Sweeten Your Life in a Healthy Way!

The season can also be a reminder to sweeten your life in a healthy way by choosing the right amount and type of sweets that you eat.

Foods sweetened with sugar may taste good, but the calories can add up fast and make it difficult to keep your blood sugar at a healthy level. When using sweeteners such as sugar, honey, and agave nectar, less is better. The American Heart Association recommends limiting added sugar to 9 teaspoons (36 grams) per day for most men and 6 teaspoons (25 grams) per day for most women and children.

Make healthier choices, such as fruits, veggies and whole grains. Check the nutrition label on your food and drinks. On food labels look for words ending in “ose”, this can identify types of sugar such as sucrose (table sugar), fructose (fruit sugar found in food products such as juice, candies, and popsicles), and maltose. Sugar substitutes such as sugar alcohols (sorbitol, xylitol), saccharine (Sweet N Low), aspartame (Equal), sucralose (Splenda) and stevia extracts (Truvia), do not have significant calories or raise the sugar in your blood, but they may impact your health with increased hunger and gut discomfort. If you decide to use these, use them in small amounts.

Sodas, juices and other energy drinks are loaded with sugar. Every 4 grams of sugar is equal to

1 teaspoon of sugar. A 12-ounce can of a regular soft drink has an average of 39 grams of sugar or a little over 9 teaspoons of sugar! Make water your go-to drink. There are many ways to flavor your water such as infusing it with mint, basil, and rosemary. A lemon wedge or a slice of cucumber also gives water a nice zing!

Having a sweet treat such as candy or pastry occasionally is okay, as long as you balance it by keeping the portions small and making healthier choices daily.
Ask the Doc: What You Need to Know About Asthma and Allergies

Q: What is asthma?
A: Asthma is a disease of the lungs that narrows airways and makes it hard to breathe. It causes coughing, wheezing and tightness in the chest. Things that cause your asthma symptoms to flare up are triggers and can make your symptoms worse. Not everyone has the same triggers.

Q: What are allergies?
A: Allergies occur when the body reacts to something harmless around you like certain foods, trees, dust or the family pet. It causes sneezing and itchy eyes. Both asthma and allergies have triggers – things that cause your symptoms. Allergies can make asthma symptoms worse.

Q: What are some common allergy and asthma triggers?
A: Some triggers that can cause symptoms to flare up are:
- Grass, trees, plants and weeds
- Dust and molds
- Some insects
- Household pets
- Smoke, colds or flu
- Changes in the weather
- Some foods
- Strong smells

Q: How are allergies and asthma treated?
A: Talk with your doctor about allergy and asthma treatment. There are prescription and over-the-counter allergy medicines that may give you relief from your symptoms.

Make a written Asthma Action Plan with your doctor. You will likely take medicines using an inhaler. Controller medicines are taken every day even when you feel well, to reduce airway inflammation and help prevent asthma symptoms. Quick-relief medicines (sometimes called rescue medicines) are taken as soon as you have any warning signs of an asthma attack.

To avoid allergy and asthma attacks, know what triggers your symptoms and avoid them when you can. See your doctor often to review your triggers, medicines and treatment plan.
Lose Weight with the Diabetes Prevention Program

Spring is a great time to refocus on your health and L.A. Care is here to help. Members now have access to the Diabetes Prevention Program from the convenience of their home.

This program includes a full year of support from health coaches to make small changes to food choices and activity levels. These changes can have a big impact on your health.

This is a free program. To qualify you must:

• Be at least 18 years old and
• Be overweight based on your height and weight
• Not have diabetes
• Have other risks of developing diabetes, like family history or a history of gestational diabetes

To see if you qualify, call Diabetes Care Partners at 1.877.227.3889 (TTY 711), Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. PST.

Medi-Cal Renewals Are Coming Back

You may need to take action to keep your coverage. Updating your contact information will help the county use the most current information for your case. You can update your information online at benefitsca.com or by calling the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) at 1.866.613.3777 (TTY 711).

