



Aetna Better Health[®] of Illinois E-newsletter

Spring 2024

Introducing food options to your monthly over-the-counter (OTC) products

We've added over 200 food products to your \$25 OTC product line. You can now select essentials like milk, cereal, bread, eggs and much more. Your household gets a \$25 monthly allowance to order OTC items online, by phone or at a CVS store. Visit AetnaBetterHealth.com/Illinois-Medicaid/OTC-benefit to view the OTC catalog.



Questions about your coverage?

Your 2024 Member Handbook details your benefits. View your handbook here:



Quitting smoking and vaping

There's been a rise in people turning to e-cigarettes and vaping. Some believe it's a safe way to transition from quitting cigarettes to not smoking at all. It's important to know there's nicotine in traditional cigarettes as well as e-cigarettes. And they are highly addictive.

There are still many things that aren't known about vaping, like what chemicals are used in the vapor and how they affect your health.

If you smoke or vape, quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health. Quitting can:

- ✓ Reduce your chances of getting cancer
- ✓ Lower your cholesterol
- ✓ Decrease your risk for heart disease
- ✓ Add years to your life
- ✓ Brighten your smile
- ✓ Clear up your skin



Here are some ways to kick the habit:

1. Talk to your doctor. Your doctor can offer resources and medicines to help you quit. There are several types of medicines. Your doctor can help you choose what's right for you. Be sure to take them as directed.
2. Join a support group. You'll meet other people who want to stop smoking. It's a chance to share encouragement and tips. Your doctor or hospital can help you find a support group that meets in person or online.
3. Call a free quit line. You can talk to experts on quitting smoking. They can help you plan to quit. Call **1-866-QUIT-YES (1-877-784-8937)** for resources on how to quit using tobacco or e-cigarettes.



How to take charge of your mental health

According to [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) (NAMI), mental health conditions are common in teens and young adults. 50 percent of all lifetime mental illnesses develop by age 14 and 75 percent develop by age 24.

Depression and anxiety are more common than you think.

- About 21 percent of children between the ages of 9 to 17 have a diagnosable mental or addictive illness
- One in two of us will have a mental health issue during our lifetime
- Almost 1/3 of Americans have had symptoms of anxiety
- Less than one-third of adults with a mental health issue will get help

The mental and behavioral health journey is unique for each person. Mental illness does not discriminate. It can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, geography, income, social status, race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, background or other aspect of cultural identity.

Here are some ways you can take charge of your mental health:

- **Exercise:** Exercise makes you feel good. When muscles contract, they secrete a special molecule into the bloodstream called “[Hope Molecules](#).” These molecules improve our mood, our ability to learn and move, and protects the brain from the negative effect of aging. Go for a walk, take the stairs, aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day.
- **Diet:** Small changes to your diet can make a big difference. This could be as simple as adding vegetables to your meals, making lunch your main meal of the day or eating a gut-friendly diet. You can also fuel a healthy diet by adding milk to your coffee, consuming green tea or kombucha and eating earlier in the day.
- **Hydration:** Staying hydrated helps your body function properly throughout the day. Try to drink four 8oz glasses of water between each meal.
- **Sleep:** With enough sleep each night, you may find that you are happier and more productive during the day. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recommends at least seven hours, but no more than eight, for a good night’s sleep.

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- **Good laughs:** Although it might seem too easy, laughing is great for your health. It improves your mood, helps fight stress, aids immune health and stimulates organs like your heart. Find moments throughout your day or family and friend circles to have a good laugh.
- **Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is a great tool to manage your well-being and mental health. Evidence suggests that practicing mindfulness has positive effects. Mindfulness includes using techniques like meditation, yoga and breathing to help us become more aware of our thoughts instead of being overwhelmed by them.
- **Care management:** Your dedicated care manager is a partner in your healthcare journey and is there to support and work with you to achieve your health care goals. Call Member Services at [1-866-329-4701 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:1-866-329-4701) to get connected to a care manager today.

