



Fall 2016

Back to school: A check-up checklist

It's back-to-school time—time for you to do a little homework.

All you have to do is pick up the phone. By making appointments for health and dental check-ups for your child, you'll help start the school year right.

Here's a checklist of what to schedule:

A well-child check-up. A yearly exam is important—even when your child isn't sick. It may help spot problems early. It also gives your child's primary care provider (PCP) a chance to offer advice about how to keep your child healthy.

It's also the time to:

- Make sure that immunizations are up-to-date
- Get answers to questions you or your child might have
- Schedule the physical that may be needed for your child to take part in school sports

An eye exam. Seeing well can be key to doing well in school. The sooner you find vision problems, the better.

A hearing screening.

Good hearing makes it easier to perform well in school and interact with others. Infections and high noise levels can affect hearing. It's good for children to be tested on an ongoing basis.

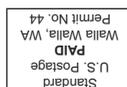
A dental check-up.

Trouble with your child's teeth can make it hard to speak, eat and concentrate. A check-up may prevent serious problems.

If these visits reveal health concerns, call your child's school. Staff there should know about your child's health conditions and what they can do to help.

Sources: American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery; American Academy of Pediatrics

Need help? Contact Member Services at **1-855-232-3596** (TTY: **711**) if you need help with transportation or finding a provider near you.





Prenatal care for moms-to-be

If you're pregnant, the health of your baby is likely at the top of your mind. And to keep your baby well, it's important to take care of yourself.

Regular prenatal care by your medical provider or OB/GYN can help prevent problems or find them early.

When to call

As soon as you think you're pregnant, call your provider. He or she will tell you how often to come in.

You will most likely visit:

- Once a month for weeks 4 to 28
- Twice a month for weeks 28 to 36
- Once a week from week 36 until birth

Some women may need to see their provider more often.

What to expect

Your provider will:

- Weigh you
- Take your blood pressure
- Measure your belly
- Listen to the baby's heartbeat

Remember, it's important to go to every appointment even if you feel fine.

Sources: *March of Dimes; Office on Women's Health*

Don't let the flu get to you

Each year has a flu season. Each flu season, the virus may change.

That's why almost everyone should get a new flu shot every year. The shot is the best way to protect yourself.

A flu shot is really important if you're 65 or older. Older bodies don't fight off germs as well as young ones. An illness like the flu can make older people very sick. The flu is more likely to turn into pneumonia in older people.

Flu season starts in the fall. Write "flu shot" on your calendar for September. That will

remind you to call your health care provider and ask about the shot.

Start with a flu shot. Then ask your doctor about a pneumonia shot. Adults should get one pneumococcal shot after age 65, or earlier if they have certain health risks.

If you cannot leave your home to get a flu or pneumonia shot, you can call Member Services at **1-855-232-3596** (TTY: **711**) for help.

Sources: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Dental home program for children

Great news for Aetna Better Health of New Jersey members under age 6! Aetna Better Health of New Jersey will begin offering a dental home program in September.

A dental home is the dental office where your child gets his or her dental and oral health care. Your child's dental home delivers care in a family-centered way. We use DentaQuest to provide our members with dental services.

Children should see a dentist before their first birthday or when their first tooth comes in and every six months after that. We cover two routine dental visits each year. We also cover all preventive and diagnostic dental services.

Have a child under 6 years old? Soon you will get information in the mail about your child's assigned dental home. You can remove your children from the program at any time. Additional dental services are available to children with special needs.

Be sure to call and make an appointment to keep your child's teeth healthy. If you have any questions or would like to change your child's dental home, call DentaQuest at **1-855-225-1727**.

Headed to the doctor?

Ask these three questions

Health care can be complex. A lot of people struggle to understand what they need to know.