If you receive a renewal packet or a notice asking for more information, please respond as soon as possible. You may submit the information by mail, phone, in person or online.

If you have any questions, or need help with accessing your Medi-Cal coverage, or if your Medi-Cal coverage was discontinued, please contact DPSS or visit benefitsca.com.

If you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI), please report any changes in contact information, address or phone number, by calling 1.800.772.1213 (TTY 711) or contact your local Social Security office.
L.A. Care Medicare Plus covers one annual physical exam every 12 months. Make good use of this benefit to stay on top of your health. When making your appointment, remember to let your doctor’s office know this is your “Annual Physical Exam.” The exam includes a review of your personal and family medical history and is done by your health care provider (doctor), who will screen for health issues and suggest ways for you to stay healthy. This is also the time to talk about any health concerns. You will be examined, get a review of your medications (please bring a list with you to your appointment), and asked about behaviors like smoking, alcohol use, diet, and exercise.

Tests and checks to learn about your health may include:
- Height and weight
- Blood pressure
- Body mass index (BMI)
- Risk factors
- Vital signs (listen to your heart and check your pulse)
- Physical exams, such as head and neck, abdominal, or neurological
- Breast exam and pelvic exam for women
- Genital and prostate exam for men

What happens after an Annual Physical Exam?
If you are healthy and your test results come back normal, your doctor will likely provide suggestions to help improve your health or to stay healthy. If an issue shows up or you have abnormal results, you may need more tests or a follow-up appointment. Your doctor will discuss this with you and develop a treatment plan. L.A. Care is here to assist you. If you have questions, please call L.A. Care Medicare Plus Member Services at 1.833.LAC.DSNP - 1.833.522.3767 (TTY 711).

Health is much more dependent on our habits and nutrition than on medicine.
– John Lubbock
Caring For You and Your Privacy

L.A. Care knows each member is one of a kind! We want to make sure you get the health care that is right for you.

This is why we may ask you what language you prefer or your race and ethnicity. Knowing about you, including if you have a disability, your gender identity and sexual orientation helps us find the right care for you.

The information you tell us is voluntary. It is only used to make sure you feel safe and respected when getting care. We use it to improve services. It also helps in giving you materials in the language or format you like.

You can choose not to answer some questions. What you tell us is protected by law. We can only share what you tell us with certain people, like your doctors. It will never be used for underwriting, or to deny benefits or care.

If you have questions about how we use this information, call Member Services at 1.833.522.3767 (TTY 711). You can also go to lacare.org/member-handbook/notice-privacy-practices and read the Notice of Privacy Practices.

What Are We Asking?

L.A. Care is now asking for members’ pronouns, gender identity and sexual orientation. When you call Member Services at 1.833.522.3767 (TTY 711), agents will ask for your:

- Preferred Pronouns (he/him, she/her, and they/them, etc.)
- Sex Assigned at Birth (Female, Male, Unknown)
- Gender Identity (Woman, Man, Non-binary, etc.)
- Sexual Orientation (Straight/Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, etc.)

For all options, you can also choose not to answer the questions.

Why are we asking?

L.A. Care values health equity. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) people are sometimes not treated well in health care. This can lead to worse health outcomes. Like everyone else, LGBTQ+ people deserve quality care. Asking for this data helps members get the best care and to feel safe and respected. L.A. Care supports our LGBTQ+ community!
How Long Should I Wait for My Appointment?

