

FirstChoice
by Select Health of South Carolina
Your Hometown Health Plan

Healthy Connections 

Healthy NOW

SUMMER 2018

www.selecthealthofsc.com

Sun, fun—
and safety

What to do
during an
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Notice of Non-Discrimination

First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. First Choice does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

First Choice provides free aids and services to people with disabilities, such as qualified sign language interpreters and written information in other formats (large print, Braille, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats). We provide free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages.

If you need these services, contact First Choice at **1-888-276-2020** (TTY **1-888-765-9586**). We are available Monday – Friday (8 a.m. – 9 p.m.) and Saturday – Sunday (8 a.m. – 6 p.m.).

If you believe that First Choice has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with:

- Grievance Supervisor First Choice Member Services
P.O. Box 40849, Charleston, SC 29423-0849
1-888-276-2020 (TDD/TTY **1-888-765-9586**)
Fax: **1-800-575-0419**
- You can file a grievance by mail, fax, or phone. If you need help filing a grievance, First Choice Member Services is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf> or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201
1-800-368-1019 (TDD: **1-800-537-7697**)

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.



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SH-162106

Language services

English: If your primary language is not English, language assistance services are available to you, free of charge. Call: **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Spanish: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Arabic:

إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم **1-888-276-2020** (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: **1-888-765-9586**) (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Portuguese: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Russian: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Vietnamese: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Brazilian Portuguese: Se você fala português do Brasil, os serviços de assistência em sua língua estão disponíveis para você de forma gratuita. Chame **1-888-276-2020** (TTY : **1-888-765-9586**).

Chinese: 如果您說中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**)。

Falam: Falam tawng thiam tu na si le tawng let nak asi mi **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**) ah tang ka pek tul lo in na ko thei.

Hindi: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं, तो आपके लिए मुफ्त भाषा सहायता सेवाएँ उपलब्ध हैं। काल करें: **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**)।

Korean: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**)번으로 전화해 주십시오.

Chin: Hakha holh a hmangmi na si ahcun man lo in holh leh piaknak lei bawmchanh khawh na si. Auh khawhnak: **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

French: Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le **1-888-276-2020** (ATS : **1-888-765-9586**).

Karen:

နမ့်ကတိ ကညီ ကျိအယိ, နမန့် ကျိအတိမစာလ
တလၢ်ဘျၢ်လၢ်စု နီတမံဘၣ်သ့န့ၣ်လီၤ. ကိး
1-888-276-2020 (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**).

Amharic: ማስታወሻ: የሚናገሩት ቋንቋ አማርኛ ከሆነ የትርጉም እርዳታ ድርጅቶች በነጻ ሊያገዝዙት ተዘጋጅተዋል። ወደ ሚከተለው ቁጥር ይደውሉ **1-888-276-2020** (መስማት ለተሳናቸው: **1-888-765-9586**)።

Burmese: အကယ်၍ သင်သည်မြန်မာစကား ကို ပြောပါက၊ ဘာသာစကား အကူအညီ၊ အခမဲ့၊ သင့် ငဲ့အတွက် စီစဉ်ဆောင်ရွက်ပေးပါမည်။ ဖုန်းနံပါတ် **1-888-276-2020** (TTY: **1-888-765-9586**) သို့ ခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

You and your primary care physician

Tykeshia, who works at Select Health of South Carolina, has played an active role in her own health since she was a teen. “There was a lot of teen pregnancy in my family, so I was trying to avoid that,” she says. Choosing the right primary care physician (PCP) was key. “I asked for a female doctor so I could talk with her about my situations. I knew I’d be more comfortable during my exams,” she says. “That grew into a close relationship.”

It became important when she chose a PCP for her children, too. “Because of my good experience, I’m a firm believer in the power of the patient-doctor relationship.” She chose a female PCP for her 2 daughters, and a male PCP for her son. “I want them to have a relationship with their doctor, as I have with mine. So their doctors know them as people, too. So they build a rapport. As they grow into teens and adults, they can be comfortable asking questions and talking about awkward things.”



