



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.

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## Show Your Heart Some Love

February might be known as the month of love, but it's also American Heart Month. Taking care of your heart is one of the best ways to stay healthy and practice self-care.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has a few tips to help promote heart health:

- Get a daily dose of physical activity, like a 30-minute walk
- Cook meals low in sodium and unhealthy fats
- Remember to take your medicine as prescribed and keep your medical appointments
- Get seven to eight hours of sleep a night
- Manage stress by relaxing through activities like meditation, yoga, a warm bath, reading a book or watching a funny movie
- Try to reach or stay at a healthy weight by moving more and eating fruits and veggies as snacks



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the nation. Anyone can get the disease. Factors like high blood pressure, smoking, an unhealthy diet, being too heavy and having a family history of heart disease can put you at higher risk.

Ask your doctor about heart health at your next check-up. You can also read more on the [American Heart Association's website](#).

[Learn More About Healthy Hearts](#)

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## Doing What You Can to Prevent Cancer

More than 1.6 million people are diagnosed with cancer each year in the United States. It is the second leading cause of death in the nation. February is National Cancer Prevention Month, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says there are many types that can be prevented or caught early.

Remembering to keep these risk factors in mind can help greatly reduce the chances of cancer in your body:

**Exposure to smoking and secondhand smoke:** Smoke causes about 90% of lung cancer deaths in the U.S.

**Exposure to the sun and tanning beds:** Most cases of melanoma, the deadliest kind of skin cancer, are caused by exposure to light from the sun or tanning beds.

**Overweight and obesity:** Obesity and being overweight are associated with at least 13 types of cancer, making up 40% of all cancers diagnosed.

**Excessive alcohol use:** Binge drinking or heavy drinking increases the risk of cancer of the breast, liver, colon, rectum, mouth, pharynx, larynx and esophagus.

**Infectious diseases:** Vaccines help prevent viruses that can cause cancer like the human papillomavirus (HPV), hepatitis B or hepatitis C.

Getting screening tests can also help prevent cancer and help to catch it early, when it is most treatable.

Learn more about ways to reduce the risks on the [CDC's website](#).

[Preventable Risk Factors](#)

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## Keep Your Kidneys Healthy



Kidneys might only be about the size of a fist, but they have an important job in our bodies. The organ filters your blood and gets rid of waste and extra fluid. March is National Kidney Month. It's a good time to remind ourselves of what we can do to prevent kidney disease.

The National Kidney Foundation says about 90% of people with the disease don't know they have it. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) means the kidneys are damaged and unable to keep you as healthy as they should. The two main causes are diabetes and high blood pressure.

The good news is there are ways to help prevent CKD. Taking steps to exercise, quitting smoking, only drinking alcohol in small amounts, staying hydrated, checking cholesterol levels and getting an annual physical can lower your chances of CKD. Ask your doctor about how to keep your kidneys in a healthy state.

Learn more on the [National Kidney Foundation's website](#).

[Learn About Kidney Health](#)

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## SCDHHS and Managed Care Plan Mail is Important

It is important to open mail that is related to your Healthy Connections Medicaid benefits. Mail with one of the logos below is almost always time sensitive. It likely requires a response by a certain date. If you get a review form in the mail to update your contact information, please remember to fill it out and return the form.

If you have questions about what you get in the mail or would like to update your information over the phone, call the Healthy Connections Medicaid Member Contact Center at (888) 549-0820. The member contact center is open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

**You've Got Mail!**

Please open mail related to your Healthy Connections Medicaid benefits immediately. Mail with one of these logos is usually time sensitive and may require action on your part.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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## Planning for Your Future Care



The start of the new year is a good time to make plans for the future. Many of us are great about planning for something like the birth of a baby. We buy cribs, supplies and lots of families know what they want to happen at delivery. We are not always so great at talking about the end of life. Whether it's knowing the type of care we would like, who we will want by our side or simply the things that bring us comfort, planning can bring a sense of peace to a difficult time.

A few topics that should be discussed include:

- Medical treatment options
- Knowing where you want to live in your final days
- Sharing information about your health with others
- What you would want to happen if you couldn't speak for yourself

We'd like to share a great resource to help get the conversation started.

[\*\*Conversation Starter Guide\*\*](#)

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## SCDHHS' Community Connections

Don't forget about the new, free, online tool to help Healthy Connections Medicaid members! **Community Connections** can be used at any time to find help in your area.



The search tool can help you look for:

- A local healthcare provider
- A job or training
- Education resources
- Food aid
- Housing assistance
- Childcare
- Transportation help (remember, non-emergency medical transportation is a covered benefit for Healthy Connections Medicaid members)
- Financial aid and financial education options
- Community support services

You can search for resources by zip code, category, location, age group and more.

[Visit Community Connections](#)

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## Coping With Grief After a COVID-related Loss

People have experienced grief during the COVID-19 pandemic in many ways. Grief is a response to loss during or after a traumatic event. You may have felt it after losing a loved one or after a big change in your daily routine. Children and teens also may be feeling grief in different ways than their parents.

It's important to take care of your mental health. The CDC has a few tips of ways to cope with grief after loss:

**Connect with other people** through calls and video chat. Ask friends to share stories and pictures with you online or through mail. Plan a time for family and friends to honor your loved one by reciting a poem, a reading or prayer in their own homes.

**Create memories** to honor the one you've lost through a virtual memory book, blog or webpage. Ask family to contribute their stories. Take part in an activity like planting a tree or making a favorite meal that is important to you and the loved one who died.

**Don't be afraid to ask for help** from others. Your Healthy Connections Medicaid benefits include coverage of many mental health services. Local grief counseling, support groups and hotlines are also available. Seek support from faith-based groups or other trusted leaders and friends.

Help is available for anyone feeling fear, anxiety or overwhelming emotions. Access a list of phone numbers for support by clicking the button below.

[Find Help With Grief](#)

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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