

Finding and Using Healthcare

Children need frequent checkups. They often need care for common illnesses and minor injuries. There are ways to get low-cost healthcare.

To get the best care for yourself and your family, ask your doctor questions and talk about your concerns. Look for a doctor you like, who takes your concerns seriously.



Free or Low-Cost Healthcare

Health insurance for your family may seem expensive. But it will probably save you money over time. Medi-Cal is health insurance for families and individuals with low incomes. It is very low cost. Covered California offers health insurance at reduced cost, if you do not qualify for Medi-Cal. You can apply for both programs on the Covered California website.

Community Clinics

Community health clinics offer low-cost healthcare. Services may include family planning, prenatal care, vaccines, dental care, mental healthcare, and testing and treatment for many diseases. Check with your county's health or social services department to find a community clinic.

If English Is Not Your First Language

Ask for doctors or office staff who speak your language, or ask for a certified interpreter. Your children should not interpret for you, even if they speak English well.

Don't be afraid to ask questions when you visit the doctor.

Get Care in an Emergency

If someone's life is in danger, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. You cannot be turned away, even if you have no insurance or money, or you are undocumented.

If someone swallows, breathes in, touches anything poisonous, or is bitten by a poisonous animal, call the Poison Control Hotline at-1-800-222-1222.

Understand Your Treatment

When a doctor suggests a treatment for you or your child, make sure you understand what it does and why it's important. Ask the doctor about risks and side effects. You can ask if there are other treatments, and what would happen if you didn't have any treatment.

Usually you need to sign a consent form before treatment. This form says you agree to the treatment. Make sure you don't have any more questions or worries before you sign the consent form.

Know Your Rights

- You have a right to choose your doctor, and to change doctors.
- You have a right to get a second opinion about a serious condition or a major treatment.
- You have a right to see your medical records and get copies of them.
- If you have a disability, you have a right to get the tests and exams you need. For example, you may need to go to a clinic that has an accessible exam table and scales.
- If you have a problem getting a treatment, or if your insurance will not pay for it, you can ask for a review of the decision. Contact the California Department of Insurance or California Department of Managed Health Care.

Where to find help and Resources

California Department of Insurance

For help filing an appeal with your health insurance company.

1-800-927-4357

insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/101-help

California Department of Managed Health Care

Information about health insurance and help with getting health insurance.

1-888-466-2219

dmhc.ca.gov

California Health+

Network of community health centers

1-855-899-7587

Covered California (California's Affordable Care Act Program)

Help with buying private health insurance or enrolling in Medi-Cal.

1-800-300-1506

coveredca.com

Family PACT

Gives referrals for family planning services.

1-800-942-1054

familypact.org

Medi-Cal

Offers health insurance if your income is low.

coveredca.com/medi-cal

Medi-Cal Access Program

Low-cost health insurance for middle-income pregnant women.

1-800-433-2611

mcap.dhcs.ca.gov

California Children's Services

Health care for children with certain diseases or health problems

dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs

California Dental Association

Help finding low-cost dental services.

1-800-232-7645

cda.org/public-resources/low-cost-dental-services

California Department of Social Services

Contact information for county social services offices.

cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices

California Employment Development Department

Information on State Disability Insurance (SDI) and Paid Family Leave: These provide time off to care for a new baby or other family members.

edd.ca.gov/disability

California Immunization Registry

Help with finding immunization records.

cairweb.org/parents-and-general-public

Centers for Disease Control

Information for parents on child development, vaccines, food safety, and more.

cdc.gov/healthyliving

Environmental Protection Agency

Tips on protecting children.

epa.gov/children/what-you-can-do-protect-children-environmental-risks

Find a Dentist

Search tool for finding dentists who see children and accept Medi-Cal dental insurance.

insurekidsnow.gov/coverage/find-a-dentist/index.html

Find a Pediatrician

Search tool to find children's doctors.

healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/find-pediatrician/Pages/Pediatrician-Referral-Service.aspx

For Parents: Vaccines for Your Children

Background information on vaccines from the Centers for Disease Control.

cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html

Healthfinder.gov

Easy-to-use health information website.

healthfinder.gov

Healthy Children

Information from the American Academy of Pediatrics on children's health, safety, and well-being.

healthychildren.org

Immunization Branch

Information about vaccines from the California Department of Public Health.

cdph.ca.gov/immunize

KidsHealth

Information on children's health.

kidshealth.org

KidsHealth Asthma Center

Information on living with asthma.

kidshealth.org/en/parents/center/asthma-center.html

Newborn Hearing Screening

Local referrals for newborn hearing tests.

1-877-388-5301

dhcs.ca.gov/services/nhsp

Newborn Screening Program

Information on newborn health tests.

cdph.ca.gov/nbs

Office of Women's Health

Information on women's health, including a national health line.

1-800-994-9662

womenshealth.gov

Planned Parenthood

Local referrals for birth control, prenatal care, and sexual health.

1-800-230-7526

plannedparenthood.org

Shots for School

List of vaccines needed before starting school in California.

shotsforschool.org

Social Security Administration

Information on Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

1-800-772-1213

ssa.gov/espanol

What to Do If Your Child Gets Sick

Book about common childhood health problems, included in Kit for New Parents.

first5california.com