Tykeshia and her daughter, Reimani

Free interpreters available

First Choice wants you to get the best care when you need it. If your primary language is not English, we have phone interpreters to help you anywhere, any time. These interpreters are available for more than 200 languages. You also can use our interpreters when you are at your doctor’s office. This is free for you and your doctor. Call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**. You can also call the First Choice Nurse Call Line at **1-800-304-5436** for free health advice, 24 hours a day. They can connect you to an interpreter.

Learn more about your benefits

Call Member Services if you want a provider directory, member handbook, list of rights and responsibilities, or other information sent to you by mail.

The First Choice website has important information about your health benefits and services. At www.selecthealthofsc.com, you can find the most current member handbook that tells you about the following:

- A list of benefits and services that are and are not covered.
- How to get language services. These services are free.
- How to find doctors in our network.
- How to choose a primary care provider (PCP).
- How to get specialty care and mental health services.
- What to do if you need to be admitted to the hospital.
- How to get care after normal business hours.
- How to get care in an emergency or when you are out of town.
- Member Rights and Responsibilities, and the Notice of Privacy Practices.
- Information about grievances and appeals, and how to report suspected fraud and abuse.



- How First Choice makes decisions about your care when there are advances in medicine and new treatments become available.
- Information about other benefits and services.

On our website you can also find:

- A searchable Preferred Drug List. The list includes drugs covered by First Choice.
- Copayment guide that includes information about copayments for adults in need of certain services.

Sun, fun—and safety

Summer brings pools, playgrounds, and sports. Parents, learn how to let your kids have fun this summer without worrying about their safety.

Through a child's eyes, summer can look like long, playful days. But as a grown-up, you see things differently. You also see the potential dangers that can lead to broken bones, burns, and bike crashes.

The following are 4 safety tips kids and their parents should follow. Check them off your list, then go have some fun!

1

Swimming

- **Your inner child says:** For many kids, summer fun involves splashing in the pool, lake, or ocean.
- **Your adult voice says:** Accidental drowning is a real and very serious risk. More than 20 percent of drowning victims are children ages 14 and younger, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- **The healthier response:** Never let kids near pools or other bodies of water without you or another responsible adult there. At least one adult who knows how to swim should watch the kids. Depending on the number of children, it may be necessary to have more than one adult keeping a close eye on the children, advises the American Academy of Pediatrics. For infants and toddlers, this grown-up should stay at arm's length, providing "touch supervision."
- Swimming lessons may lower your little one's risk of drowning. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends signing kids up when they're ready, which can be as early as age 1. Still, even trained swimmers need a watchful adult nearby. And keep safety equipment, such as life preservers, on hand.



2

Biking

- **Your inner child says:** Biking offers freedom, fun, and a healthy dose of exercise.
- **Your adult voice says:** Each year, about 26,000 children worldwide are seen in emergency departments for traumatic brain injuries related to bicycle-riding (statistic from Safe Kids Worldwide).
- **The healthier response:** Don't rush your child off training wheels—most aren't ready for a 2-wheeled bike until age 5. Choose a bike that fits your child that allows him or her to place the balls of both feet on the ground while sitting on the seat.
- When biking, have your child wear a properly-fitted helmet for every ride. Choose one that is approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (check the inside label). In the event of a crash, helmets often protect kids from more serious injury.



3

Team sports

- **Your inner child says:** Joining the squad helps build friendships and learn sportsmanship.
- **Your adult voice says:** Every year, more than 2.6 million children end up in the emergency department with sports-related injuries, according to the CDC. And as the weather warms up, the risk for heat-related illness during practice, games, or matches goes up, too, per the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- **The healthier response:** If your child wants to play a sport, take him or her to the doctor's office to receive a well-child visit, which includes a physical exam. Check that your athlete has the right gear for the activity (helmet, wrist guards, knee pads, etc.). And help children train for their sport to reduce their risk of getting hurt.
- To stay cool when it's hot outside, ask coaches to schedule games and practices in the morning or late afternoon instead of the hottest part of the day. Avoid heat illness by providing your child with plenty of water before, during, and after exercise. During practice or a game, the kids should get a water break every 20 minutes.