Did you know L.A. Care has rules about how long you should wait to get a doctor appointment? Appointments must be offered within the timeframes listed below*:

Primary Care Doctors
- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 10 business days
- Urgent appointment (no authorization required): 48 hours

Specialists
- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 15 business days
- Urgent appointment (requiring prior authorization): 96 hours

Behavioral Care
- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 15 business days (physicians)
- Routine appointment (non-urgent): 10 business days (non-physicians)
- Non-Urgent Follow-Up Appointment: Within 10 business days of prior appointment (Non-Physicians)
- Urgent appointment: 48 hours
- Life threatening emergency: Immediately
- Non-life threatening emergency: 6 hours
- Emergency Care: Immediate, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week

After-hours:
- Access - After Hours recording or answering service must state emergency instructions to address medical emergencies
- Access - After Hours recording or answering service must state a way of contacting the provider
- Timeliness - Recording or live person must state that provider will call back within 30 minutes

You can get health advice when your doctor’s office is closed and on weekends or holidays.
- L.A. Care doctors must be available, or have someone available, to help you at all times.
- If you need to talk with your doctor when the office is closed, call your doctor’s office phone number. Follow their instructions.
- A doctor or nurse should call you back within 30 minutes.

If you have trouble reaching your doctor, call the L.A. Care Nurse Advice Line at 1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711) 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. A nurse will give you the health information you need. Remember, if you have a medical emergency and need help right away, dial 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

*The applicable waiting time for a particular appointment may be extended if the referring or treating health care provider has determined and noted in the patient record that a longer waiting time will not have a detrimental effect on the health of the member.
**Doctor’s Orders: Take Your Meds!**

Do you have long-term health problems and take many medications? Do you sometimes forget to refill your medications? You can now fill your chronic medications up to a 100-day supply at a time. By switching, you will not need to go to the pharmacy as often, can keep your conditions under control and be healthier. Your copay, if you have any, will stay the same as a 30-day supply. It is important to take your medications daily! Here are some helpful tips for you.

Here are some helpful tips for you:

- Use our mail order service to deliver your medications to your doorstep. It is FREE! If you are interested, please call Ralphs Pharmacy at **1.213.452.0830** and say you are an L.A. Care member.
- Take your medications the same time every day, preferably with a daily routine like brushing your teeth or getting ready for bed.
- Use a calendar or a reminder and note each time you take a dose.
- Use a pillbox and refill it on a weekly basis.
- Always have enough medications with you so you never run out.
- Call our medication experts to get all your questions answered. L.A. Care partners with Navitus Clinical Engagement Center to offer the Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program. It is FREE! If you are interested, please call **1.213.584.2028** to see if you qualify.

° For more information, you can also visit [https://medicare.lacare.org/members/part-d-prescription-drugs](https://medicare.lacare.org/members/part-d-prescription-drugs)

If you have any questions, call L.A. Care Medicare Plus Member Services at **1.833.522.3767** (TTY 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays.

L.A. Care Medicare Plus (HMO D-SNP) is a health plan that contracts with both Medicare and Medi-Cal to provide benefits of both programs. Enrollment in L.A. Care Medicare Plus depends on contract renewal.

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**Looking for L.A. Care Members to Join the Community Advisory Committees**

Do you want to help improve the health care of your family? Would you like to share your thoughts on how L.A. Care can improve health services for its members? If you answered yes, then L.A. Care would like to invite you to join our Community Engagement Group (CEG).

As a CEG member, you will receive information on L.A. Care’s programs, trainings on health topics and skills to help you be an advocate for your community. Best of all, you will meet other members who want to make a difference in improving health care for over 2 million L.A. Care members in L.A. County.

If you are interested or have questions about CEG, please email [coeadvisory@lacare.org](mailto:coeadvisory@lacare.org). For more information, please call the Community Outreach & Engagement Department at **1.888.522.2732** (TTY 711), Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Do you need support understanding your health condition, accessing health care, or being connected with additional resources?

If so, you may benefit from seeing a Community Health Worker (CHW), a trained non-clinical professional who can help you address chronic conditions, preventive health care needs, and health-related social needs. The goal of CHW services is to help prevent disease, disability, and other health conditions from worsening, to prolong life and promote physical and mental health and well-being. Services are available to L.A. Care Medi-Cal members at the local Community Resource Centers (CRCs). To obtain CHW services, please connect with your Provider to receive a written recommendation.

