

winning health



Santa Clara
Family Health Plan
The Spirit of Care

Winter 2014



» SEE PAGE 4 for changes
to your Medi-Cal benefits!

DIABETES AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

A risky combination

A lot of people struggle with high blood pressure, but if you have diabetes, it is even more important to make sure your blood pressure stays low. This is because diabetes and high blood pressure together are much worse than each on its own. In combination, they increase your risk for heart disease and stroke.

What is high blood pressure?

Every time your heart beats, blood rushes through your arteries. Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against your artery walls. If your blood pressure is high, your arteries may not be as flexible. This means your heart has to pump

harder to circulate your blood.

Your blood pressure is managed with two numbers. The higher number is called “systolic pressure.” This is the pressure inside the artery when your heart contracts and pumps blood through your body. The lower number is called

“diastolic pressure.” This is the pressure inside the artery when your heart is resting and filling with blood.

High blood pressure for adults is considered to be a systolic pressure of 140 or higher and a diastolic pressure of 90 or higher. Your health care provider would say this as “140 over 90.”

Normal blood pressure is considered to be 120 over 80 or below.

Can high blood pressure be prevented?

The American Diabetes Association suggests you take these steps to reduce your chances for high blood pressure:

- Eat less salt.
- Quit smoking.
- Find ways to relax.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Get regular exercise.
- Moderate or eliminate alcohol.

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Could it be asthma?

Think about how hard it would be to breathe through a straw for minutes or hours on end.

That's how asthma can feel.

Asthma is a chronic lung disease. It causes the airways to narrow, making it hard to breathe.

The number of people with asthma is growing. Right now more than 25 million people in the U.S. have it. While asthma affects people of all ages, it most often starts when you're a kid.

It's important to spot the symptoms of asthma and to get help for it.

What are the signs?

Sometimes asthma symptoms are mild and go away on their own. But at other times, symptoms can get worse. When this happens, it could bring on an asthma attack.

Common asthma symptoms include: » Coughing. » Wheezing. » Chest tightness. » Shortness of breath.

Not all people with asthma have the same symptoms. And having these symptoms doesn't always mean someone has the disease.

If you think you have asthma, see your doctor. He or she can find

out if you have the disease by:

- Looking at your health history.
- Doing a physical exam.
- Performing a simple lung function test.

What causes it?

The cause of someone's asthma isn't always known. But a number of things can bring on symptoms or make them worse. These are called triggers. Common ones include:

- Allergens. Some of these are dust mites, animal dander and mold. So are pollens from trees, grasses and flowers.
- Cigarette smoke, air pollution and certain chemicals.
- Infections of the lungs or airways.
- Doing something active.
- Stress.

If you do have asthma, your doctor can help you find out what your triggers are. You can then learn how to avoid them.

How is asthma treated?

There is no cure for asthma. But it can be managed well if you learn how to control your asthma. It's important to get ongoing care and watch for signs that the disease is getting worse.

Asthma is treated with two types of drugs:

- Quick-relief drugs. These provide temporary relief from asthma symptoms.
- Long-term control drugs. These are taken daily to control airway swelling.

It's important to take your asthma drugs the right way. So be sure to follow your doctor's instructions.

Most of the time you can treat asthma symptoms on your own. But get medical help right away if you:

- Have trouble walking or talking because you are out of breath.
- Develop blue lips or fingernails.

By working with your doctor and learning how to manage your asthma, you can breathe freely and live an active life.

Sources: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

» **WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS** If you've recently joined us, welcome! We know this change can be difficult. But we are here to help. Three times a year we will send you this newsletter. In it you will find:

- Health information.
- Helpful tips.

■ **Resource information.** We value all of our members and look forward to helping you. If you have any questions, please call us:

- **Member Services:** 1-800-260-2055.
- **Nurse Advice Line (available 24 hours a day):** 1-877-509-0294.

Are you eligible for a free phone?

It's important to be able to call for help when you need it. But what if you can't afford a cell phone or specialized phone? You may be surprised that two different programs offer phones for a reduced cost, or even free, to those in need.

The Lifeline Assistance program is a government-subsidized program that provides a free cell phone along with a selection of free or low-cost plans. Enrollment is available to people with low incomes and people who are homeless. You may qualify if you are on certain public

assistance programs, like Medi-Cal or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). You can also qualify based on your household income. You must provide proof of program participation or proof of income.

