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Better. Together. CalOptima's Medi-Cal Newsletter



Medi-Cal
CalOptima
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Spring 2020

STAY WELL, PLAY WELL

Prevention is the key to good health. Stop diseases before they start. Call your doctor today to schedule a well-care visit.

Find out more at
caloptima.org



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**Leading California
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NCQA's Medicaid Health Insurance Plan Ratings 2019–2020

WELL-CHILD VISITS

Getting well-child visits are a key part of your child's health.

Well-child visits are a time when parents can check their child's health, growth and development at different ages.

In the 1st year of life, your child will grow and change quickly. This is why children have more scheduled well-child visits when they are younger. Well-child visits start a few days after birth and continue until your child turns 21. It is important for your child to see his or her doctor at each recommended visit.

The Benefits of Well-Child Visits

- **Prevention:** Vaccinations are shots that prevent or limit the risk of getting a disease or illness. These shots are often given during a well-child visit.
- **Tracking growth and development:** The doctor will ask you questions and will review your child's growth since their last visit. You can also ask about vaccines, healthy eating or safety at home and at school.
- **Raising concerns:** Make a list of topics you want to talk about with the doctor at the start of the visit. You can discuss topics such as, speech, movement, behavior, sleep, weight or getting along with others.

Vaccines Protect Your Child from Disease

- **Vaccines are very safe and effective.**
 - » Vaccines are tested often to ensure they have few side effects.
 - » It is safe for your child to get more than 1 shot at a doctor's visit. Some shots are combined in 1 dose to lower the number of shots given at once.
- **Vaccines can protect your child against disease or illness.**
 - » Getting vaccines can protect children from viruses and bacteria that they come into contact with every day.
 - » Children who have not gotten their shots can be carriers of disease that threatens the health of others.
- **It is normal for your child to have some mild side effects.**
 - » Normal side effects include headache, low fever and redness or swelling where the shot was given. These effects should go away after 2 days.
- **All vaccines for children are at no cost to CalOptima members.**
 - » Visit the doctor to make sure your child is up-to-date with all the shots they need!





Infant and Child Car Seat Safety

Car crashes are a leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 13.

Car seats and booster seats provide the best protection for children in a car when used correctly. It is also very important to use the right car seat every time your child is in the car. Follow these important steps to choose the right seat, install it correctly and keep your child safe when driving.

Find the right seat:

- Make sure your child meets the weight and height requirements for their car seat.
- Car seats have an expiration date. Check to make sure your child's car seat has not expired.
- Know California law:» Children under 2 must ride in a rear-facing car seat.
- » Children under 8 must be secured in the backseat of a vehicle in a safety seat.
- » Everyone should always wear a seatbelt.

How to install a car seat:

- Read the car seat instructions and your vehicle's owner manual to learn how to correctly install your child's car seat in your car.
- Find a local certified inspection station to be sure your child's car seat is properly installed. Inspection stations can be found at:
 - » California Highway Patrol at www.chp.ca.gov.
 - » National Highway Traffic Safety Commission at www.nhtsa.gov
 - » Or call your local police department.

Other Safety Tips:

- Make sure the car seat chest strap is always at armpit level.
- Keep straps snug and not twisted.
- Watch for recalls.
- Never leave your child in the car alone.

Laws get updated. Check current car seat laws at www.chp.ca.gov



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; California Highway Patrol

Understand Asthma Inhalers

When your asthma is well-controlled you can live a healthier and more active life!



Work with your doctor to create an Asthma Action Plan so you know how to take your medicines. Most people take more than 1 medicine to control asthma. There are 2 main types of medicines for asthma. Each type works differently.

1. Long-acting controller medicines (inhaled corticosteroids)

- Keeps the airways in the lungs from swelling and becoming inflamed.
- Must be taken every day to prevent asthma symptoms and flare-ups.
- It is important to rinse your mouth after each use to prevent infections.
- These medicines work slowly. It may take up to 2 weeks to start working.
- Take even when the symptoms are gone, so that asthma can stay under control.
- The doctor will tell you when the desired level of asthma control has been reached.

2. Short-acting medicines (rescue inhalers)

- They open the airways fast when you have asthma symptoms or an asthma attack.
- Use only if you are wheezing, having trouble breathing or feeling tightness in the chest.
- These medicines do not reduce swelling or mucus.
- These medicines should not be used every day.
- If you need to use your rescue inhaler more than 2 days a week, your asthma may not be well controlled. Ask your doctor to review your need for a controller medicine.

Talk with your doctor today if you have any questions about your asthma care.

To learn more, visit us at www.caloptima.org/healtheducation.

