

WHOLE you



2021 Spring Bulletin

Protect Yourself: Prevent Skin Cancer

Nice, sunny days are meant to be enjoyed. Do not let your fun in the sun be spoiled by harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays and skin damage. When you protect yourself from UV rays, you lower the risk of skin cancer. You also slow early aging!

Practicing smart sun protection in warmer months is a good way to get into habits that you should have all the time. The danger of UV rays is year-round, even on cloudy or cold days — and even when you are inside but near windows! UV rays can also reflect off snow, water and concrete. Put simply, if your skin is exposed and you are not in a windowless space, you can get exposure to UV rays.

Here are ways you can protect your skin:

- **Choose sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.** Apply it at least 15 minutes before sun exposure. Use it on all exposed skin. Reapply it every two hours if you are sweating or swimming.
- **Wear long sleeves, long pants and longer skirts.** Some materials are better than others at protecting you from the sun. An easy way to gauge how well it can protect you is to hold up the material to the sun. The more light that you can see through it, the less it will protect you from harmful UV rays. Dark and bright colors will protect you more than lighter colors like whites and pastels.

- **Put on a hat with a full brim when you spend time outdoors.** This will help protect your face, ears and neck. Keep in mind that a hat with a partial brim, like a baseball cap, can shield only part of you. Straw hats are not as effective for blocking out UV rays.
- **Sport shades.** Sunglasses help guard your eyes from UV rays. They also protect the skin around your eyes from sun exposure. Buy a pair you like and wear them whenever you are outside.
- **Avoid being outside during the hottest times of the day.** Always look for shade during peak daytime hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.). Find a tree or an outdoor umbrella to shield yourself.

If you work outside, play sports or simply like to spend time outdoors, be extra aware of any changes in your skin. A new growth or an uneven patch of skin can be an early sign of an issue. Set up a visit with your primary care provider (PCP) if you see any changes in your skin or have questions about your risks.



Healthy Homes for Healthy Families

Did you know that the state of your home affects your health? Certain conditions can cause health problems. Keep your home:

Clean

Keep your home clean to reduce dust and toxins. These can cause breathing problems and other sicknesses. Clean hard surfaces with wet cleaners. Use cleaners that kill germs when someone in your house is sick. Do not forget to sweep and vacuum regularly.

Safe

Reduce clutter to prevent fires and risks of tripping. Having a less cluttered home can also make you feel less stress.

Keep chemicals out of children's reach to prevent accidental poisoning. Get childproof locks for cabinets.

Dry

Damp walls and carpeting can cause mold to grow. Mold can cause asthma, viruses, and other breathing problems. Damp housing also attracts pests.

Ventilated

Having fresh air in your home will help you breathe better. Be sure to use the right filters for your furnace and to change them at the beginning of each season. Good ventilation also reduces dust and odors.

Smoke-free

Smoking and secondhand smoke both cause stroke, heart disease, and lung cancer. Protect your family by not smoking, and especially not in your home.

Most secondhand smoke exposure for children happens in the home. This can lead to ear infections, respiratory illness, worsening asthma symptoms, and other problems.

If you need help **quitting**, Nebraska Total Care can help. You can call 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711.

Pest-free

Cockroaches and rodents in the home can cause asthma, allergies, and other sicknesses. Do not leave old food lying around, and take the trash out regularly.

If you are going to use chemicals to control pests, use non-toxic ones, especially if you have children in the home.

You should also be mindful of:

Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors

Elevated levels of carbon monoxide can cause symptoms ranging from headaches to poisoning that can cause death.

Smoke detectors can alert you to a fire. They can wake you up in the middle of the night. Without them, you may not realize that there is a fire in your home.

Test your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors once per month. Do not put used batteries in them.

Temperature

Make sure that your home is not too cold in the winter months or too hot in the summer months. Homes that are too cold can cause respiratory illnesses. Homes that are too hot can cause heat-related illnesses like heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Good insulation can help to control the temperature in your home. Energy-efficient heating and cooling systems can also help, and they save you money in the end.