Well-child visits include sports physicals

Did you know children should get well-child visits once a year from birth through age 21? Free for First Choice members, well-child visits have everything that is needed for a sports physical, and more. Please call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020** (TTY **1-888-765-9586**) for help making an appointment.

4

Playing at the playground

- **Your inner child says:** Kids love swings, monkey bars, and seesaws. Did you just say monkey bars? They're just plain fun!
- **Your adult voice says:** Even backyard swing sets can be dangerous. After hours in the sun, metal, plastic, and rubber equipment can burn your child's skin, while wooden materials can give your kids splinters. Ropes and nets may trap small heads. And falling can cause injuries.
- **The healthier response:** Make sure playground equipment is safe. It should be on a level surface and fixed firmly to the ground. Place safety-tested mats or wood chips underneath. Make sure it covers at least 6 feet in all directions (even farther for swings and slides).
- Before playtime, check the temperature of all equipment. Check for loose bolts, rusted chains, and jagged edges that could catch a child's clothing.



Stay calm in an emergency

The sight of blood or the sound of a child crying can panic any parent. But keeping calm when injuries occur helps you make better decisions. Your mood can also help put your child at ease. To maintain a cool head:

- **Plan in advance.** Talk with your child's doctor about the signs and symptoms of a medical emergency. Learn when to go to the hospital, when to call an ambulance, and when you can just check in with the doctor. Fill out a medical history form for your child, and bring it along with any medicines he or she takes—if you do have to get emergency care.
- **Study first aid.** Learning the way to help a child who is bleeding and in shock, for example, can help you know what to do after an injury. Take a class at the American Red Cross.
- **Keep a first aid kit nearby.** Keep a clear, waterproof container with medical supplies where every adult in the family can reach it. Include things like a pain reliever, bandages, tape, and sharp scissors with rounded tips.
- **Trust the pros.** Medical professionals stay on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They're trained to give lifesaving care after you make the call to **911**.



When bad things happen

Talking with kids about scary events

While tragedies have always been a part of life, technology has made it easier for kids to learn about bad things that are happening all over the world.

When disaster strikes—such as a hurricane or a shooting—be honest with your children about what's going on. It's best if they hear what happened from you. Ask them what they've heard, and then start the conversation from there. Don't be afraid to show them you are upset, but do not react very strongly in front of your kids. Seeing you overly upset or screaming can add to their stress.

A conversation for all ages

Older kids and teenagers will probably see news through social media on their cellphones and computers. With younger kids, though, you can—and should as

much as possible—keep them away from the scary images that come from news reports. Instead, talk with them about what has happened without showing them frightening sights and sounds. Even young children should be given information about the event, but keep it basic. Help them understand why people are talking about this tragedy and let them know it's OK to be sad. Let them know you are there to support them.

Older kids will probably know more about what happened, and they might want to talk about why it happened. Answer their questions. If they're interested in helping, encourage them to write letters of thanks to the first responders or make care packages for the survivors.

Is my child struggling?

Some children might have difficulty coping when hearing bad news. Here are some signs to watch for:

- **Sleep issues.** This includes trouble falling asleep, nightmares, and difficulty waking up.
- **Changes in behavior.** Kids may go back to acting younger than they are, with behaviors like thumb-sucking and bed-wetting. Teenagers may start arguments or try risky behaviors like drinking or smoking.
- **Emotional changes.** Silence, anger, or sadness for more than a couple of weeks following a tragedy may be signs your child is struggling emotionally.
- **Physical complaints.** These might include headaches, loss of appetite, and feeling more tired than usual.