REMEMBER:

Use your controller medicine every day:

1. Take it at the same time every day. Set an alarm!
2. Leave yourself a note on the bathroom mirror.
3. Keep your inhaler in a place where you will see it every day!

Refill your inhaler:

1. Write “refill inhaler” on your calendar a week before it runs out.
2. Make sure you have enough refills to last you until your next doctor’s visit.
3. Ask your pharmacy to send you reminders to refill your medicines.

Get Your Lab Tests Done!

Lab tests — also known as blood tests or blood work — are a major part of your health care. You need to get your blood work done often if you take medicines for diabetes, your heart or blood pressure. Lab tests can show your health care team how well your body is working. They also let your doctor see how the medicines are helping to manage your health.

Key Lab Tests for People with Diabetes:

- **Hemoglobin A1c:** Also known as the A1c test, if you have diabetes, you need this blood test at least every 6 months. It will show your doctor how your diabetes is controlled.
- **Cholesterol:** This blood test needs to be done at least every year. Make sure to look at your low-density lipoprotein (LDL) levels. LDL is also known as “bad” cholesterol. Ask your doctor what your goal should be.
- **Kidney Function Test:** This is either a urine or blood test and it should be done at least every year. Results will help show how well your kidneys are working.

Key Lab Tests If You Take Heart or Blood Pressure Medicines:

If you take any of the medicines listed below, you need to get a blood test to measure the levels of potassium and creatinine in your body. This will show your health care team how well your kidneys are working.

- **Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors:** such as lisinopril (Zestril, Prinivil), enalapril (Vasotec) and benazepril (Lotensin).
- **Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARBs):** such as losartan (Cozaar), valsartan (Diovan), telmisartan (Micardis) and irbesartan (Avapro)
- **Diuretics:** such as furosemide (Lasix), hydrochlorothiazide (Microzide) and spironolactone (Aldactone).

It is very important to get your lab tests done so that you can improve your health. It is good for you to know what your levels mean. **Always** ask your health care team to explain the numbers on your results.

A photograph of an elderly couple sitting together indoors. The man, on the left, has grey hair and a mustache, wearing a dark red sweater over a collared shirt. The woman, on the right, has short grey hair and is wearing a white and black striped shirt. She is smiling and looking towards the camera, with her hand resting on her shoulder. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor space with large windows.

Diabetes and Heart Disease

People who have diabetes are at risk of developing other health problems, such as heart disease.

The A1c test reflects your average blood sugar over the past 3 months. The higher your A1C level, the less your blood sugar is under control. A higher A1c level puts you at risk for diabetes-related health problems. Schedule your next A1c test so your doctor can see how your blood sugar levels have been over the past few months.

If you have diabetes, you may also have high levels of “bad” cholesterol in your body. Over time, high levels of “bad” cholesterol can cause heart disease. Heart disease can increase your risk of a heart attack or stroke.

A statin is a type of medicine that can prevent heart attacks or strokes by decreasing the “bad” cholesterol in your body. Some examples of statin medicines include:

- Atorvastatin (Lipitor)
- Lovastatin (Mevacor)
- Pravastatin (Pravachol)
- Rosuvastatin (Crestor)
- Simvastatin (Zocor)

If you have diabetes or heart disease, ask your doctor if adding a statin to your treatment is right for you.

Statin medicines may interact with certain foods and other medicines. Talk to your doctor about possible side effects and interactions. Let your doctor know if you have taken a statin before and if you had any side effects. Your doctor may be able to change your medicine to a different statin. Make sure to keep a current list of your medicines with you.

Treatment for Depression Is Available

Talk to Your Doctor

Feeling sad at times is a normal part of life. But when feelings of sadness last for more than a few weeks and daily activities become hard for you to do, you may have depression. Depression is common and can affect your thoughts, mood, health and day-to-day activities.

Each person is unique and can have different symptoms, which may include:

- Feeling sad
- Loss of interest in activities
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Loss of energy or low energy
- Feeling sick with no other health reasons
- Trouble thinking or making choices
- Feeling worthless
- Thoughts of not wanting to live

You can get treatment for depression. The first step is for you to talk with your doctor and/or a behavioral health professional. Treatment can include medication and talk therapy. If you use medications, it is important to follow your doctor's instructions about how, when and how much to take. Continue taking your medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop. Depression is treatable, and you can get better if you meet with your doctor and/or a behavioral health professional often and talk about your plan of care.

Behavioral health services are available to CalOptima members. CalOptima members can call the CalOptima Behavioral Health phone line, toll-free, at **1-855-877-3885** to access behavioral health services. TTY users can call toll-free at **1-800-735-2929**.



