

WINTER 2025



HEALTH matters

Helpful information from CenCal Health



www.cencalhealth.org



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La versión en español, Temas de salud, está adentro.

Take Control of Your Health this New Year!

The new year is a great time to start fresh. It's a time when we think about making lifestyle changes to improve our health and well-being. CenCal Health offers self-management tools to help you navigate health challenges and thrive.

These tools are interactive resources that can give you quick results based on your situation.

Self-management tools are offered on several important topics, including:

- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Smoking and tobacco use cessation
- Encouraging physical activity
- Healthy eating
- Managing stress
- Avoiding at-risk drinking
- Identifying depressive symptoms

Members can access these tools directly from:

- CenCal Health's website: www.cencalhealth.org/health-wellness/self-management-tools/
- Your online Member Account
- Printed mail by request. Call the Health Education Request Line at 1-800-421-2560, ext. 3126, any time to request specific materials or for other health education needs.



Note: These self-management tools are not intended to replace medical treatment or advice. If you believe you have an emergency medical condition, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

Get Help When You Need It

Depression is a common mental health condition that affects people of all ages. It can cause you to feel sad, lose interest in activities that you used to enjoy, withdraw from others, and have little energy.

Some people experience a type of depression that occurs during the same season each year, often in the winter. This is called seasonal affective disorder or seasonal depression.

When you have depression, certain chemicals in your brain may be out of balance. Most experts believe that a combination of genes and stressful life events may cause depression. Doctors usually treat depression with medication, counseling, or a combination of both.

How can you care for yourself?

You can try many things to help yourself when you feel depressed. These things may also help lower the chance of depression coming back.

- Move your body every day, if you are able.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Get enough sleep.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, using drugs, or using medicines that have not been prescribed to you.
- Get support from others. Stay connected to family and friends.



Mental health matters just as much as physical health.

You don't have to face sadness or depression alone. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength. Find a mental health specialist today, visit:

<https://provdircencalhealth.org/>



It's Vaccination Time: Stay Protected!

This winter, it's important that everyone ages six months or older receive their COVID-19 booster and yearly influenza (flu) shot. Flu shots and COVID vaccination are **FREE** for CenCal Health members. Protect your health and get your vaccines today!

You can get your vaccines at your doctor's office or any major pharmacy. If you have questions about where to go, contact Medi-Cal Rx at 1-800-977-2273 or go to **www.medi-calrx.dhcs.ca.gov**.



Preventing Hospital Visits for Infection



Sepsis happens when the body's immune system has an intense reaction to an infection. Common infections can lead to sepsis. These can include a skin infection from a cut, a lung infection like pneumonia, a kidney infection, or a gut infection such as E. coli.

Sepsis can damage tissue and even go deep into your organs. Sepsis can cause deadly damage to the body and lead to dangerously low blood pressure. Sepsis develops very quickly. If you think you have it, get hospital care right away.

Symptoms may include:

- Breathing problems
- Fast heartbeat
- Chills
- Cool, clammy skin
- Skin rashes
- Shaking
- Fever or low body temperature
- Confusion
- Low blood pressure

You can do things at home to avoid infections and prevent sepsis from happening.

- Wash your hands often.
- Make sure to keep any wounds or scrapes clean.
- Don't touch broken skin, like a cut or a sore.
- Make sure you and everyone in your home are up to date on vaccines (including the flu shot and COVID-19 booster).

To learn more about sepsis and how you can prevent it, visit: www.cencalhealth.org/health-and-wellness/

Cervical Cancer is Preventable!

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. According to the Centers for Disease Control, about 11,500 new cervical cancer cases are diagnosed each year, and about 4,000 people die from it. Early detection can help prevent and treat cervical cancer.

There are often no symptoms in the early stages of cervical cancer. This is why screenings are so important. Cervical cancer screening tests check the cells on the cervix for changes that could lead to cancer.

Many people avoid cervical cancer screenings due to feelings of discomfort, anxiety, abnormal results, or emotional triggers. Learning about the purpose and benefits of regular screenings can empower you to take control of your health.

Prevention

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine can help protect people from being infected with some of the most common types of the virus, which can cause cancer. The HPV vaccine is recommended starting at age 9 and up to age 26. Depending on your age, you may need two or three shots. For the vaccine to work best, you need to get all the shots.

If you are age 27 to 45, ask your doctor if you might benefit from the HPV vaccine.



How to Schedule Your Cervical Cancer Screening or Vaccination:

You can get screened at your PCP's office or any contracted women's health specialist. Find a list of contracted providers by scanning the QR code here!



Schedule Your Initial Health Appointment

The purpose of the Initial Health Appointment is to help your PCP learn your health care history and needs. Your PCP might ask you questions about your health history or ask you to complete a questionnaire. Your PCP will also tell you about health education, counseling, and classes that can help you.

Be sure to call your PCP's office if you are going to be late or cannot go to your appointment. If you have questions about your Initial Health Appointment, call Member Services at 1-877-814-1861 (TTY/TDD 1-833-556-2560 or 711) Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you have diabetes, it's important to get a retinal eye exam every year.

Retinopathy is an eye condition caused by diabetes that affects the retina and can lead to poor vision or blindness. Regular retinal eye exams can help find retinopathy before it changes your vision.

You can do the following to keep your eyes healthy:

- Test your blood sugar regularly
- Take the medicine prescribed by your doctor to manage your blood sugar
- Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and maintain a healthy weight
- Visit your doctor regularly
- Avoid tobacco products

If you have diabetes and have never had an eye exam, or it's been two years since your last eye exam, call your doctor to ask about a retinopathy exam today!