Lead

Lead in the home can cause a number of health problems for children. There is no safe level of exposure. Health problems include slowed growth and damage to the brain and nervous system. These can cause children to struggle in school and later in life.

You should have your child tested for lead before age two. Schedule an appointment with your child's doctor to complete this test. This test does not cost you anything.

If your home was built before 1978, contact your local health department to see if you can have your home tested for lead.

Because we spend so much time in our homes, keeping them healthy is important. If you are concerned that your home may be affecting your health, call us at 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711. We can help.



Opioids and Addiction

You may have heard of the opioid crisis or the opioid epidemic. What is this, exactly? Opioids are a medication prescribed to treat pain. In our country, we have seen an increase in the number of people who have used opioids over the last 20 years. Doctors have been prescribing them more, but also, misuse has become a problem. Opioids can be addictive and this has led to their misuse. Misusing a medication means that you are taking it in a way that is not prescribed to you by a doctor (for example, taking too much or taking it in a different way), using it to get high, and sharing with or selling it to other people.

Opioids can be safe for most people when taken as your doctor prescribes. However, they do come with risks and side effects. It is important to know about these before you start taking them.

Tolerance and Dependence

Your body may get used to the amount of opioid that you are taking and you may require more to continue to effectively manage your pain. This is called tolerance. Let your doctor know if this happens. Do not change the amount of medication that you are taking unless your doctor tells you to. Dependence happens when you start to experience withdrawal symptoms when you stop taking the medication. These can include fast heartbeat, fast breathing, inability to sleep, and diarrhea. Do not stop taking your medication or decrease the amount you take unless your doctor tells you to.

Addiction

Addiction happens when you have the urge to take your medicine and cannot stop using it, even when it

is causing harm in other areas of your life. These areas could include relationships, work, and your health.

Overdose

Overdose happens when you take medication that is too much for your body to handle. It can cause your breathing to slow or completely stop. This can lead to death. If you suspect that someone has overdosed, you should call 911 right away.

If you are worried about your use of opioids or alcohol and other drugs, there is help available. Many people struggle with substance use. Do not feel like you are alone.

[myStrength](#) is a free online tool for Nebraska Total Care members. It can help you to cope with stress, including the stress of addiction. It teaches you skills that you can use anytime.

Nebraska Total Care's Care Managers can also support you. Call 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711, and ask for Care Management.

We also have a **24/7 Substance Use Crisis Line**. Call us any time at **1-844-385-2192**, Nebraska Relay Service 711. **Press *** to talk to a licensed professional.



Find a Provider – Quick and Easy!

Did you know that you can search for providers 24/7 from the comfort of your home? The [Find a Provider](#) tool allows you to find in-network providers whenever, and from wherever. Start by entering your zip code. If you have a provider in mind, you can search for them by name. Or, you can enter the name of a hospital. If you do not have a specific provider or clinic in mind, you can choose a specialty and search for that. The list of results will show providers who are in our network, and it will tell you if they are seeing new patients, what their hours are, and how you can contact them.

Start Smart for Your Baby®

Finding out that you are pregnant can be both exciting and scary. You may wonder, “What do I do next?” As soon as you find out that you are pregnant, you should complete a Notice of Pregnancy (NOP) form. You can complete the NOP form in the [Member Portal](#). Submitting this form lets us know that you are pregnant. It makes you eligible to receive services related to pregnancy, and it also enrolls you in the Start Smart for your Baby® program.

