



LifeTimes®

Winter 2025

Your guide to lifelong health

Health and wellness and prevention information

Talk to Your Doctors and Care Team About Your Cultural Beliefs and Values

To make sure you get the best possible care, it is important to talk about your past health care, family health history and habits as they relate to your health. It is equally important to talk with your doctors about getting care that meets your social and cultural beliefs and values. This is known as culturally competent care.

Your doctors and care team need to know about any beliefs that could impact your health, treatment and understanding of your medical information so they can provide care that is culturally sensitive.

- **Language** - Let your doctors know if you need an interpreter or if you want to get information in a different language.
- **Family** - Explain how family decisions might influence your health care choices and if you need to talk with family members before making medical decisions.
- **Spirituality** - Share religious or spiritual beliefs that could affect your treatment plan like medical interventions or end-of-life care.



- **Diet** - Tell them if you have food restrictions like avoiding certain foods or ingredients and fasting during religious holidays.
- **Modesty** - If you have modesty practices regarding clothing or physical exams, let your doctors know so they can make sure you are comfortable during medical procedures.

Don't be shy or afraid to have this talk with your doctors. Your doctors might not know about your beliefs and values. Your open and honest communication can help them to build a treatment plan with a better understanding of your needs.

■ *Source: National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine,*

LifeTimes is published for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas STAR members. Each issue brings you news about your health plan and staying healthy, along with important phone numbers for you to keep. If you have questions or need help, call the Customer Advocate Department. Articles in *LifeTimes* are meant to educate. They are not meant as medical advice. Please check with your doctor for any advice about your health.

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Caring for Your Heart

Heart-Smart Tips That Can Add Years to Your Life

Heart disease cuts too many lives short. Fight back! There are simple steps you can take every day to nurture and protect your heart.

- **Tip the scales in your favor.** Maintain a healthy weight. Get rid of love handles to help your heart pump more efficiently. A 10-pound weight loss can lower blood pressure and reduce strain on your heart.
- **Snack on good stuff.** Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. Include a balance of whole-grains, low-fat dairy, skinless poultry and fish in your meals. They help reduce plaque that clogs arteries and blood vessels.

- **Move more.** Break a sweat. Work in at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week to help your heart beat strong. Plus, it lowers stress and keeps the extra pounds off!
- **Keep your numbers in check.** Know your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Take steps to lower them if they are high. This will also reduce your risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

Protect your heart so you can spend more time with people you love.

■ Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Learn to Live – Support for Emotional and Behavioral Well-Being

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas is working with Learn to Live, an online resource available at no cost to eligible members and caregivers to support their well-being. Learn to Live is a mental health program for those living with stress, depression, substance-use concerns, insomnia, panic and /or social anxiety. It can also help those looking to improve their overall resilience and well-being.

Grounded in the proven principles of cognitive behavioral therapy, Learn to Live resources focus on problem solving and changing behaviors. Learn to Live is not a replacement for therapy, but rather serves as a compliment to other services that members have access to and includes:

- 24/7 access to seven online, self-guided programs and features
- Programs available in English and Spanish
- Ability to start, stop and save progress
- Can be used with other services that members may have access to (in-person therapy, teletherapy, primary care)
- Personal coaching (phone, text, email)
- Mobile app that is compatible across devices.

Find a program that is right for you. Take the online, self-paced private assessment to start.



Visit <https://www.learntolive.com/welcome/bcbstxmedicaid?code=txmed> and enter access code TXMED.

Learn to Live provides educational behavioral health programs. Members considering further medical treatment should consult with a physician. Learn to Live, Inc. is an independent company that provides online behavioral health programs and tools for members with coverage through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. BCBSTX makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding third-party vendors and the products and services offered by them.

Helpful Toll-Free Phone Numbers

Service Coordination	1-877-214-5630	(TTY: 711)
Mental Health Services Hotline	1-888-657-6061	(TTY: 711)
Member Advocate and Value Added Services	1-877-375-9097	(TTY: 711)
Medicaid Managed Care Helpline	1-866-566-8989	(TTY: 711)
ModivCare: Non-Emergency Medical Transportation	1-866-824-1565	(TTY: 711)
Vision Services	1-888-657-6061	(TTY: 711)
Special Beginnings®	1-888-421-7781	(TTY: 711)

STAR Customer Advocate **1-888-657-6061** (TTY: **711**)

Member Outreach **1-877-375-9097** (TTY: **711**)

Wintertime Skin Care to Help Treat and Prevent Dry Skin

As the seasons change, so does your skin. Dry skin can itch, flake, crack and even bleed. Chronic skin conditions like eczema may flare up around this time, leaving lots of people looking for relief.