Not all children will react immediately, so it's possible that these signs might appear months after the event. If you have any questions about whether your child is having trouble dealing with scary news or how to help, talk with your child's pediatrician.

Remember, you can't change the bad things that happen in the world, but you can help your children deal with them.

High-risk pregnancy and progesterone

According to March of Dimes, an organization that has fought for the health of all moms and babies for the past 80 years, a hormone called progesterone helps your uterus grow during pregnancy and keeps it from having premature contractions. Progesterone can help some women lower their risk for early birth. Talk with your health care provider to see if progesterone treatment is right for you.

If you have had a baby that was born too early and are now

pregnant with another baby, talk with your doctor about the 17P shot. While 17P can help lower the chance for another early birth, there are also other things you can do to help stop your baby from coming early.

- If you think you are pregnant, see your doctor as soon as you can to start your prenatal care. Go to all your prenatal appointments, even if you feel fine.
- Take prenatal vitamins as soon as you are pregnant, or earlier if you know you are trying to get pregnant.
- Avoid cigarette smoke. If you smoke, contact First Choice for resources to help you stop.
- Brush your teeth regularly and see your dentist at least once during your pregnancy.



BRIGHTSTART

First Choice has a care management program for pregnant members called Bright Start. For more information visit www.selecthealthofsc.com or call **1-888-276-2020**.

- Talk with your doctor about any drugs, prescription and over-the-counter medicines, or herbal medicines you are taking.
- Rest and relax whenever you can. Ask friends and family for help.
- Talk with your doctor if you feel burning or pain when you urinate. You may have an infection.

Mammograms: Every 2 for you

Breast cancer affects thousands of women each year. It can be deadly if left untreated. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women. Certain family factors may boost your risk, so be sure to talk with your doctor. Most women with low or average risk for breast cancer should have a mammogram **every 2 years starting at age 50**. If you are 40 to 49, ask your doctor about when and how often to have a screening. Breast cancer screenings are a covered benefit for you. You do not need a referral to have a screening. If you have a family history, you may have to start screenings earlier—ask your doctor when the time is right for you. Check with your doctor today for a location near you. You can also call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020** if you need help making an appointment.



Q&A: What is prediabetes?

Q: My doctor says I have prediabetes. What does this mean?

A: If you have prediabetes, your blood glucose levels are high. However, they are not quite high enough to say you have diabetes. Without any intervention, many people with prediabetes could get type 2 diabetes in 5 years.

It can be scary to hear this kind of news from your doctor. But you're not alone. More than 1 in 3 U.S. adults has this condition, according to the CDC.

Q: Why is this condition so common in the U.S.?

A: The modern American lifestyle now involves less movement and more high-calorie foods. This has made more of us overweight and obese. Being heavy is a risk factor for prediabetes. So is not exercising.

Q: I have no symptoms. How does my doctor know I have prediabetes?

A: Prediabetes often does not have any signs. In fact, many people don't even know they have it.

Your doctor probably tested your blood glucose because you had several factors that increased your chances of having prediabetes. Besides your weight, having a family member with diabetes also increases your odds. People with high blood pressure and high cholesterol are also at risk.

Q: What health problems can prediabetes cause?

A: If you have prediabetes, you are more likely to get diabetes. You are also at risk for heart disease and stroke.

Diabetes can cause blindness, kidney disease, eye disease, skin

problems, nerve damage, and other serious issues. Some of these problems can begin even before you are diagnosed with diabetes.

Q: What can I do to prevent getting diabetes and protect my health?

A: The most important treatments for prediabetes are exercise and weight loss. You don't have to reach your ideal body weight. Just losing 5 to 7 percent of your body weight can reduce your risk, according to the CDC.

Also, aim to get 30 minutes of exercise at least 5 times per week. Finally, choose healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Your doctor will test you for diabetes regularly. He or she may also tell you to take medicine to control your blood glucose.



