

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Healthy Connections
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Healthy and Connected Member Newsletter - Aug. 12, 2021

Healthy and Connected is the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (SCDHHS) member e-newsletter. Healthy and Connected features tips and tools to help you and your loved ones connect to resources and live healthier lives.

Stay Safe. Stay Vaccinated.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month. Immunization helps protect you against a disease by receiving a vaccine. This not only benefits you, but also benefits your community and family members. You can prevent yourself from getting diseases. You can also stop diseases from spreading to those in your home and neighborhood.



Due to COVID-19, vaccinations have become a popular topic in households and communities worldwide. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine is a great way for you to help end the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 vaccine is a covered benefit for all Healthy Connections Medicaid members, including full-benefit members and members enrolled in Family Planning and COVID-19 limited benefit programs. COVID-19 vaccines are available for South Carolinians 12 and older. Find out where to get the COVID-19 vaccine from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC's) [COVID-19 vaccine locator](#).

Beyond the COVID-19 vaccine, it is very important for parents to make sure their children are caught up on their regular vaccines. Healthy Connections Medicaid covers vaccines for children enrolled in the Medicaid program. By being aware of the latest vaccines for you and your children,

we can all increase our ability to live healthy and free lives. More information, including recommended immunizations and schedules, is available on SCDHHS' website.

[Learn More About Vaccine Coverage](#)

Don't Get Overheated

Heat exertion (exhaustion) happens when the human body is unable to cool itself down. The summertime increases the risk of heat exhaustion. Staying hydrated becomes more vital than ever during this time of year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has some great tips to stay cool, stay hydrated and stay informed to prevent heat-related illness.



[Heat Illness Information from the CDC](#)

Look Before You Lock



You can do your part to help avoid heat-related injuries and deaths this summer by simply looking before you lock your car. Too often, the news contains stories about tragic deaths that happen because a child, vulnerable adult or even a pet was left unattended in a hot vehicle. On average, 38 children under the age of 15 die each year from heatstroke after being left in a vehicle ([National Safety Council](#)).

Healthy Connections Medicaid members can use these helpful reminders to make sure they are keeping their family members safe.

- **Look Before You Lock:** Always check the car to make sure everyone is out before you lock it and walk away!
- **Keep Your Car Locked:** The second leading cause of heat-related vehicle deaths is children who become trapped in an unattended vehicle. Keep your car and trunk locked when you park it and make sure children don't have access to the keys.
- **Never Leave a Child Alone:** Never leave a child alone in a parked car, even if the air conditioning is on or the windows or rolled down. A child's body temperature can rise three to five times faster than an adult's ([National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)).

[Learn More From the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)

Breastfeeding Helps Moms and Babies

Breastfeeding has many benefits for both the mother and their baby. Human milk is the best source of nutrition for infants. However, many do not understand the benefits of breastfeeding.

Studies show that babies who are breastfed:

- Are protected against some infections, allergies and asthma;
- Better digestion and fewer digestive issues, including less vomiting;
- Have improved brain development and develop a higher IQ;
- Have lower risk of diabetes and obesity;
- Have stronger bones; and,
- Have lower blood pressure and cholesterol later in life.

Studies also show that moms who breastfeed their babies:

- Have a lower risk of cancer;
- Are less likely to experience postpartum depression;

- Have lower levels of stress;
- Are able to lose weight more easily;
- Have reduced cost of health care; and,
- Develop a special bond with their new baby.

[Learn More About Breastfeeding Benefits](#)

Help Kids See Clearly



August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month. It is essential for children to go to their annual eye checkups to ensure no new issues hurt their vision.

There are a few signs that might hint your child has eye issues:

- Family history of vision problems;
- Squinting or turning head while watching a television or using a computer; and/or,
- Not interested in reading or observing distant objects.

Eye exams and glasses are both covered benefits for children enrolled in Healthy Connections Medicaid.

If you see even the smallest sign of eye issues in your child, do not hesitate to set an appointment before it gets any worse.

[Get More Eye Health Tips Here](#)

You Can Help Prevent Childhood Obesity

Obesity is a serious condition many households deal with daily. When a child enters the category of being “obese” they increase their chance of having both immediate and long-term health complications. The good news is obesity can be stopped with a healthy diet and exercise.



Helping address childhood obesity can start with parents in our communities. Children imitate adults. You can encourage your children to have healthy eating habits and be physically active by doing so yourself.

The CDC link below has great tips on how to prevent and overcome childhood obesity.

[Tips to Help Children Maintain a Healthy Weight](#)

Sickle Cell Awareness



Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) affects millions of people worldwide. It is crucial for a child to have an early diagnosis of SCD to help avoid serious issues. SCD is treatable and treatment continues to improve. Like other diseases, the earlier SCD is detected the better it can be managed and treated. Screening for SCD is included in the newborn screening covered by Healthy Connections Medicaid. Treatment is also covered for Medicaid members. [DHEC also has a program](#) that helps with SCD treatment for adults who are not eligible for Medicaid.

[Sickle Cell Disease Information from the CDC](#)

Don't Suffer in Silence

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Those who are at risk of suicide often display warning signs. You can help reduce the risk of losing someone you love to suicide by learning warning signs and talking with those around you.

Healthy Connections Medicaid covers many behavioral health services for people battling depression or experiencing other mental health challenges.

Additionally, Healthy Connections

Medicaid partners with the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH) to offer 24/7/365 mobile crisis services.

HELP HOTLINES

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

1.800.275.8255 (TALK)

Press 1 for Veteran-specific services

For Lifeline TTY services, call 1.800.799.4889.

¿Tiene dificultades para lidiar con sus problemas después de un desastre? Hay esperanza!

Para la **Prevención de Suicidio Nacional: 1.888.628.9454.**

Con la ayuda, llega la esperanza.

CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text "HOPE4SC" to 741741

[Find Suicide Prevention Resources from DMH](#)

Newborn Screening Awareness: Early Detection is Important

Newborn screening is important for your baby to get a healthy start to life. Newborn screening is a covered benefit for Healthy Connections Medicaid members. It is usually performed while you are still in the hospital after your baby is born.

September is Newborn Screening Awareness Month and is a great time to make sure future parents and new parents know why this covered benefit is so important. Newborn screenings can

help detect conditions in your child as early as possible. The earlier a condition is found, the better it can be treated.

[Learn More from Baby's First Test](#)

Thank you for reading Healthy and Connected. Follow SCDHHS on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for regular updates. You can also view the Medicaid Member Handbook [here on SCDHHS' website](#) to learn more about what is covered, where to go to ask questions and more.



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