**Health Education and Navigation**
- Promotes health or addresses barriers to physical and mental health care through providing information on health topics. This may include control and prevention of chronic or infectious diseases and perinatal health conditions.
- CHWs can provide training, referrals, or support to assist with
  - Accessing health care, understanding the health care system, or engaging in your own care
  - Connecting to community resources such as medical translation/interpretation or transportation services

**Screening and Assessment**
- CHWs may provide screening and assessment services that do not require a license, and assist with connecting you to appropriate health services

**Individual Support or Advocacy**
- CHWs may assist with preventing the worsening of a health condition, preventing injury or violence prevention, specific to community and gang violence

L.A. Care Health Plan and Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Community Resource Centers are here to serve you. Enjoy our in-person health and wellness classes that are fun, free and open to everyone. You can also participate in free on-demand online classes such as exercise, healthy cooking and more at [youtube.com/activehealthyinformed](http://youtube.com/activehealthyinformed). Call 1.877.287.6290 for more information or drop by so that our CRC staff can help you get the services you need!
**Medi-Cal Covers Dental Exams and Cleanings for Older Adults!**

Spring is right around the corner, which means it is time for cleaning. Make sure you visit the dentist for a routine cleaning and check-up. As an older adult, you may be prone to gum disease and other oral health problems. Good oral health takes more than just brushing and flossing. Eating a balanced diet and limiting sugary foods and drinks will help keep your teeth and gums in good shape as you age.

Don’t forget to visit the dentist for regular check-ups. They are your best defense against cavities and gum disease. During an exam, dentists and hygienists can find and prevent cavities and gum issues. Some preventive services you can get through the Medi-Cal Dental Program include:

- Annual dental exams
- X-rays
- Annual teeth cleanings
- Scaling and root planning
- Flossing
- Annual fluoride treatment

Medi-Cal Dental provides free or low-cost check-ups every 12 months for members aged 21 and over.

Find Your Medi-Cal dental home by using the “Find a Dentist” tool on [SmileCalifornia.org/Find-A-Dentist/](https://www.smilecalifornia.org/findadentist) or call the Telephone Service Center at **1.800.322.6384**.

Medi-Cal Benefits have expanded for adults 50 and older and they can now receive Medi-Cal benefits, including coverage, regardless of immigration status. Under this coverage expansion, the following populations are impacted:

- Individuals who are eligible for Medi-Cal, who do not have satisfactory immigration status for Medi-Cal (or are unable to verify citizenship) and are not yet enrolled in Medi-Cal.
- Individuals who are enrolled in restricted scope Medi-Cal (often called Emergency Medi-Cal).

For more information, visit [SmileCalifornia.org/OlderAdultExpansion](https://www.smilecalifornia.org/olderadultexpansion).

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**L.A. Care Works for You**

At L.A. Care, we inform, educate, and engage our members. We want to empower YOU to be well and happy with your health care. We reach more than 2 million members through mail, email, phone, websites, newsletters, and even through your doctor!

Let us help you with your health care when and how you need it. Call us at **1.888.522.2732** (TTY 711) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays. Also, visit our website at [lacare.org](http://lacare.org).
Discrimination is against the law. L.A. Care Health Plan follows State and Federal civil rights laws. L.A. Care Health Plan does not unlawfully discriminate, exclude people, or treat them differently because of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, mental disability, physical disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

L.A. Care Health Plan provides:
- Free aids and services to people with disabilities to help them communicate better, such as:
  - Qualified sign language interpreters
  - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
  - Qualified interpreters
  - Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact L.A. Care Health Plan 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays, by calling 1.833.522.3767. If you cannot hear or speak well, please call TTY 711. Upon request, this document can be made available to you in braille, large print, audio cassette, or electronic form. To obtain a copy in one of these alternative formats, please call or write to:

L.A. Care Health Plan
Member Services Department
1055 West 7th Street, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
1.833.522.3767 TTY 711