No one should have to deal with painful skin conditions, and it may be good time to change your skin routine for the season. Below is a list of dermatologist's recommendations to prevent dry skin.

Tweak your bath and shower routine.

1. Limit your shower or bath to five to 10 minutes.
2. Use warm water instead of hot water.
3. Wash with gentle, unscented cleanser.
4. Dry your face by blotting (don't rub) gently with a clean towel.

Slather on moisturizer.

Ointments, creams and lotions trap existing moisture in your skin. You may want to choose ointments and creams since they are more hydrating and less irritating than lotions. Use them daily to prevent dryness, cracking, flaking and peeling.

1. Apply moisturizer immediately after washing your face and hands while they are still damp.
2. As soon as you dry off after a shower or bath, apply moisturizer generously while the skin is still damp.



Wear lip balm.

There are so many products to choose from – ranging from well-known brands to products with all-natural ingredients. Lip balm not only protects the delicate skin on your lips, but it is also soothing and feels good.

Use unscented skin care products.

It is best to stay away from products with strong fragrance. They can be harsh on dry, sensitive skin. If your skin feels dry, avoid deodorant soaps and skin products with alcohol, retinoids and alpha hydroxy acids that slough off skin cells.

Use a humidifier.

Add moisture to the air in your home with a humidifier. Moisture helps your skin stay healthy and hydrated.

■ Sources: American Academy of Dermatology Association; Mayo Clinic



Brush Up on These Smile-Worthy Health Tips

Everyone wants a healthy smile, right? A good toothbrush, fluoride toothpaste and pack of dental floss are a good start. These dental tools can get rid of plaque. Plaque is a sticky film of bacteria that can cause tooth decay and gum disease. The bacteria can also enter your bloodstream and boost the risk for heart disease, stroke and other illnesses.

When you take care of your mouth, you take care of your overall health.

- **Keep your brain sharp.** Brush and floss to fend off gingivitis, a form of gum disease linked to memory loss and Alzheimer's disease.
- **Show your heart some love.** Brush and floss to prevent gum infections that may lead to heart disease, clogged arteries and stroke.
- **Help your lungs breathe easier.** Brush and floss to keep harmful germs that could cause pneumonia from making their way into your lungs.
- **Protect your unborn baby.** Brush and floss to guard your bundle of joy from a premature delivery and low birth weight.
- **Kick cancer to the curb.** Brush and floss to help reduce your risk for liver, kidney, pancreatic and blood cancers.

Brush, floss, smile and stay healthy.

■ Sources: Mayo Clinic; Harvard Medical School and Annals of Oncology



We Want to See You!

We host member meetings and community events that provide important health information and resources for our members.

Go to <https://www.bcbstx.com/star/pdf/star-community-calendar-tx.pdf> to view a list of upcoming events near you. If you need help completing your STAR renewal packet, come out and see us. We can help!

Family Food Favorites



Cajun Beef Chili

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 medium garlic cloves, chopped
- 4.5 oz. diced green chiles, drained
- 2 tablespoons Cajun seasoning
- 1 lb. 95% lean ground beef
- 1 (28-oz.) can peeled Italian tomatoes
- 1 cup fat-free salsa
- ¼ cup chili powder
- 30 oz. kidney beans, drained

Directions:

1. In a large, nonstick saucepan, heat the oil. Add the onion and cook for six to eight minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the garlic, green chiles and Cajun seasoning and cook for about one minute, stirring occasionally. Add the beef and cook for about eight minutes, breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon.
2. Add the tomatoes with their liquid, salsa, chili powder and 1/2 cup water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and cook until the chili is slightly thickened, about one hour. Stir in the beans and cook until heated.

■ Sources: *Weight Watchers*

Tell Us What You Think!

Member Advisory Group

Every three months, we invite STAR members, parents or legally authorized representatives (LARs) to join our online Member Advisory Group (MAG) meeting. MAG members are asked to give us feedback on our member education materials, Value Added Services (VAS) and to get health plan program updates. Members, parents or LARs who join MAG are asked to commit to four quarterly meetings to get a \$25 gift card per family for attending.

You can visit www.bcbstx.com to find a schedule of MAG meetings and events or call a Member Advocate in the Central Service area at **1-888-657-6061** (TTY: **711**). For a Member Advocate in the Travis service area, call **1-877-375-9097** to get details.