First Choice has a care management program for members with diabetes called In Control. A care manager can help with diabetes education, finding community resources, and more. We can also help you find a diabetes educator. Certified diabetes educator services are provided at no cost to First Choice members. Call **1-888-276-2020** or visit **www.selectthehealthofsc.com** for more information.

Diabetes educator: A helping hand

There's a lot to learn about taking care of your diabetes. A diabetes educator can help you understand and control your disease.

A partner in diabetes management

A diabetes educator is a nurse, pharmacist, dietitian, or other health care provider. He or she is a critical part of your health care team. According to the American Association of Diabetes Educators, these professionals receive special training and certification to teach you how to:

- Notice and treat high or low blood glucose.
- Make and follow a diabetes diet.
- Use insulin and other diabetes medicines.
- Take care of your feet.
- Deal with sick days.
- Stay healthy during pregnancy.
- Cope with your emotions.
- Prevent and manage complications of diabetes and common conditions that occur with it, such as high blood pressure.

Many meeting places!

You might meet with a diabetes educator at the hospital, doctor's office, pharmacy, or community center. You can even have the meetings in your home. He or she will spend 30 minutes to an hour each session helping you improve your health.

Finding a diabetes educator is easy

Find a qualified diabetes educator near you through the American Association of Diabetes Educators. At www.diabeteseducator.org, click "Find an Education Program" at the top of the page.

Blood pressure myth and fact

BP MYTH: I have diabetes and take my pills and insulin as my doctor tells me, so I shouldn't worry about my blood pressure.

FACT: About 74 percent of adults with diabetes have high blood pressure, per the CDC. Keeping a blood pressure of less than 140/90 can help stop harm to the eyes, kidneys, heart, and blood vessels, and can lower the risks for illnesses that may come from having diabetes, such as heart disease and stroke. Eating healthy, taking medicines as your doctor tells you, and exercising can help you take care of your high blood pressure and diabetes.

Diabetes and statin medicines

Diabetes can raise your risk for cardiovascular disease. Cholesterol is a kind of fat in your blood. It can build up inside your heart. When too much cholesterol builds up, it can block the flow of blood to your heart and can cause a heart attack. If you have diabetes, your doctor may give you a medicine called a statin, which could help lower your cholesterol. Some common names for this medicine include atorvastatin, pravastatin, and simvastatin. Ask your doctor if a statin is right for you. Discuss the risks and benefits of taking a statin, as well as which medicine may work for you.

Stay on top of your asthma

When your asthma is acting up, it's a clear reminder to take your control medication regularly to stay on top of your care. But what about when you're feeling great?

If you've taken control of your asthma, congratulations! Managing the condition is key to staying healthy and enjoying life. But remember, it's important to follow your treatment plan even when you're symptom-free. Don't forget that asthma is a serious condition and can be fatal if not managed properly. Thankfully, most people with asthma can expect to have few problems if they manage their condition well. Remember these steps:

- **Take your controller medicine.** It's important to take your long-term control medicine exactly as your doctor tells you. These drugs reduce swelling and prevent asthma symptoms over time. If you're feeling good, it doesn't mean you don't need them. It means the drugs are working! Let your provider know if you have problems with side effects or the cost of medicine.
- **Avoid triggers.** You may have found things that can cause your asthma to flare, like pollen, dust, or other triggers. But don't let down your guard. Keep avoiding your triggers or reduce the time you are around your triggers whenever possible.
- **Know your symptoms.** It's important to pay attention to your symptoms and see when you might be headed for an asthma attack. Work with your doctor to figure out your early warning signs—mild symptoms can begin even when your condition seems under control. By acting fast when these symptoms occur, you can reduce your chance for an attack.
- **Make a plan.** If you haven't already, fill out an asthma action plan. The plan details when to take your medicines, how to know and respond to worsening symptoms, when to call for help, and more. If you already have a plan, update it with your doctor regularly, and keep it where it's handy.