If you need a specialized phone that makes it easier to hear, dial or call, you may be able to get one for free through California Phones—a program sponsored by the California Public Utilities Commission. California Phones are available to all eligible California residents. You



» FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, contact one of the two companies administering the program:

1. Assurance Wireless:
Phone: 1-888-321-5880

Website: www.assurancewireless.com

2. Reach Out Wireless:
Phone: 1-877-777-1914

Website: www.reachoutmobile.com

can receive free specialty phone equipment with certification by a medical doctor, a licensed audiologist, a qualified state agency or a hearing aid dispenser. Contact

the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program for more information at **1-800-806-1191**, or visit their website, www.ddtp.org.

We speak your language

Is English your second language?

Here's good news.

You can get an interpreter through the health plan. That way you can talk to your doctor in your first language. A family member, child or friend won't have to interpret for you. You can have this service for free when you:

- Get medical care or advice on the phone.
- Visit your doctor.
- Call the health plan.



How can you get an interpreter? Tell your doctor's office you'd like one. You can do this when you call to set up your next visit.

Or call Member Services.

We can help you find a doctor who:

- Speaks your language.
- Has an interpreter in the office.

For help, call Member Services at **1-800-260-2055**.

A risky combination

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- Make sure to monitor your blood pressure.

Can high blood pressure be treated?

If you have high blood pressure, talk to your doctor to find out how best to treat it. Your doctor may suggest you exercise more, change your diet, quit some unhealthy habits or take medication.

What should I do if I have diabetes and high blood pressure?

If you have diabetes and high blood pressure together, it is just as important to know your pressure as your sugar. Make sure you get your blood pressure checked regularly, and keep it below 140 over 90. Better yet, keep it below 120 over 80. If you can't get to the doctor frequently, most pharmacies have automated machines that will check your pressure for you. However you do it, make sure you know your blood pressure.

Important notice about your Benefits for Mental Health Services and for Substance Use Disorder Preventive Services

Dear Member:
You are getting this letter because you may currently be receiving your mental health services or substance use disorder preventive services through Regular Medi-Cal. Starting January 1, 2014, Medi-Cal managed care plans will now cover some of your mental health services and substance use disorder services that you get in Regular Medi-Cal.

What does this mean for your mental health services?

You do not need to do anything. You will receive the following Mental Health services through Santa Clara Family Health Plan (SCFHP):

- Individual and group mental health testing and treatment (psychotherapy);
- Psychological testing to evaluate a mental health condition;
- Outpatient services that include lab work, drugs, and supplies;
- Outpatient services to monitor drug therapy; and
- Psychiatric consultation.

These services are for the treatment of mild to moderate mental health conditions.*

What does this mean for your substance use disorder preventive services?

Alcohol misuse screening services are now a benefit covered by SCFHP for all members ages 18 and older. The services covered for alcohol misuse are called Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) and include:

- One expanded screening for risky alcohol use per year; and
- Three 15-minute brief intervention sessions to address risky alcohol use per year.

What is not covered?

- Mental health services for relational problems are not covered. This includes counseling for couples or families for conditions listed as relational problems.*
- Treatment for major alcohol problems is not a covered benefit, but you may be referred to the County Alcohol and Drug Program.

What if I currently receive these services?

If you are currently receiving these benefits from a non-plan provider, you may be able to continue that care for a period of time. Call SCFHP Member Services toll free at

1-800-260-2055 if you need assistance with this process (Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.).

Where can I find out more about these benefits?

To find out more information about these benefits, you may call SCFHP Member Services toll free at **1-800-260-2055** (Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.).

TTY/TDD users can call toll free **1-800-735-2929**. We have staff who speak your language.

Note: This information is an update to the SCFHP Medi-Cal 2013–2014 *Evidence of Coverage* (EOC):

- **Section 5: Your Benefits and Coverage:** Updates existing information on Outpatient Mental Health Services (page 36), adds new information on Substance Use Disorder Preventive Services.
- **Section 7: Benefit Exclusions and Limitations:** Adds new information on Outpatient Mental Health Services and on Substance Use Disorder Preventive Services (pages 51–52).

*As defined by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM IV)