Your 2025 Member Handbook & Other Important Documents

NEW

CenCal Health has a new Member Handbook, also called the Evidence of Coverage (EOC), for 2025.

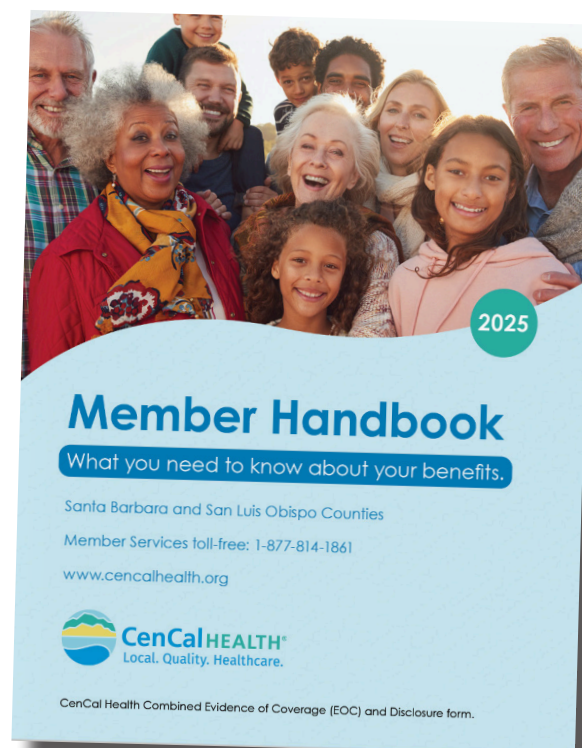
Your new 2025 Member Handbook can be viewed or downloaded at the following link:

www.cencalhealth.org/memberhandbook

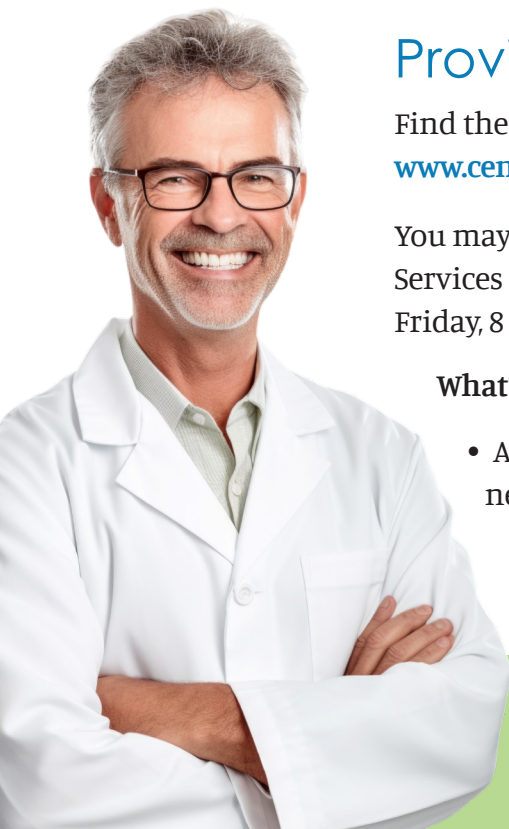
- You may also request a print copy of the Member Handbook by calling Member Services toll-free at 1-877-814-1861 (TTY/TDD 1-833-556-2560 or 711), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

What's included in the Member Handbook:

- A complete list of your covered benefits and services, as well as what is not covered
- How to access pharmacy benefits with Medi-Cal Rx, California's Medi-Cal Pharmacy Program
- Copayments and other charges for which you are responsible
- Benefit restrictions to services that you receive outside of CenCal Health's service areas
- **How to get:**
 - » Language assistance in your preferred written and spoken language
 - » Information about providers contracted with CenCal Health
 - » Primary care and how to choose your Primary Care Provider
 - » Specialty care, behavioral healthcare, and hospital services
 - » Care after normal business hours (outside of Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
 - » Care when outside of CenCal Health's service areas
- **How to submit:**
 - » A claim or bill you receive for covered services
 - » A grievance or complaint (any expression of dissatisfaction)
 - » An appeal for denied services
- **How to access emergency services, including information on the appropriate times to access emergency services and 911 directly**
 - » Availability of independent, external review options for final UM/Denial decisions
 - » Details on how CenCal Health reviews new technologies for inclusion as a covered benefit
 - » Your rights and responsibilities as a member
 - » Important phone numbers to know
 - » What is covered by Medi-Cal but not CenCal Health
 - » And more!



Access to other important documents!



Provider Directory

Find the list of doctors and other providers who work with CenCal Health:

www.cencalhealth.org/providerdirectory

You may also request a print copy of the Provider Directory by calling Member Services toll-free at 1-877-814-1861 (TTY/TDD 1-833-556-2560 or 711), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

What's included in the Provider Directory:

- A complete list of primary care providers and specialists in CenCal Health's network.
- Information about the providers. This includes name, address, location, office hours, known provider demographics, and more!

Please scan the QR code to access the directories for Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. Find a list of contracted providers here!



What's Included in Your Rights & Responsibilities

You can view or download your Member Rights and Responsibilities at the following link:

www.cencalhealth.org/members/medi-cal/member-rights/

You may also request a print copy of your Member Rights and Responsibilities by calling Member Services toll-free at 1-877-814-1861 (TTY/TDD 1-833-556-2560 or 711), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Both are important to learn and understand.

What's included in Your Rights and Responsibilities:

- Your Rights — To receive timely care, choose a PCP, be treated with dignity, respect, and more.
- Your Responsibilities — Schedule care through your PCP, be on time to appointments, treat providers and health plan staff with respect, and more.

Learn more about CenCal Health by visiting

www.cencalhealth.org today!

