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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://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