

Welcome!

Thank you for being a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) Medicare Advantage member. This newsletter is designed to provide you with tools and resources to keep you healthy, update you on plan information and connect with us.

Would you like to receive this communication electronically? Email GetStarted@NebraskaBlue.com or call 888-488-9850 to provide your contact information and email address.

Call **888-488-9850** if you would like to stop receiving member communications.

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BCBSNE Offers No Cost Health Evaluations

When was the last time you saw your doctor? If it's been more than a year, or if you have difficulty getting to the doctor, we have good news. BCBSNE now offers in-home and online health evaluations through Signify Health. And the news gets better. When you complete your Signify in-home health evaluation, we'll send you a \$50 CVS gift card.

With Signify's health evaluation program, a licensed health professional will come to your home and review your medications, medical history, conduct a brief physical exam and discuss any health issues or concerns. The Signify provider will leave you a summary of the visit and send a copy to your doctor for follow up.

BCBSNE provides members with this no-cost service because:

- ➔ **It's convenient.** We come to you. There's no travel time or crowded waiting rooms.
- ➔ **It's personal.** Enjoy up to an hour of one-on-one time to ask all your health questions in the comfort of your own home.
- ➔ **It's rewarding.**

CVS gift cards can be used to buy products that promote better health and wellness and exclude tobacco, alcohol and certain other items. CVS gift cards are good towards the purchase of allergy remedies, cold remedies, eye care, oral hygiene, pain relievers, skin care, stomach remedies and vitamins. This healthy reward card can also be applied toward prescriptions and prescription copays.

To schedule a Signify in-home health evaluation, visit **Schedule.SignifyHealth.com** or call **402-200-5548**, Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT. TTY users can call 711.

If you have any questions about the Signify in-home health evaluation or your health coverage in general, call Member Services at **888-488-9850 (TTY 711)**:

- ➔ From **Oct. 1 to March 31**, seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT
- ➔ From **April 1 to Sept. 30**, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT

Signify Health contracts with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska to provide health evaluations for select members. Signify Health is solely responsible for its services and content, as well as the conditions, terms of use and privacy policies.

Opioid Risks and Alternative Treatments



The misuse of prescription opioids is a significant public health issue in the United States. Approximately 9.5 million people aged 12 or older misused opioids in 2020.¹ Opioid abuse claims more lives than motor vehicle crashes annually. Opioids are not the first choice for chronic pain outside of active cancer treatment, palliative care and end-of-life care. Evidence suggests that nonopioid treatments, including nonopioid medications and nonpharmacological therapies can provide relief to those suffering from chronic pain, and are safer.² Patients with pain should receive treatment that provides the greatest benefit.

Risks

Prescription opioids can be used to treat moderate to severe pain and are often prescribed following surgery or injury, or for health conditions such as cancer. However, prescription opioids carry serious risks of addiction and overdose, especially with prolonged use. Additionally, prescription opioids have several side effects, even when taken as directed:³

- Tolerance - meaning you might need to take more of a medication for the same pain relief
- Physical dependence - meaning you have symptoms of withdrawal when a medication is stopped
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting and dry mouth
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression
- Low levels of testosterone that can result in lower sex drive, energy and strength
- Itching and sweating

Alternative treatments

There may be other ways to manage your pain. Your doctor may recommend treatment options covered by your BCBSNE Medicare Advantage plan. Depending on the type of pain you are experiencing, covered options include:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®)
- Cognitive behavioral therapy – a psychological, goal-directed approach in which patients learn how to modify physical, behavioral and emotional triggers of pain and stress
- Exercise therapy, including physical therapy
- Medications for depression or for seizures
- Interventional therapies (injections)
- Exercise and weight loss
- Other therapies such as acupuncture and massage

➔ Please talk with your health care provider about the best pain management treatment for you.

1 Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2021). 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): Methodological summary and definitions. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

2 https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/nonopioid_treatments-a.pdf

3 Dowell D, Haegerich TM, Chou R. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1.htm>

Simple Ways To Help Keep Your Diabetes In Check

It's tough to manage what you don't measure. This is especially true with diabetes because there's not just one thing to measure. It can affect your entire body from your blood vessels, kidneys, eyes and heart.

To help you stay on top of your diabetes, there are a few services you can get to show you how well your treatment plan is controlling your diabetes. They give you and your doctor ideas on how to improve your health.

Please discuss these with your doctor who can recommend how often you need them.

Blood sugar control: Lowering your blood sugar level could lower the chances of developing diabetic complications. An A1C is a blood test that monitors diabetes. It gives you an A1C score, which is your average blood sugar level over two to three months. You and your doctor can develop a plan to help you improve your A1C score over time. You should have this test at least twice a year or more if your doctor recommends it.

Kidney function test: Diabetes is a risk factor for kidney disease. You may not experience any signs or symptoms if you're in the early stages of kidney disease. Kidney function tests (urine and/or blood) should be done each year to detect and treat kidney disease early before it progresses to kidney failure.

Eye exam: Diabetic eye disease, including diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and glaucoma, could potentially cause major vision loss or blindness. Your eye doctor can give you an annual eye exam to catch diabetic eye disease early while it's still treatable.

Blood pressure check: Please be sure to get your blood pressure checked at every doctor appointment. The risk of heart attacks and strokes doubles for people with high blood pressure and diabetes. You can also speak with your doctor about medication to lower blood pressure. Medicines called ACE inhibitors and ARBs are recommended for most people who have diabetes.

Cholesterol screening: Diabetes usually raises bad cholesterol levels while lowering good cholesterol levels. This increases the risk for heart disease and stroke. A yearly screening helps you and your doctor understand your cholesterol levels and how much you need to improve. Ask your doctor if you should take a statin cholesterol medication to treat or prevent high cholesterol.



Remember to always take any medication exactly as prescribed by your doctor. If you're feeling side effects, talk to your doctor right away. It's recommended that you do not stop taking the medication until you've discussed with your doctor the side effects you're experiencing.

Following your doctor's preventive care plan can help you control your diabetes instead of it controlling you. Please refer to your Schedule of Benefits to understand your plan coverage.

Important BCBSNE MA information. Health and wellness or prevention information.



Important **RESOURCES**

Member Services

Update your contact information and ask questions about your plan

888-488-9850 (TTY users call 711)

Oct. 1 – March 31: seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. CT

April 1 – Sept. 30: Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. CT

Prime Customer Care

Call for questions related to prescription drug coverage or to set up home delivery for your prescriptions

855-457-1349

24 hours per day / 7 days per week

24/7 Nurse Line

833-968-1764

OTC Card Questions

To ask questions about benefits related to the over-the-counter (OTC) pharmacy card

800-706-5058

Learn More Online

**[Medicare.NebraskaBlue.com/
MedicareAdvantage](https://www.Medicare.NebraskaBlue.com/MedicareAdvantage)**