Get help in a crisis:

If you or someone in your family needs immediate help with a mental health crisis, you can call CARES anytime at [1-800-345-9049 \(TTY: 1-866-794-0374\)](tel:1-800-345-9049). They offer mobile crisis response and can send a trained behavioral health specialist to you.

Mental Health Matters

It's OK not to be OK. Talking openly about mental health helps end the stigma that often comes with it. Wherever you are in your mental health journey, Aetna Better Health® of Illinois can support. Call Member Services at [1-866-329-4701 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:1-866-329-4701) for information about your mental health benefits or visit our [Resources and services](#) page.





Behavioral health resources for all ages

As an Aetna Better Health® of Illinois member, you have access to behavioral health resources at any stage of your life.

Pathways to Success – a program for members under 21 who have complex behavioral health needs. Services include:

- Care coordination and support, including child and family team meetings
- Family peer support
- Counseling in the home
- Respite services
- Mentor services

Moodfit – a mental health app for members ages 13 and up that provides customizable tools to help manage mental wellness. Users learn how to:

- Reduce stress
- Fight procrastinations
- Relaxation techniques
- And much more!

Pyx Health® – designed to help young and older adults reduce loneliness and improve health. This app connects you to resources in real time and has tools to support mental, social and physical health needs.

Your case manager or health care provider can answer questions or help you with the IM+CANS form. You can also call Member Services at [1-866-329-4701 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:1-866-329-4701).

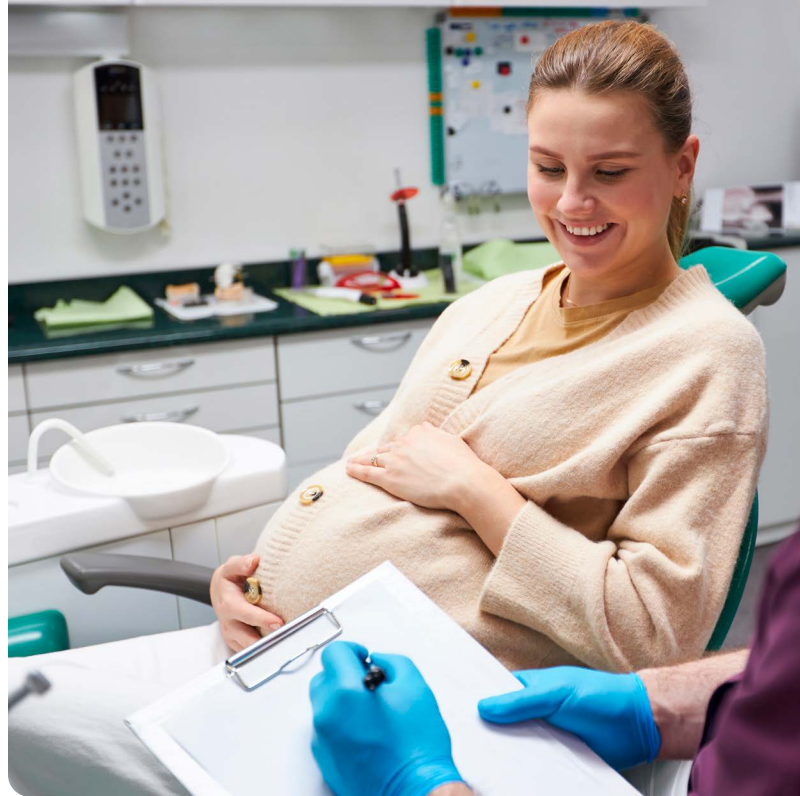


A healthy smile for the entire family

Your teeth can last your entire lifetime. Dental services are covered through your Aetna Better Health® of Illinois plan. Follow these tips to make sure your teeth are healthy throughout all phases of life.