STAR Customer Advocate **1-888-657-6061** (TTY: **711**)

Member Outreach **1-877-375-9097** (TTY: **711**)

Snow-Free Winter Activities

Winter can be a magical time of the year, even if you don't live somewhere that snows. Check out these no-snow-required, family winter activities.

- **Drink apple cider or hot cocoa.** Make your own or buy it from the store.
- **Watch a movie together.** Watching movies can be a fun family tradition.
- **Have an indoor picnic.** Boring dinner just got more fun. Spread out a tablecloth on the floor and eat together picnic-style.
- **Read aloud to the whole family.** Sharing stories is a wonderful way to build family bonds. Choose a picture book with beautiful illustrations.
- **Make a squirrel feeder.** Spread peanut butter over a pinecone and place it outside near a window to see the squirrels enjoy a treat.
- **Bake cookies.** Involve the kids in measuring, mixing and cleaning up.
- **Work on a puzzle together.** It is fun to pick out a puzzle with many pieces that may take your family several days to complete.

Winter Crafts

- **Make paper snowflakes and decorate your house.** This craft activity can be enjoyed by people of all ages. The youngest kids can fold paper two or three times and simply cut off the corners, while older family members can experiment with more intricate snowflake designs.
- **Decorate pine cones.** Collect a few pinecones and set out some glue, small pompoms, glitter or other decorative items and let the kids unleash their creativity.



Winter Outings

- **Visit a children's museum.** Heading to a science museum, aquarium or history museum is a great way to spend a chilly day indoors, but away from home.
- **Go to the library.** Find some good books to read.
- **Volunteer as a family.** Teach your children compassion and find community activities that welcome help.

■ Sources: [Parents.com](https://www.parents.com); [Tinybeans.com](https://www.tinybeans.com)

To get auxiliary aids and services, or to get written or oral interpretation to understand the information given to you, including materials in alternative formats such as large print, braille or other languages, please call the BCBSTX Customer Advocate Department at the number on the back of your member ID card.

Non-Discrimination Notice

Health Care Coverage Is Important For Everyone

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English knowledge and first language), age, disability, or sex (as understood in the applicable regulation). We provide people with disabilities with reasonable modifications and free communication aids to allow for effective communication with us. We also provide free language assistance services to people whose first language is not English.

To receive reasonable modifications, communication aids or language assistance free of charge, please call us at **855-710-6984 (TTY 711)**.

If you believe we have failed to provide a service, or think we have discriminated in another way, you can file a grievance with:

Office of Civil Rights Coordinator	Phone:	855-664-7270 (voicemail)
Attn: Office of Civil Rights Coordinator	TTY/TDD:	855-661-6965
300 E. Randolph St., 35th Floor	Fax:	855-661-6960
Chicago, IL 60601	Email:	civilrightscoordinator@bcbsil.com

You can file a grievance in person or by mail, fax or email. If you need help filing a grievance, the Office of Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You may file a civil rights complaint with the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, at:

US Dept of Health & Human Services	Phone:	800-368-1019
200 Independence Avenue SW	TTY/TDD:	800-537-7697
Room 509F, HHH Building	Complaint Portal:	
Washington, DC 20201	ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf	
	Complaint Forms:	
	hhs.gov/sites/default/files/	
	ocr-cr-complaint-form-package.pdf	

<https://www.bcbstx.com/medicaid/pdf/medicaid-non-discrimination-tx.pdf>

ATTENTION: If you speak another language, free language assistance services are available to you. Appropriate auxiliary aids and services to provide information in accessible formats are also available free of charge. Call 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) or speak to your provider.