Start Smart for your Baby® is free. It gives extra support during and after your pregnancy. This includes:

- Information about pregnancy and newborn care
- Support to help you get the things that you need during pregnancy and after your baby is born. This includes food, housing, cribs, and clothing
- Breastfeeding support and help
- Expert medical staff
- Support if you are feeling down after your pregnancy
- Assistance with quitting smoking, alcohol, or drugs
- Help choosing a doctor and hospital for your delivery

- Assistance with keeping your appointments
- Transportation support to and from your doctor visits (where available)

Remember that after your baby is born, you and your baby still need to see the doctor. **Your baby should go three to five days after birth, and you should go for your postpartum visit one week to ten weeks after you deliver. Many women struggle with postpartum depression after having a baby. You should talk to your doctor about this at your postpartum appointment, or call your doctor sooner.** Your Care Manager can also help if you are feeling down. Call 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711, and ask for Care Management.

Your baby will need to continue infant well visits regularly. You will schedule these with your doctor. Do not forget that you can [earn rewards](#) for going to them!

Nebraska Total Care offers many [resources for pregnancy](#). Remember that you and your baby are never alone. We are here to support you and your baby to be as healthy as possible.

Start Smart for Your Baby

It is important that you understand your benefits. You can find out more about them in the [member handbook](#). If you do not have a copy, we can send you one. Call Member Services if you have any questions or if you need an interpreter. The number is 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711.



Earn Rewards

\$10 - Infants Well visits,
1 per visit,
ages 0-15 months
(up to \$60)

HPV Vaccine Important for Boys and Girls

Keeping your adolescent up-to-date on their vaccines is important. Vaccines are safe and they help to prevent serious illnesses. When you get your adolescent vaccinated, you are helping to protect others in the community. Adolescents need to get the Tdap, Meningococcal, and HPV vaccines. Some of these require more than one shot. Check with your doctor to find out which shots your child needs each year. Do not forget about the annual flu shot, too.

HPV, or the human papillomavirus, is a common virus. It is spread through skin-to-skin and sexual contact. Some of the infections can last longer than others. Some can also lead to cancer. This is why it is important to be protected early in life. The HPV vaccine can prevent HPV, and the cancer that is caused by HPV. Many people believe that only girls should get the HPV vaccine. HPV can cause cancer in anyone. It is important for boys to be vaccinated too.

All members should get this vaccine before age 13.

The vaccine comes in two shots. Members should get them both within 12 months of each other. Children can start getting the vaccine as early as age nine. It is best for children to be protected before they are ever exposed to the virus. You can receive a **reward** for getting the HPV vaccine.

Vaccines do not cost anything for members. If you need help finding a provider, use our **Find a Provider** tool or call 1-844-385-2192, Nebraska Relay Service 711.

Earn Rewards!

\$20 - HPV vaccine for children, for two doses within 12 months, before age 13



Care Managers Can Help

Our Care Management program is for members who need help managing their health. If you have an ongoing health problem, or more than one health problem, this program could benefit you. Our Care Managers are licensed nurses, therapists, and social workers. They help you:

- Communicate with healthcare providers
- Make and understand a treatment plan
- Get treatment and other services
- Use community supports for recovery

Care Management is for physical and behavioral health. It is not required. If you start it and find that it is not helpful, you can stop at any time. To find out more, call us at 1-844-385-2192, Relay 711.

Visit Our Website & Secure Member Portal

Visit **NebraskaTotalCare.com** to create a member portal account. You can use it to:

- Complete your Health Risk Screening
- Complete your Notice of Pregnancy form (NOP)
- Change your primary care provider (PCP)
- Update your personal information
- Print a temporary member ID card
- Find pharmacy benefit information
- Send Nebraska Total Care a message
- See claims and authorization approvals
- Check rewards card balance and more!

Call Member Services

Call **1-844-385-2192, Relay 711**. We can help you:

- Find a doctor or change your primary care provider (PCP)
- Get a new Nebraska Total Care ID card
- Understand your benefits
- Change your address and phone number
- Get translation help for medical appointments
- Get transportation to your appointments
- Get a paper copy of anything on our website

You can see authorization approvals on our **Secure Member Portal**.