But here's a way to make things easier. Every time you go to the doctor, be sure to ask—and understand the answers to—these three questions:

1. What is my main health problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

Knowing this information will make it easier for you to follow the treatment plan from your doctor. You'll be more likely to:

- Take your medicines the way you should
- Prepare for a medical procedure
- Get well sooner
- Better manage a long-term health issue
- Avoid a hospital visit
- Keep your health costs down

Source: *National Patient Safety Foundation*

Interpreter services: Just ask!

To get the best possible health care, it's important that you and your provider can speak to each other clearly. But what if your provider doesn't speak the language you know best? We can help.

Member Services can:

- Find a provider who speaks your language
- Plan for an interpreter to be with you at your appointments
- Provide an interpreter for phone calls with your provider

You can call Member Services at **1-855-232-3596** (TTY: **711**).



How's your blood pressure?

High blood pressure can fool you. With this condition, the force of blood against your arteries is strong enough to harm them. You might think you'd feel that. But that's where high blood pressure is tricky: You can have it for years and not know it, and that makes it dangerous. Over time, high blood pressure can lead to:

- Heart attacks;
- Heart failure;
- Strokes;
- Kidney failure;
- Blindness.

Could you be at risk? The short answer is yes. High blood pressure can sneak up on anyone. Some things that may boost your risk are:

- Growing older;
- Being overweight;
- Eating salty foods;

- Not exercising;
- Smoking;
- Being African American.

You won't know if your blood pressure is too high unless your health care provider checks it regularly. Ask about blood pressure screenings. If you do have high blood pressure, it's better to find out. That way you can treat it and control it, which may help you avoid worse problems down the road. If you are already on blood pressure medication, take it as your doctor has ordered. If you are having side effects, discuss treatment options with your doctor.

Sources: *National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

Lead poisoning

Five ways to protect children

It takes work to keep kids safe, but you know it's worth it.

One thing you might not know, however, is that keeping kids safe includes protecting them from lead.

Lead is a poisonous metal that's harmful to kids' health. Years ago—before people knew it was dangerous—it was put in paint. That means that in housing or buildings built before 1978, kids might come in contact with lead.

They may chew on paint chips, for example. Or as paint breaks down, it may contaminate dust. That dust can get on toys or other things kids put in their mouths.

Lead can also be in old pipes. Recently, it has been found in the drinking water of some New Jersey schools.

To protect your family:

1. Have your child tested for lead at their first birthday and second birthday. Also ask your PCP about lead testing if your child's school has been found to have lead in the drinking water. If you need assistance finding a testing site or getting transportation, call Member Services at **1-855-232-3596** (TTY: **711**).
2. Keep kids away from peeling paint or surfaces they might chew on.
3. If your home is being updated, keep children away from areas where work is being done.
4. Wash children's hands and toys often.
5. Regularly use a wet mop on bare floors. Wipe windowsills and window wells with a wet cloth.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences



Screening helps prevent cervical cancer

You don't usually think of cancer as something you can catch, but cervical cancer is nearly always caused by a virus.

Here's what happens: The human papillomavirus (HPV) is passed from person to person during sex. HPV causes cells on the cervix to change. They usually go back to normal on their own, but sometimes these cells turn into cancer.

However, women can protect themselves. Though there are no early symptoms of cervical cancer, these tests can find problems early:

- An HPV test checks for the virus. Your doctor may suggest this if you are over age 30.
- A Pap test checks for abnormal cells. You should begin having Pap tests at age 20.

HPV and abnormal Pap test results are common. Simple treatments can kill or remove the abnormal cells. This can put a stop to cancer before it starts.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

.....
This newsletter is published as a community service for the friends and members of **Aetna Better Health® of New Jersey**.

This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

Contact us

Member Services
1-855-232-3596
24 hours a day,
7 days a week
TTY: **711**

www.aetnabetterhealth.com/newjersey

March Vision
1-888-493-4070
TTY: 711

DentaQuest
1-855-225-1727
TTY: 711

2016 © Coffey Communications, Inc.,
All rights reserved.

NJ-16-07-09-ENG