Español Spanish	ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. También están disponibles de forma gratuita ayuda y servicios auxiliares apropiados para proporcionar información en formatos accesibles. Llame al 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) o hable con su proveedor.
العربية Arabic	تنبيه: إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، فستتوفر لك خدمات المساعدة اللغوية المجانية. كما تتوفر وسائل مساعدة وخدمات مناسبة لتوفير المعلومات بتنسيقات يمكن الوصول إليها مجانًا. اتصل على الرقم 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) أو تحدث إلى مقدم الخدمة.
中文 Chinese	注意: 如果您说[中文], 我们将免费为您提供语言协助服务。我们还免费提供适当的辅助工具和服务, 以无障碍格式提供信息。致电 855-710-6984 (文本电话: 711) 或咨询您的服务提供商。
Français French	ATTENTION : Si vous parlez Français, des services d'assistance linguistique gratuits sont à votre disposition. Des aides et services auxiliaires appropriés pour fournir des informations dans des formats accessibles sont également disponibles gratuitement. Appelez le 855-710-6984 (TTY : 711) ou parlez à votre fournisseur.
Deutsch German	ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlose Sprachassistentendienste zur Verfügung. Entsprechende Hilfsmittel und Dienste zur Bereitstellung von Informationen in barrierefreien Formaten stehen ebenfalls kostenlos zur Verfügung. Rufen Sie 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) an oder sprechen Sie mit Ihrem Provider.
ગુજરાતી Gujarati	ધ્યાન આપો: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો તો મફત ભાષાકીય સહાયતા સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. યોગ્ય ઓફિસિલરી સહાય અને એક્સેસિબલ ફોર્મેટમાં માહિતી પૂરી પાડવા માટેની સેવાઓ પણ વિના મૂલ્યે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) પર કોલ કરો અથવા તમારા પ્રદાતા સાથે વાત કરો.
हिन्दी Hindi	ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं, तो आपके लिए नि:शुल्क भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध होती हैं। सुलभ प्रारूपों में जानकारी प्रदान करने के लिए उपयुक्त सहायक साधन और सेवाएँ भी नि:शुल्क उपलब्ध हैं। 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) पर कॉल करें या अपने प्रदाता से बात करें।
Italiano Italian	ATTENZIONE: se parli Italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Sono inoltre disponibili gratuitamente ausili e servizi ausiliari adeguati per fornire informazioni in formati accessibili. Chiama l'855-710-6984 (tty: 711) o parla con il tuo fornitore.
한국어 Korean	주의: [한국어]를 사용하시는 경우 무료 언어 지원 서비스를 이용하실 수 있습니다. 이용 가능한 형식으로 정보를 제공하는 적절한 보조 기구 및 서비스도 무료로 제공됩니다. 855-710-6984(TTY: 711)번으로 전화하거나 서비스 제공업체에 문의하십시오.
Diné Navajo	SHOOH: Diné bee y1ni[ti'gogo, saad bee an1'awo' bee 1ka'an7da'awo'7t'11 jiiik'eh n1 h0l=. Bee ahi[hane'go bee nida'anish7 t'11 1kodaat'4h7g77 d00 bee 1ka'an7da'wo'7 1ko bee baa hane'7 bee hadadilyaa bich'8' ahoot'i'7g77 47 t'11 jiiik'eh h0l=. Kohj8' 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) hod7ilnih doodago nika'an1lwo'7 bich'8' hanidziih.
فارسي Farsi	توجه: اگر [وارد کردن زبان] صحبت می کنید، خدمات پشتیبانی زبانی رایگان در دسترس شما قرار دارد. همچنین کمک ها و خدمات پشتیبانی مناسب برای ارائه اطلاعات در قالب های قابل دسترس، به طور رایگان موجود می باشند. با شماره 855-710-6984 (تله تایپ: 711) تماس بگیرید یا با ارائه دهنده خود صحبت کنید.

Polski Polish	UWAGA: Osoby mówiące po polsku mogą skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Dodatkowe pomoce i usługi zapewniające informacje w dostępnych formatach są również dostępne bezpłatnie. Zadzwoń pod numer 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) lub porozmawiaj ze swoim dostawcą.
РУССКИЙ Russian	ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русский, вам доступны бесплатные услуги языковой поддержки. Соответствующие вспомогательные средства и услуги по предоставлению информации в доступных форматах также предоставляются бесплатно. Позвоните по телефону 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) или обратитесь к своему поставщику услуг.
Tagalog Tagalog	PAALALA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, magagamit mo ang mga libheng serbisyong tulong sa wika. Magagamit din nang libre ang mga naaangkop na auxiliary na tulong at serbisyo upang magbigay ng impormasyon sa mga naa-access na format. Tumawag sa 855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) o makipag-usap sa iyong provider.
اردو Urdu	توجہ دیں: اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کے لیے زبان کی مفت مدد کی خدمات دستیاب ہیں۔ قابل رسائی فارمیٹس میں معلومات فراہم کرنے کے لیے مناسب معاون امداد اور خدمات بھی مفت دستیاب ہیں۔ (855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) پر کال کریں یا اپنے فراہم کنندہ سے بات کریں۔
Việt Vietnamese	LƯU Ý: Nếu bạn nói tiếng Việt, chúng tôi cung cấp miễn phí các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ. Các hỗ trợ dịch vụ phù hợp để cung cấp thông tin theo các định dạng dễ tiếp cận cũng được cung cấp miễn phí. Vui lòng gọi theo số 855-710-6984 (Người khuyết tật: 711) hoặc trao đổi với người cung cấp dịch vụ của bạn.

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