- Drink plenty of fluoridated water, to wash out some of the negative effects of sticky and acidic foods and beverages.
- Floss at least once a day.
- Use fluoride toothpaste.
- Always brush before going to bed.
- Use mouthwash to reduce the amount of acid in your mouth and clean those hard-to-brush areas in and around the gums.
- Visit your dentist at least twice a year, even if you have no natural teeth or have dentures.
- Don't use tobacco and alcohol. Reach out to the state's free Quit Line at [1-866-QUIT-YES](tel:1-866-QUIT-YES) for resources on how to quit smoking.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Chronic conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease and immune disorders can put you at risk for poor oral health if not controlled. Be sure to keep all appointments with your dentist and doctors to ensure your overall health.
- Some medications may cause dry mouth. Ask your doctor for a different medication that may not cause this condition. Over-the-counter dry mouth products can also work, if recommended by your dentist.
- Chew sugarless gum.

We're here to help. Contact Member Services at [1-866-329-4701 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:1-866-329-4701) for help scheduling an appointment with a dental provider in your area. Your dentist can provide more oral health care tips and can answer your questions.





What you should know about lead exposure

**By Lakshmi Emory, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer**

Lead is an element that is found in nature but can be toxic to humans in larger amounts. Lead exposure happens when a child touches, swallows or breathes in lead. This can happen from drinking water from lead pipes, eating pieces of chipping paint or breathing dust from old paint.

The health effects of lead exposure are more harmful to **children** less than six years of age because their bodies are still developing and growing rapidly. Young children also tend to put their hands or other objects, which may contain lead dust, into their mouths, so they are more likely to be exposed to lead than older children.

Once a child swallows lead, their blood lead level rises quickly. When a child's exposure to lead stops, the amount of lead in the blood gradually decreases. The child's body releases some of the lead through urine, sweat and feces.

Many things affect how a child's body handles exposure to lead, including:

- Child's age
- Nutritional status
- **Source of lead exposure**
- Length of time the child was exposed
- Presence of other underlying health conditions

Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health and cause serious effects such as:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Slowed growth and development
- Learning and behavior problems
- Hearing and speech problems

These problems can cause lower IQ, decreased ability to pay attention and underperformance in school. Childhood exposure to lead can also cause long-term harm.

Symptoms of lead exposure

Most children have no obvious immediate symptoms. If you think your child may have been exposed to lead, talk to your child's primary care provider (PCP) about **getting a blood lead test**. PCPs and most local health departments can test for lead in the blood.

Aetna Better Health® of Illinois covers the cost of this testing for children enrolled in our plan. Call Member Services at **1-866-329-4701 (TTY:711)** if you need help making an appointment or arranging transportation to your child's doctor's visit.

Preventing lead exposure

Protecting children from exposure to lead is important. Even low levels of lead in blood have been shown to have negative effects. The good news is that childhood lead exposure is preventable.

Prevention is the most important step that **parents, health care providers** and others can take. Here are some ways to make your home lead safe:

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- Talk with your child's doctor about a simple blood lead test. If you are pregnant or nursing, talk with your doctor about exposure to sources of lead.
- Talk with your local health department about testing paint and dust in your home for lead if you live in a home built before 1978.
- Renovate safely. Common renovation activities (like sanding, cutting, replacing windows and more) can create hazardous lead dust. If you're planning renovations, use contractors certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (visit [EPA.gov/lead](https://www.epa.gov/lead) for information).
- Remove recalled toys and toy jewelry and discard in a safe manner. Stay up-to-date on current recalls by visiting the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website: [CPSC.gov](https://www.cpsc.gov).

Check out this [video](#) to learn more tips on how to create a healthy home free of lead.

We're part of your community

Our community outreach team hosts events throughout the state every month. We share health resources, information and more with those who attend.

Join Aetna Better Health® of Illinois at an upcoming event in your area. Find out where we'll be on our [News and Events](#) page.

