

Social Determinants of Health: When Staying Healthy Is About More Than Your Health

You may know that some ways for you to stay healthy includes getting your vaccines, eating healthy, not smoking and seeing your doctor. But you may not know that things related to where you live, learn, work and play can affect your health too. These are called social determinants of health, or SDoH. Examples of SDoH include:

- Whether or not you have safe and affordable housing
- Whether or not you feel safe at home and in your community
- Whether or not you have access to transportation
- Whether or not you have access to healthy food
- How hard it is for you to understand information from your doctor

When you have trouble with any of these types of things, it can make it hard for you to take care of your health.

How can you stay healthy if you think you are affected by SDoH?

1. **Talk to your doctor.** Some people don't think about how things like transportation, access to healthy foods, and feeling safe can affect their health. Talk to your doctor about what makes it hard to take care of yourself. For example, tell your doctor if sometimes you don't take your medicine because you are worried about other things. Tell your doctor if you don't know which medicine to take at what time of the day. Your doctor might help you find ways to address these issues.
2. **Know that your doctor may be trying to help you with these challenges.** Your doctor might ask questions that you don't think are related to your health. For example, your doctor might ask if you have problems getting to the clinic. They might ask if you have trouble getting healthy food to eat. Sometimes a nurse, care coordinator or social worker may talk to you. They are trying to find out what makes it hard for you to take care of your health so that they can find ways to help. They might ask you these questions at every appointment, because things in your life may have changed, such as if you change jobs or move into a new neighborhood.
3. **Ask Questions. Be your own ally.** Before each appointment, write down questions you want to ask. Put the most important ones at the top of the list, in case you do not have time to talk about them all. If you don't understand something, ask your doctor to say it again. Let your doctor know how you like to learn: seeing pictures, listening, reading, or having someone show you. Repeat back to your doctor what you know about your medicine and how you should take it. Saying it in your own words can help you to understand. It can also help your doctor know if you still have questions.

4. Learn about your benefits with Blue Cross Community Health Plans. We offer some benefits that can help address SDoH. Some examples are:

- Free transportation to and from your doctor appointment.
- Over-the-Counter drug benefits. These give you a dollar amount to order supplies like bandages, diabetic socks, toothpaste and blood pressure cuffs.

You can learn more about your benefits by visiting www.bcbsil.com/bcchp or in your Member Handbook. You can also call Member Services at the phone number on your ID card.

5. Know your community resources. Learn about resources in your area that can help you with problems like not having enough food, finding a job, or finding a place to live. Your doctor or health department may be able to connect you with resources. Websites such as 211.org or [Aunt Bertha](http://AuntBertha.com) can be helpful too. If you or your doctor think that you have many barriers to taking care of your health, you may qualify for Care Coordination. A care coordinator may be able to connect you to the resources you need. You can learn more about this by talking to your doctor or calling Member Services.

If you have any further questions, please call Member Services. We can be reached at **1-877-860-2837**. TTY/TDD users, please call **711**. We are available 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week. The call is free.

Blue Cross Community Health Plans is provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, a Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company (HCSC), an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

To ask for supportive aids and services, or materials in other formats and languages for free, please call,
1-877-860-2837 TTY/TDD:711.

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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois:

- 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 these services, contact Civil Rights Coordinator.

If you believe that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois 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: Civil Rights Coordinator, Office of Civil Rights Coordinator, 300 E. Randolph St., 35th floor, Chicago, Illinois 60601, 1-855-664-7270, TTY/TDD: 1-855-661-6965, Fax: 1-855-661-6960, Civilrightscoordinator@hsc.net. You can file a grievance in person or by mail, fax, or email. If you need help filing a grievance, 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, 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 **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

Español (Spanish): ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

繁體中文 (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 **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**。

Tagalog (Tagalog – Filipino): PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

Français (French): ATTENTION : Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le **1-877-860-2837 (ATS : 711)**.

Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese): CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

Deutsch (German): ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

한국어 (Korean): 주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**번으로 전화해 주십시오.

Русский (Russian): ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните **1-877-860-2837 (телетайп: 711)**.

العربية (Arabic):

ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اذكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم 1-7382-068-778 (رقم هاتف الصم والبكم: 117).

हिंदी (Hindi): ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं। **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)** पर कॉल करें।

Italiano (Italian): ATTENZIONE: In caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Chiamare il numero **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

ગુજરાતી (Gujarati): સુચના: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાય સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. ફોન કરો **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

Urdu (Urdu): کریں کال - بین دستیاب میں مفت خدمات کی مدد کی زبان کو آپ تو، ہیں بولتے اردو آپ اگر: خیردار **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

Polski (Polish): UWAGA: Jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.

λληνικá (Greek): ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Αν μιλάτε ελληνικά, στη διάθεσή σας βρίσκονται υπηρεσίες γλωσσικής υποστήριξης, οι οποίες παρέχονται δωρεάν. Καλέστε **1-877-860-2837 (TTY/TDD: 711)**.