New Members Start Here

You need to do these 4 things



As a new CalOptima member, you will get a “Welcome to CalOptima” package in the mail. Please open it right away and do these 4 things:

1. Choose a primary care provider (PCP) and a health network

The package will have a large book called the Health Network and Provider Directory. Choose a PCP and health network from the directory. You must choose a PCP who belongs to the health network you choose.

2. Fill out the health network selection form

The health network selection form is in your new member packet. You must list your choice of health network and PCP, sign the form, and return it to CalOptima as soon as you can.

3. Read and keep your CalOptima member handbook

Your CalOptima member handbook has key information about CalOptima’s programs and services. Refer to your handbook to find out what we cover, how to change your health network, how to change your PCP and many other details.

4. Schedule your first health exam

Schedule the first health exam within 90 days (3 months) of joining CalOptima. We believe preventive care is the best way to keep you and your family health. That means seeing your doctor for the first time, even if you do not feel sick. Your doctor can find health issues early, before they turn into big problems.

PREGNANT?

What to do if you are planning on getting pregnant

Family planning services are covered by your health network or CalOptima. These include counseling, pregnancy testing, and birth control methods. Call the CalOptima Customer Service department.

What to do if you are pregnant

You need to see your doctor as soon as you think you are pregnant to begin prenatal care. Ask your doctor about Perinatal Support Services. This is a program that gives you more information while you are pregnant and for two months after your baby is born.

Important Phone Numbers



After-Hours Advice

If you need after-hours medical advice, call your PCP's office or the phone number on the back of your health network or medical group card.

Medical Emergency

Dial 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room for a true medical emergency.

CalOptima	Customer Service department, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	Toll-free: 1-888-587-8088 TTY: 1-800-735-2929
	Behavioral Health department for help with outpatient mental health services for mild to moderate impairments due to a mental health condition	Toll-free: 1-855-877-3885 TTY: 1-800-735-2929
	Health Education department for help with health and wellness materials to help you stay healthy	Local: 1-714-246-8895 Toll-free: 1-888-587-8088 TTY: 1-800-735-2929
	Nurse Advice Phone Line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For help to find out if you need care at the doctor's office, urgent care or emergency room.	Toll-free: 1-844-447-8441 TTY: 1-844-514-3774
Denti-Cal	For help with dental benefits	Toll-free: 1-800-322-6384 TTY: 1-800-735-2922
VSP (Vision Service Plan)	Call CalOptima's Customer Service department to see if you are eligible for vision care services. These numbers are for VSP.	Toll-free: 1-800-438-4560 TTY: 1-800-428-4833

Get Information in Other Languages or Formats

Information and materials are available in large-size print and other formats and languages. Please call our Customer Service department and tell us your preferred spoken and written language, and if you need information or materials in another format.

CalOptima Member Handbook

The most current member handbook is available on our website at www.caloptima.org and upon request. To get it mailed to you, please call our Customer Service department.

**The people in the photographs that appear in this document are models and used for illustrative purposes only.*

Regular Checkups and Getting Your Health Screenings!

Regular health checkups with your doctor are an important part of staying healthy! Even if you feel well, it is important to go to your doctor for a yearly checkup. A yearly checkup may help prevent health problems before they start.

We hope that you will take an active role in maintaining your health! By getting the care you need at the right time, you improve your chances of living a healthier life. Schedule your yearly checkup with your doctor and ask about tests and screenings that are right for you!

Visit the CalOptima member website to learn more: **www.caloptima.org/healtheducation**. You can also call CalOptima's Health Management department at **1-714-246-8895**. We are here to help you Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. TTY users can call toll-free at **1-800-735-2929**. We have staff who speak your language.

**Thank you for allowing us to help you
improve your health!**

BE SURE TO DISCUSS THESE TOPICS WITH YOUR DOCTOR:

- Blood pressure and cholesterol
- Weight and body mass index
- Depression and anxiety
- Fall prevention
- Diabetes and blood sugar
- Eye and vision health
- Flu and pneumonia vaccines
- Exercise and staying active
- Medications and vitamins
- Bone health



P.O. Box 11063
Orange, CA 92856-8163

Sign Up Today for Our Member Portal!

Take an active role in your health care.

Register today at:

<https://member.caloptima.org!>

To make changes online go to the
member portal at www.caloptima.org.



Bright Steps: CalOptima's Maternity Program

Are you pregnant? Are you trying to conceive?

CalOptima's Bright Steps program may be able to help you throughout your pregnancy and after your baby is born. To learn more about these no-cost Bright Steps services, please call CalOptima's Health Management department at **1-714-246-8895**.