Earn Aetna Better Care® Rewards

You can earn rewards by completing healthy activities like annual screenings, wellness exams and more. Use your rewards to help pay for everyday items. Learn more at [AetnaBetterHealth.com/illinois-medicaid/rewards-program.html](https://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/illinois-medicaid/rewards-program.html).

Get ready to renew your coverage

Illinois is checking to see if people are still eligible for Medicaid.

Select Manage My Case at [ABE.Illinois.gov](https://www.abe.illinois.gov) to:

- Verify your mailing address under "Contact Us"
- Find your renewal due date (the "redetermination" date) in your "Benefit Details"

Watch your mail and complete your renewal right away.

If you are no longer eligible for Medicaid, connect to coverage at work or through the official Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace for Illinois, [GetCoveredIllinois.gov](https://www.getcoveredillinois.gov).

Beware of scams. Illinois will never ask you for money to renew or apply for Medicaid. [Report scams to Report Fraud | HFS \(illinois.gov\)](#) or the Medicaid fraud hotline at [1-844-453-7283](tel:1-844-453-7283) / [1-844 ILFRAUD](tel:1-844-ILFRAUD).

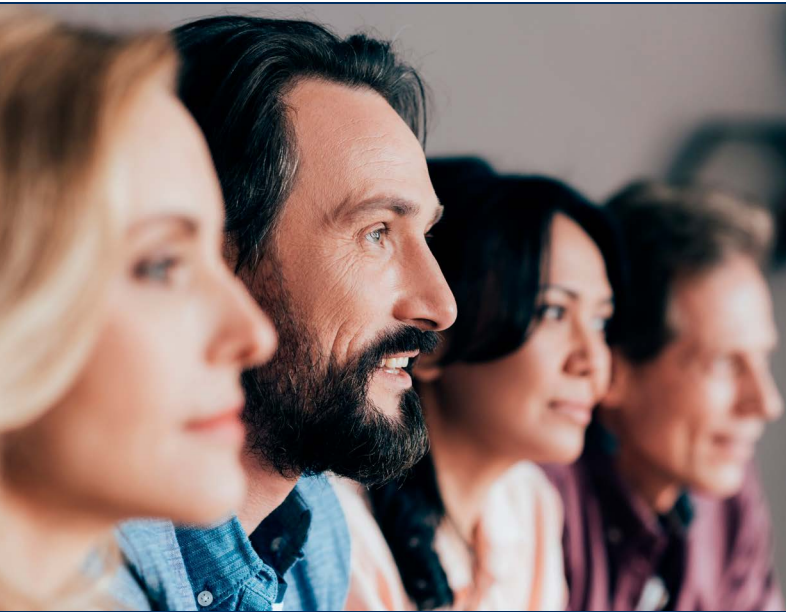
Rights and responsibilities

Your rights:

- Be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- Have your personal health information and medical records kept private except where allowed by law.
- Be protected from discrimination.
- Receive information from Aetna Better Health® of Illinois in other languages or formats such as with an interpreter or Braille.
- Receive information on available treatment options and alternatives, presented in a manner appropriate to your condition and ability to understand.
- Receive information necessary to be involved in making decisions about your healthcare treatment and choices.
- Refuse treatment and be told what may happen to your health if you do.
- Receive a copy of your medical records and in some cases request that they be amended or corrected.
- Choose your own primary care provider (PCP) from the Aetna Better Health of Illinois. You can change your PCP at any time.
- Be free from any form of restraint or seclusion used as a manner of coercion, discipline, convenience or retaliation.
- Exercise your rights, with the assurance that the exercise of those rights will not adversely affect the way you're treated.
- Request and receive in a reasonable amount of time, information about your Health Plan, its providers and policies.