HOW TO FILE A CIVIL RIGHTS GRIEVANCE
If you believe that L.A. Care Health Plan has failed to provide these services or unlawfully discriminated in another way on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, mental disability, physical disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation, you can file a grievance with L.A. Care Health Plan Chief Compliance Officer. You can file a civil rights grievance by phone, in writing, in person, or electronically:
- **By phone:** Contact L.A. Care Health Plan Chief Compliance Officer, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays, by calling 1.833.522.3767. Or, if you cannot hear or speak well, please call TTY 711.
- **In writing:** Fill out a complaint form or write a letter and send it to:
  L.A. Care Health Plan
  Chief Compliance Officer
  1055 West 7th Street, 10th Floor
  Los Angeles, CA 90017
  Email: civilrightscoordinator@lacare.org
- **In person:** Visit your doctor’s office or L.A. Care Health Plan and say you want to file a civil rights grievance.
- **Electronically:** Visit L.A. Care Health Plan website at www.lacare.org/members/member-support/file-grievance/ grievance-appeal-form or send an email to civilrightscoordinator@lacare.org.

OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS – U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
If you believe you have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights by phone, in writing, or electronically:
- **By phone:** Call 1.800.368.1019. If you cannot speak or hear well, please call TTY/TDD 1.800.537.7697.
- **In writing:** Fill out a complaint form or send a letter to:
  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  200 Independence Avenue, SW
  Room 509F, HHH Building
  Washington, D.C. 20201

- **Electronically:** Visit the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal at https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf

L.A. Care Medicare Plus (HMO D-SNP) is a health plan that contracts with both Medicare and Medi-Cal to provide benefits of both programs to enrollees. Enrollment in L.A. Care Medicare Plus depends on contract renewal.
Nurse Advice Line Can Help You

Do you have questions about your health? Need medical advice fast? The Nurse Advice Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Registered nurses will answer your health questions and help you take care of your family. Get tips on avoiding the flu, treating the common cold and so much more.

Use the audio library to listen to recorded messages on many different health topics. Call the L.A. Care Nurse Advice Line at 1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711) or chat with a nurse online free. To access the nurse chat function, go to lacare.org and click on “Member Sign In” to log on.

Go Green and Get Live Well Electronically!

Would you like to get Live Well by email? Please sign up on our website at lacare.org/live-well to receive it by email. Be sure to like us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Important Numbers

Do you have questions about your benefits? Please see the contact information below to get help and answers.

L.A. Care Covered™
1.855.270.2327 (TTY 711)
Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

L.A. Care Compliance Helpline
(to report fraud or abuse)
1.800.400.4889 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Language/Interpreter Services
1.888.839.9909 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

L.A. Care Nurse Advice Line
(for non-emergency medical advice)
1.800.249.3619 (TTY 711)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and holidays

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL 911
This is not a complete list. The benefit information is a brief summary, not a complete description of benefits. For more information, contact the plan or read the Member Handbook. Limitations, co-pays, and restrictions may apply. For more information, call L.A. Care Medicare Plus Member Services or read the L.A. Care Medicare Plus Member Handbook. Benefits and/or co-payments may change on January 1 of each year. To learn more, please call the L.A. Care Member Services Department at 1.833.522.3767 (TTY: 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and holidays.

“The List of Covered Drugs and/or pharmacy and provider networks may change throughout the year. We will send you a notice before we make a change that affects you.”

Use Well is a member news publication by L.A. Care for L.A. Care Senior and Special Needs Members. L.A. Care Health Plan is a health plan that contracts with both Medicare and Medi-Cal to provide benefits of both programs to enrollees. You can get this information for free in other languages. You can get this information for free in other languages. You can get this information for free in other languages. You can get this information for free in other languages. You can get this information for free in other languages. You can get this information for free in other languages. You can get this information for free in other languages. You can get this information for free in other languages.

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