Kids need their vaccines to attend public school

Vaccines—also known as immunizations—save lives. They work by prompting the body to make special proteins called antibodies. These protect against dangerous diseases.

The immunization requirements for kids to attend public school in Pennsylvania have changed.

School students now have 5 days from the first day of school to either:

1. Have all the required shots
2. Have completed the first shot in a series and a written scheduled catch-up plan signed by a health care provider
3. Have documented exemptions

If this information isn’t given to your student’s school by the fifth school day, he or she may not be allowed to enter their school on the sixth school day.

Vaccines help protect children against 14 serious childhood diseases, like whooping cough and measles.

Vaccine-preventable diseases can be very serious, especially in young children.

Make vaccines part of your child’s regular school physical.

Don’t wait. Vaccinate. Contact your health care provider today to make sure your family stays on track for immunizations.

Privacy and security

We understand the importance of keeping your personal and health information (PHI) secure and private. We are required by law to provide you with the Notice of Privacy Practices. This notice tells you of your rights about the privacy of your PHI. It tells you how we may use and share your personal information. You can request a copy at any time.

Both Aetna Better Health of Pennsylvania and your providers make sure that all member records are kept safe and private. You can access our privacy policy at www.aetnabetterhealth.com/pennsylvania/privacy-policy. If you have any questions, Member Services can help. Just call 1-866-638-1232 (PA Relay 7-1-1).
Helping you live well

We help our members who have serious or long-term medical needs live well. One way we do this is through our Integrated Care Management program. This program strives to improve the quality of life for our members. We focus on the individual member with targeted plans.

Care managers are registered nurses and licensed clinical social workers who work for us and can help you with issues. They are here to help you manage your care. They can help you make specialist appointments and coordinate this care with your doctor.

Care management is part of your health benefits. It does not take the place of any care you are already getting. You don’t need a doctor’s referral and you can opt out at any time.

We have care managers for asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart failure, coronary artery disease, diabetes, pregnancy, and for members with other complex health issues.

If you have a special need or feel you need care management, please call Member Services at 1-866-638-1232 (PA Relay 7-1-1).

Making sure you get the right care

We know that you want to feel sure that you are getting the right care and services in the right place and right time. This is called utilization management (UM). Our UM program and staff can help you and your doctors make decisions about your health care. But we also look at ways to make the most out of your health outcomes and managing costs.

We use clinical review criteria, practice guidelines and written policies to make UM decisions. UM decisions are based on these reasons:

- Services requested are medically needed (also called medically necessary)
- Services requested are covered

We do not reward or pay extra money to health care providers, staff or other people to:

- Deny you care
- Give you less care
- Deny tests or treatments that are medically necessary

If you ever need to contact someone on our UM staff, don’t forget that they:

- Are available at least eight hours a day during normal business hours for inbound collect or toll-free calls about UM issues
- Can receive inbound communication about UM issues after normal business hours
- Identify themselves by name, title and organization name when initiating or returning calls about UM issues

Remember, you can also access TDD/TTY services or language assistance to discuss UM issues. Just call us at 1-866-638-1232 (PA Relay 7-1-1).

Your rights and responsibilities

Every year, we review and remind our members of their rights and responsibilities. You can get a complete copy of your rights and responsibilities at any time. Here’s how:

- Go to www.aetnabetterhealth.com/pennsylvania
- Call Member Services
- Look in your member handbook

For more information on rights and responsibilities, just call Member Services at 1-866-638-1232 (PA Relay 7-1-1). Aetna Better Health does not take action against members who exercise their rights.
Outgrowing pediatrics: When your child is ready for adult health care

You’ve seen your child pass many milestones. Now he or she is nearing adulthood. And there’s a milestone coming up you may not have thought about.

Your child will need to switch from pediatric to adult care—and may need to find a new doctor.

This change should occur between the ages of 18 and 21. You can help your child prepare by making sure he or she knows the answers to these questions:

• What kind of health insurance do I have?
• Do I know my medical history?
• What medicines do I take, and why?
• Am I allergic to any medicines?

Make sure your child knows how to talk to a doctor without you being in the room. Talk with your son or daughter about what it means to be in charge of one’s own health. And ask your pediatric doctor for help in making this change.

You can find more information at www.gottransition.org.

Source: The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

Be prepared with an advance directive

Staying healthy is a goal we all want. However, sometimes things happen all of a sudden. It’s always good to prepare for things we don’t expect. Advance directives help you be prepared.

Advance directives are instructions about your medical care if you are not able to make those decisions. An advance directive becomes your voice when you can’t say what you want or speak for yourself. Advance directives can also say who makes medical decisions for you when you can’t.

There are two kinds of advance directives:

• A living will is a document that says what medical care you want or don’t want. It is used in the event that you are not able to speak for yourself.
• A health care power of attorney is a legal document that says who can make medical decisions for you when you can’t.

For more information about advance directives, just visit our website: www.aetnabetterhealth.com/pennsylvania. Go to the “For Members” page, and then click on “Advance Directives.”

Eat smart for better blood pressure

Some foods may cause blood pressure to go up. But some help keep blood pressure down—or even lower it.

Eat less

Foods to avoid include those high in sugar and salt. Much of the salt we get comes from prepackaged and processed foods. These include:

• Breads and rolls
• Cold cuts and cured meats
• Pizza
• Restaurant foods

If you prefer a structured guide for controlling blood pressure, consider the DASH eating plan. Learn more at www.morehealth.org/DASH.

Sources: American Heart Association; National Institutes of Health

Eat more

Focus on foods that help control your weight. Good choices give your body nutrients it needs without empty calories. These include:

• Whole grains
• Beans
• Fruits and vegetables
• Low-fat milk

Many of these foods provide fiber that helps fill you up. They can also be good sources of potassium, magnesium, calcium and protein. All of these help with blood pressure control.

Sources: American Heart Association; National Institutes of Health

www.aetnabetterhealth.com/pennsylvania
Drugs, alcohol and teen dating abuse

Teens may feel peer pressure to drink alcohol or try drugs. Some teens take alcohol or drugs to cope with emotional pain. Emotional pain may be caused by one or more traumatic events. Data\(^1\) says that boys who report dating abuse are more likely to use marijuana or be antisocial. Girls who report dating abuse are more likely to:

- Smoke
- Have suicidal thoughts
- Be depressed
- Binge drink

Teens also may be coerced into using drugs or alcohol by an abusive partner to:

- Control them through drug or alcohol addiction
- Make them do things they would not normally agree to
- Keep them from reporting the abuse

A teen may feel afraid to report abuse if they were high or drunk. This may be because the teen is afraid of getting into trouble. They may feel ashamed or at fault. They may be afraid the person who did it will plan revenge. A local domestic abuse advocate can talk about ways to stay safer if more abuse is a risk.

No one deserves to be abused. It does not matter if they use drugs or alcohol. It does not matter what they say or do. It does not matter if they change their mind about what they agree to do. Drugs and alcohol do not make a person abuse their partner. Blaming abuse on drugs or alcohol is an excuse. There are people who can help teens who have been abused even if they were drunk or high at the time.

To find the domestic abuse program nearest you, visit [www.pcadv.org](http://www.pcadv.org) and click on Find Help or use the Find Help map on the home page.

To reach the National Dating Abuse hotline, call 1-866-331-9474 or text loveis to 22522. Or visit these websites:

- [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)
- [www.thatsnotcool.com](http://www.thatsnotcool.com)

Reference:


Provided by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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