Well-child and EPSDT visits

Well-child and EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment) visits are regular medical checkups that are important for all children from birth through the month of their 21st birthday. The visits may also include immunizations (shots). Well-child visits make sure your child is growing up healthy. If the doctor finds a problem, the doctor will watch it and treat it early. First Choice wants parents to make sure their children are getting regular medical checkups.

How often should my child have a well visit?

- **From birth to age 2 years:** At 3 to 5 days, 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, and 30 months.
- **From age 3 through age 21:** Every year.

What to do during an asthma attack

When you're having an asthma attack, the lining of your airways becomes swollen. The swelling in your airways causes them to create more mucus, which blocks the flow of air.

Symptoms of an asthma attack include:

- Tightness in your chest.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Coughing.
- Wheezing.

If you're having an asthma attack, take action right away:

1. Stay calm.
2. Use your rescue medicine, such as an inhaler, as your doctor has told you. If you're able, use your

3. Call your doctor after taking your medicine, if you do not get prompt relief.

4. Call **911** or go to the emergency department if:
 - Your medicine isn't helping after 15 minutes.
 - Your lips or fingernails are turning blue.
 - You have trouble walking and talking.
 - You feel drowsy.

- Your peak flow is less than 50 percent of your personal best.

Rescue inhalers: You can have 2

An asthma attack can come on quickly and may include symptoms such as coughing, chest tightness, wheezing, and trouble breathing. It is very important that your child's rescue inhaler is with him or her at all times. A spacer can attach to an inhaler and make it easier to take certain asthma medicines. The doctor will tell you if your child's inhaler should be used with a spacer. **First Choice will cover the cost for an extra inhaler and spacer for your child to have at school or day care.** Talk with your child's doctor about getting an extra inhaler and spacer to use at school or day care. Also talk with your child's doctor about an asthma action plan to get ready for the new school year.

When it's time to leave the hospital

After a hospital stay, it is important that you call your primary care physician (PCP) or other provider (like a behavioral health provider or specialist) within a week of going home. Your health is important. Whether you are in the hospital for diabetes, a surgery, help with your heart, or a behavioral health condition, make appointments with your providers before you leave the hospital. Remember, having a follow-up appointment within 7 days of leaving the hospital will help you get better faster. Your doctor can give you advice about your medicine, concerns about side effects, how you are sleeping, or whether counseling might be right for you.

If you need help, First Choice is always available to help you make an appointment or get the transportation that you need to follow up with your doctor or behavioral health provider. Please call us at **1-888-276-2020**.



breatheeasy

Breathe Easy is a care management program for members with asthma or other respiratory conditions. Visit www.selecthealthofsc.com or call **1-888-276-2020** for more information.

How to help a family member in **trouble**

If a loved one is in trouble, you want to help, but you may not know where to start. Here are some places you can call to guide your loved one to get the help he or she needs.

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

If your family member is being treated for a mental health problem, tell him or her to call his or her doctor for non-life-threatening situations. If you think that your loved one is at risk of hurting himself or herself, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

ADDICTION

The best place to start when talking to someone with a substance abuse problem is to tell him or her to talk with a doctor. Often, people are more likely to listen to a doctor than to friends and family members. If you think a treatment center could help, you can find one by visiting the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website at **findtreatment.samhsa.gov** or calling the SAMHSA National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**.

LOCAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Local agencies can help connect South Carolina citizens with behavioral or physical health support as well as social services:

- United Way Association of South Carolina: Call **2-1-1** on your phone or visit **www.SC211.org** to find services in your community.
- SC Thrive's Benefit Bank to apply for food assistance, student aid, tax filings, and more. Visit **www.scthrive.org** or come see Benefit Bank certified counselors at the First Choice Community Center in Columbia, 217 Park Terrace Drive, Suite 100 (off Harbison Boulevard by Academy Sports). Open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday or call **1-888-676-9588**.

JOB LOSS

If someone you know lost his or her job, they can visit the website **www.usa.gov/unemployment**. It talks about programs such as unemployment insurance, health coverage, disability insurance, workers' compensation, and more. Another helpful website, **www.careeronestop.org**, can help your loved one search for a new job, find out about education and training, and much more.

