plan covers most Part D vaccines at no cost to you even if you haven't paid your deductible. Call Member Services for more information.

**Insulin** – You will not pay more than \$35 for a one month supply of each insulin product covered by our plan, no matter what cost-sharing tier it is on, even if you have not paid your deductible.





## Specialized Support for Dementia

We are always striving to connect you with the best care possible for all healthcare challenges. This is why we want you to know about a new service to help those diagnosed with dementia.

**Hospice of the Valley's Supportive Care for Dementia** program offers:

- 24/7 phone support
- Home visits
- Caregiver groups and education
- Connections to screening, diagnosis, and treatment

Serving members Valley-wide!

3811 N 44th St, Phoenix, AZ 85018

**602-767-8300**

[hov.org/dementia/supportive-care-for-dementia/](https://hov.org/dementia/supportive-care-for-dementia/)

For more information on our in-network Centers of Excellence doctors, visit [azblue.com/specialtycare](https://azblue.com/specialtycare).

## Communicating with Your Doctor



Be sure to get the most out of your doctor's appointment. Here are some ideas to get the most out of your time.

1. Ask the doctor to speak slowly. Bring some paper and a pen to take notes.
2. Ask questions when you do not understand what your doctor is saying.
3. If you are uncomfortable speaking up, bring a trusted friend or family member with you to help.
4. Talk about cultural beliefs and practices. Let them know how these affect your concerns about health, illness, and treatment preferences.
5. Ask for an interpreter to help you in understanding your care, medical terms, and procedures in your language. There is no cost for interpreter services.

And remember, you always have the right to ask for a second opinion.

## You're Not Alone: Help for Mental Health and Addiction Issues

Our Office of Individual and Family Affairs (OIFA) is here to help you and your family if someone is struggling with their mental health or coping with addiction.

In 2019, more than 1.6 million people in the U.S. struggled with addiction to fentanyl, heroin, and painkillers such as oxycodone, codeine, and hydrocodone. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one in five people struggle with mental health issues.

Our team will work to help you find support and treatment. You can reach us at **[oifa@azblue.com](mailto:oifa@azblue.com)**. And remember, 988 is available 24/7 to help anyone struggling with addiction or mental health issues.



## List of Covered Medicines (Formulary)

We want to help you get the medicine you need. Our list of covered medicines is called a formulary. We use a closed formulary. This means if a drug is not on the list, we must approve it before we can pay for it.

If your medicine is not on the list, your doctor can ask us to make an exception. This means we will review your case to see if we can cover the drug based on your medical needs. You or your doctor can call us to start this process.

Our list of covered drugs can change, so please check our website or call us if you have questions.

To see the most up-to-date list of covered drugs, visit:

**[azblue.com/prescriptions](https://azblue.com/prescriptions)**

You can also call us to ask if your medicine is on the list.

Member Services:

**1-800-322-8670, TTY: 711**

Hours:

Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



## Help to Quit Smoking!

- Call the Arizona and Arizona Smoker's Helpline (ASHLine) **1-800-556-6222** or visit **[azdhs.gov/ashline](https://azdhs.gov/ashline)**

**Get more information:**

- Visit: **[azdhs.gov/prevention/chronic-disease/tobacco-free-az/index.php](https://azdhs.gov/prevention/chronic-disease/tobacco-free-az/index.php)**



## Have Questions? Find Answers in Your Member Handbook.

Did you know you can find the following information and much more in your Member Handbook?

- Your Rights and Responsibilities (including Privacy and Confidentiality Rights)
- How to find a Specialist
- Interpreter Services; and availability of materials in alternate formats
- Quality Improvement Programs and Utilization of Services
- How to File a Grievance or Appeal an Adverse Decision
- Advance Directives (End-of-Life Decisions)

The member handbooks are updated every October.

You can view your member handbook [here](#). You can also request a hard copy of the handbook by calling Member Services. We will send one at no-cost to you.

## Quality Management Program: Making Sure You Get What You Need

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Health Choice has a Quality Improvement (QI) program. The goal of the program is to keep you healthy and coordinate services you need. This is why we provide information on checkups and screenings. It is important to schedule preventive screenings and go to annual exams.

We aim to provide high-quality providers. We screen Network Providers carefully before they can see our members. We check license and background information.

Please let us know if we can assist on how to talk with your Provider about your health, medications, and needs.

Members can ask for information about the QI program by calling Member Services at **1-800-322-8670, TTY: 711.**

More information about our performance can be found on our website. Use this [link](#) and replace with words Quality Measures.



## Share Your Ideas – Help Us Make a Difference!

We want to say a big thank you to our members! Your ideas and feedback are helping us make healthcare better for everyone—yourself, your family, and your community.

Many of the changes we've made are because of members like you who joined our Member Advocacy Council (MAC) and Enrollee Advisory Committee (EAC). These groups meet to share ideas and help us improve.

Thanks to your help, here are some great things we've done:

- **More MAC/EAC Meetings** – We've added more in-person and online meetings so more people can join and share.
- **Pharmacy Number on ID Cards** – Now it's easier to get help with your medicine.
- **System Outage Alerts** – You'll get updates by email, text, or on our website when our systems are down.
- **More Doctors and Dentists** – We're adding more providers in Coconino and Mohave counties.
- **Better Transportation Options** – We're working on ways to help you get to your appointments more easily.

## Want to Help Us Do Even More? Join the MAC or EAC!

We're always looking for members who want to share their ideas and help us grow. It's a great way to speak up, be heard, and make a difference.

Call us to learn more or to join: **1-800-322-8670**

Visit us online:  
[azblue.com/hca](https://azblue.com/hca)

Together, we can build a better health plan—one voice at a time.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Health Choice complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call **1-800-322-8670, TTY: 711**.

Español (Spanish): ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **1-800-322-8670, TTY: 711**.

Diné Bizaad [Navajo]: Díí baa akó nínízin: Díí saad bee yáníłti'go Diné Bizaad, saad bee áká'ánída'áwo'déé', t'áá jik'eh, éí ná hóló, kójjí' hódíłłnih **1-800-322-8670, TTY: 711**.

**All health information is for educational purposes only**, and is not a substitute for medical treatment, advice, or diagnosis by a healthcare professional. Talk to your doctor before undertaking any medical treatment, exercise program, or dietary change.