Your responsibilities:

- Treat your doctor and the office staff with courtesy and respect.
- Carry your Aetna Better Health of Illinois ID card with you when you go to your doctor appointments and to the pharmacy to pick up your prescriptions.
- Keep your appointments and be on time for them.
- If you cannot keep your appointments, cancel them in advance.
- Follow the instructions and treatment plan you get from your doctor.
- Tell your health plan and your caseworker if your address or phone number changes.
- Read your member handbook so you know what services are covered and if there are any special rules.



Share your thoughts

Our Member Advisory Committee brings members, providers and plan representatives together to improve our services. To join a Member Advisory Committee meeting, call [1-866-329-4701](tel:1-866-329-4701) (TTY: 711).

You can also share your voice through our Family Leadership Council. It meets multiple times each year and helps us improve care coordination for children with behavioral health needs. Find details for the council's next meeting on our [News and Events](#) page.

Stay informed

Want to hear from us about important information by phone, text or email? You'll get marketing updates on plan benefits, the rewards program, savings opportunities, new apps and services.

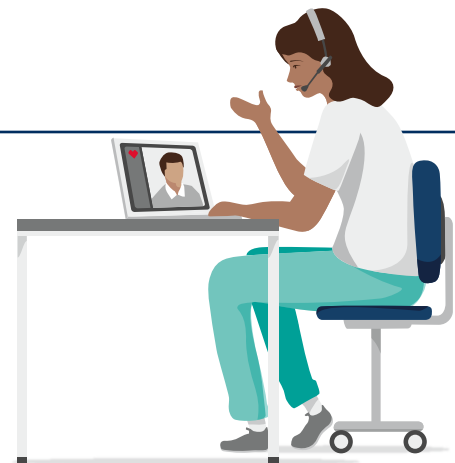
Simply text **SIGN UP** to **72138**.

Message and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Your consent is not required and you can opt out at any time.

We're here to help

Call Member Services at [1-866-329-4701](tel:1-866-329-4701) (TTY: 711) Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM to:

- Make an appointment
- Get help with your benefits
- Arrange a ride to the doctor's office



Connect with us on social media.

Nondiscrimination Notice

Aetna complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. Aetna does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Aetna:

- Provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
 - Qualified sign language interpreters
 - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
 - Qualified interpreters
 - Information written in other languages

If you need a qualified interpreter, written information in other formats, translation or other services, call the number on your ID card or **1-800-385-4104**.

If you believe that Aetna has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can file a grievance with our Civil Rights Coordinator at:

Address: Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator
4500 East Cotton Center Boulevard
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Telephone: **1-888-234-7358 (TTY: 711)**

Email: **MedicaidCRCoordinator@aetna.com**

You can file a grievance in person or by mail or email. If you need help filing a grievance, our Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at **<https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>**, or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, **1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697 (TDD)**.

Complaint forms are available at **<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>**.



English: ATTENTION: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Spanish: ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Polish: UWAGA: Jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Chinese: 注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**)。

Korean: 주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**) 번으로 전화해 주십시오.

Tagalog: PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Arabic: **711**. إذا كنت تتحدث اذكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم **1-800-385-4104** (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: ملحوظة)

Russian: ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните **1-800-385-4104** (телетайп: **711**).

Gujarati: સુચના: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાય સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. ફોન કરો **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Urdu: کریں اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کو زبان کی مدد کی خدمات مفت میں دستیاب ہیں۔ کال خردار: **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Vietnamese: CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Italian: ATTENZIONE: In caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Chiamare il numero **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Hindi: ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं। **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**) पर कॉल करें।

French: ATTENTION: Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le **1-800-385-4104** (ATS: **711**).

Greek: ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Αν μιλάτε ελληνικά, στη διάθεσή σας βρίσκονται υπηρεσίες γλωσσικής υποστήριξης, οι οποίες παρέχονται δωρεάν. Καλέστε **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

German: ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

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[AetnaBetterHealth.com/Illinois-Medicaid](https://www.aetna.com/better-health/illinois-medicaid)

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