HOMELESSNESS

There is local support for those facing homelessness. Start by visiting the Department of Housing and Urban Development Resource Locator Tool at **resources.hud.gov**. The site helps you find places in your area that show people how to find low-cost housing and helps homeless individuals and families find housing.



Working together to reduce the stigma of behavioral health conditions

If you have a behavioral health condition, know you are not alone. One in 5 Americans age 18 or older has a behavioral health condition of some kind, per the CDC. Stay connected to others and get support.

A stigma is when people may think badly of someone for something he or she might not be able to control, like a behavioral health condition. Getting rid of stigma starts with knowledge. When we judge others, it's usually because we don't understand them. With greater education and awareness, we can reduce the stigma of behavioral health conditions.

If you do not have a behavioral health condition, you can do your part to help. Speak out against stigma. Don't let stigma lead to shame.

Here to help

First Choice can help you make appointments to treat both physical and behavioral health conditions. We can also help you arrange transportation to get the care you need. Call us at 1-888-276-2020.

Opioid prescriptions: 7 questions to ask

When you get a new prescription from your doctor, look for these medicine names of common opioids. Then, start a conversation with your doctor about how to take them safely.

- Codeine.
- Fentanyl (Duragesic).
- Hydrocodone (Lorcet, Lortab, Vicodin).
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid).
- Meperidine (Demerol).
- Morphine (Avinza, Kadian, MS Contin).
- Oxycodone (OxyContin, Percodan, Percoset).
- Oxymorphone (Opana).

If the medicine your doctor gives you is an opioid, it's recommended that you ask these 7 questions before you leave your doctor's office and go to the pharmacy.

1. Are there any nonopioid treatment options?

Based on your situation, your doctor may tell you to take over-the-counter pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil). Or your doctor may prescribe medicines that treat another condition that is causing your pain, such as prescription nonsteroidal anti-

inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for arthritis or triptan medicines for headaches. Other ways to help with this pain may include physical therapy and exercise.

2. If I need an opioid, how long should I take it?

Ask your doctor to give you the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time. For pain, such as pain after dental surgery or a serious sports injury, a 3-day prescription is often all that's needed. For long-lasting issues (such as arthritis or back pain), nonopioid treatments may be safer and more effective.

3. How can I cut down my risk of side effects?

Use opioid medication exactly as your doctor tells you. If you still have pain, call your doctor. Don't up the dose or take it more often than the doctor says you should.

4. Could the opioid interfere with my other medicines?

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, even those you take only once in a while. It's especially important to tell him or her about anti-anxiety drugs, muscle relaxants, seizure medicines, and sleeping pills.

5. What if I have a history of drug or alcohol problems?

Talk with your doctor about any problems you've had with drugs, alcohol, or smoking. Also tell your doctor if someone in your family has a history of misusing drugs or alcohol. Sometimes addiction can run in families.

6. Where should I keep my opioid medicine?

If you spend time with children or young adults, keep opioid medicine in a lockbox. For children, an accidental overdose can be deadly. For teens, easy access to opioids may sometimes lead to harm.

7. What are some danger signs?

Learn the side effects of opioids, such as sleepiness and wanting more of the drug. You and your family should know when to call the doctor or dial **911**.

STAY IN THE KNOW

Talk with your doctor about any new medicine you're prescribed. If it's an opioid, it's especially important to get all the facts. Learn more about how to fight the opioid epidemic in South Carolina at www.justplainkillers.com.

When taking medicine, good timing makes a difference

If you're on daily medicine, you know that you need to take it every day—but is there a best time to take it? Often, the answer is yes, depending on the type of medicine as well as your symptoms and choices.

A matter of time

For instance, in healthy people, blood pressure naturally drops during sleep. This helps balance a rise in blood pressure that occurs upon waking up. But some people with high blood pressure, diabetes, or kidney disease don't experience nighttime drops in their blood pressure. This may raise the risk of having a heart attack or stroke in the morning.

Taking blood pressure medicine at bedtime often helps. But this plan isn't right for everyone. In fact, for some, it could make blood pressure fall too low. If you're on blood pressure medicine, ask your doctor whether taking it close to bedtime is a good idea for you.

For members who would like a free pill box to help organize their medicines, please call the First Choice Rapid Response and Outreach Team at 1-866-899-5406.

Just-in-time tips

For any medicine, these are some key questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist:

- **Do I need to take the medicine at a specific time?** To maximize benefits or minimize side effects, your health care provider may recommend taking your medicine at a particular time of day or with meals.
- **If I need 2 or more doses daily, how far apart should they be?** Make sure you know when to schedule each dose.
- **Set an alarm on your phone or watch so you take your medicine at the right time.** Be consistent. Eventually, it will become part of your daily routine.

TAKE A QUIZ

How much do you know about using medicines safely and correctly? Test yourself at www.nihseniorhealth.gov/takingmedicines/quizzes.html.



Cut your cholesterol with statins

If you need to lower your risk for heart disease and stroke, statins can help. These medicines help lower high levels of the “bad” cholesterol that often is found in the artery walls. As the statin starts working, it helps lessen the buildup of plaque that can clog your arteries.

Statins do twice the work

Statins lower cholesterol in 2 ways. First, they control how much cholesterol your body makes. They also help your liver remove bad cholesterol that's already in the bloodstream.

In addition to lowering cholesterol, statins lower a protein in your bloodstream that may cause heart disease.

Which statin is for you?

There are 8 statin drugs on the U.S. market: lovastatin, lovastatin extended-release, simvastatin, pravastatin, fluvastatin, atorvastatin, rosuvastatin calcium, and pitavastatin. Serious side effects are rare. Your doctor can help find the right one for you if you need one.

When you start taking a statin, follow these tips:

- **Take them at night (unless your doctor tells you to take them differently).** Statins typically are taken at dinner or at bedtime. That's because the body makes more cholesterol at night than during the day.
- **Stick with it.** While you may not feel any different, your cholesterol level will begin to drop in a little as 2 weeks. By the time your doctor checks your cholesterol at 6 to 8 weeks, you might be surprised by how much it has dropped!
- **Report any problems.** As your body adjusts to a new drug, you may experience slight gas, stomach upset, constipation, or cramping. If these conditions continue or worsen, call your doctor.


Translation availability

First Choice is here for you! This newsletter and other materials are translated into Spanish, and can be found on our website at www.selecthealthofsc.com. If you need help with translations of other documents, or in other languages, please call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.

Disponibilidad de traducción

¡First Choice está aquí para usted! Este boletín informativo y otros materiales están traducidos al español, y se pueden encontrar en nuestro sitio de Internet en www.selecthealthofsc.com. Si necesita ayuda con traducciones de otros documentos, o en otros idiomas, llame a Servicios al Miembro al **1-888-276-2020**.

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Mango and melon salad with strawberry sauce

Salad

- 1 mango, peeled and sliced into bite-sized pieces
- ½ cantaloupe, peeled and sliced into bite-sized pieces
- ½ honeydew, peeled and sliced into bite-sized pieces

Strawberry sauce

- 1½ C fresh or partially thawed frozen strawberries
- 1 TB lemon juice
- ¼ C confectioners sugar

1. Place mango, cantaloupe, and honeydew pieces in a large serving bowl.
2. In a blender, blend strawberries, lemon juice, and sugar until smooth.
3. Drizzle sauce over fruit salad and serve.

Serves 4. Each serving provides: Calories–177, fat–1 g, cholesterol–0 mg, fiber–4 g, sodium–29 mg.

Quick tip: Stay hydrated with water-rich foods

Try adding some water-rich foods—such as celery, spinach, tomatoes, blueberries, and melons—to your diet.



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Member Services:
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TTY for the hearing impaired:
1-888-765-9586

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