



P R O M I S E

Cares

Health Talk

Fall 2026

Renewing your Medi-Cal coverage

Each year, your county office checks your eligibility to make sure you still qualify for Medi-Cal. Some members renew automatically, but many need to complete a renewal packet.

We're here to help

If you have questions or need help with your renewal:

- Call the Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Retention Department at [\(855\) 636-5251](tel:(855)636-5251) (TTY: 711), 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday.
- Visit a Community Resource Center for in-person support. Find locations at communityresourcecenterla.org/locations.

If you get a renewal packet, don't wait

Open it right away and follow the instructions. You have 60 days to complete and return it. If you miss the deadline, you could lose your coverage.

Ways to complete your renewal

You can submit your renewal packet in a few ways:

- **Online:** Log in or create an account at BenefitsCal.com.
- **By mail:** Send your completed packet to the address listed in your renewal packet.
- **In person or by phone:** Visit your local Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services office or call [\(866\) 613-3777](tel:(866)613-3777) (TTY: 711), 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Keep your Medi-Cal information up to date

Make sure your address, phone number, and email are current so you don't miss important notices.

Looking ahead

There have been recent changes in Medi-Cal eligibility and benefits. Learn what is different and how new laws may affect you at dhcs.ca.gov/medi-cal/help/medi-cal-changes.

Earn your GED® at no cost¹

Blue Shield Promise members have access to GEDWorks™. This program can help you get your high school equivalency diploma. Learn more at blueshieldca.com/GEDworks.

4 ways to care for your baby by caring for yourself

After your baby is born, it's easy to focus on your baby's needs first. But your health matters, too. Here are four ways to care for yourself and your baby after delivery.

1

Schedule your postpartum checkup

Try to see your doctor within three weeks of having your baby. Then, have another visit no later than two and a half months after your baby is born. At this visit, your doctor checks to make sure you're healing well. They can also answer your questions and address your concerns.

2

Ask questions about breastfeeding

Breastfeeding can help your baby get important nutrients. But it can come with challenges. If you have questions, talk to your doctor. Visit blueshieldca.com/healtheducationlibrary for breastfeeding brochures and videos.

3

Talk about your mental well-being

Your postpartum checkup is also a time to talk about how you feel. Your doctor can discuss your mental and emotional well-being and share supportive services.

4

Get help with food and formula

Baby formula is also an excellent source of nutrition. If you can't afford it, you may qualify for the California Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. This is a state program that helps families get healthy food. Call [\(800\) 852-5770 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:8008525770), 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday, or visit myfamily.wic.ca.gov to learn more.

Here to support you

Postpartum visits are covered by your plan. You can also get prenatal care, as well as up to 12 months of postpartum doula support. To learn more, call the Blue Shield Promise Maternity Program at [\(888\) 802-4410 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:8888024410). Our hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday.



Vaccines you and your family may need

Vaccines teach your body to fight infections before you get sick. Many dangerous diseases are now rare because of vaccines. But they can return if people do not get vaccinated. Recent increases in measles cases prove how quickly this can happen.

Why staying up to date matters

Vaccines help protect you and your family from serious illness and slow the spread of disease. This is especially important for infants, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

Vaccines for infants (birth to 24 months)

Well-child visits are essential during the first two years of life. These visits help track growth and catch concerns early. They help keep babies on schedule for recommended vaccines when they are most vulnerable.

- **By age 2, children typically receive protection against 10 serious diseases.** These include hepatitis B, rotavirus, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), polio, pneumococcal disease, measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox.

Vaccines for children and families

- **MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine:** Protects against highly contagious diseases, which can spread quickly in schools and communities.
- **DTaP/Tdap vaccine:** Protects against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis.
- **Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine:** Helps prevent infection and complications.
- **Polio vaccine:** Protects against a potentially disabling disease.



Keeping kids on track

Some parents wonder why there may be more vaccines in the U.S. than in some other countries. Like many countries, the U.S. sets its vaccine schedule based on its population's health needs. The schedule is designed to protect children early from serious illness and common sickness. Each vaccine is given at the right time to keep your child safe. This helps stop diseases from spreading in your community.

Vaccines for preteens and teens

- **HPV vaccine:** Helps protect against certain cancers.
- **Meningococcal vaccine:** Protects against serious infections such as meningitis.

Vaccines for adults

- **Tdap booster:** Recommended every 10 years. Protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.
- **Shingles vaccine (ages 50+):** Helps prevent shingles and long-term nerve pain.
- **Pneumococcal vaccine (ages 65+ or high risk):** Protects against pneumonia and other serious infections.

Vaccines for everyone

- **Flu vaccine (annual):** Helps prevent seasonal flu and reduce how severe it can be. Children 6 months through 8 years who haven't had the flu vaccine before will need two doses at least four weeks apart.
- **COVID-19 vaccine:** Recommended when eligible. Helps protect against severe illness and complications.

Talk to your doctor about which vaccines are recommended for you and your family. You can also find recommended vaccines, book appointments, and access your Digital Vaccine Record at myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov.

We're here to help

Our Customer Service team stands ready to answer your questions, listen to your concerns, or help you solve a problem.

We can do things like:

- Help you make an appointment
- Assist with getting you prior authorization
- Arrange a ride to a medical appointment
- Help you if you get a bill
- Answer a question about your plan
- Help you find a new doctor
- Explain Medicare and Medi-Cal combined plans

Call **(800) 605-2556 (TTY: 711)**, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday.

You can also scan the QR code to save our number to your phone's contacts.



Health equity

Everyone deserves a fair chance to be as healthy as possible. The Blue Shield Promise Health Equity Office works to help reduce gaps in care and health outcomes between groups. Visit blueshieldca.com/health-equity to learn more.

Do you need interpreting services?

Don't assume your provider will schedule an interpreter for you. We're here to help. We offer interpreter services, including American Sign Language, by phone and in person at no cost to our members. Interpreters help you talk with your healthcare team in your language. Phone interpreter services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling Customer Service. If you need an in-person interpreter, please call Customer Service at least five days before your doctor appointment. You may request an interpreter as early as the 16th of the month before your appointment. Some benefits of an interpreter:

- Trained in medical terms
- Helps you understand all information and explains your diagnosis and treatment in your language

We discourage using family or friends, especially minors, to interpret. You may get wrong information, risking your care. Call Customer Service at [\(800\) 605-2556](tel:8006052556) [\(TTY: 711\)](tel:711), 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday:

- If you want to connect with a phone interpreter or request an in-person interpreter
- If you or your authorized representative need communication in your language or an alternative format like braille or large font
- If you want to file a grievance because we did not meet your language needs

Ask a doctor

Expert advice from Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan's chief medical officer

QUESTION: I just turned 45. Is there anything I should know about my health?

ANSWER: Yes, turning 45 is a big milestone for your health. Colon cancer is starting earlier than it used to. The colon is the large intestine, which is the part of the body that helps get rid of waste. Experts now recommend screening starting at age 45, even if you feel healthy. Getting screened now helps you stay healthy for yourself – and for the people who count on you.

Why screening matters

Colon cancer often doesn't cause symptoms early on. You may feel fine and not know anything is wrong. Screening can find problems before they get worse. It can even help prevent cancer.

Screening looks for signs of cancer or small growths called polyps. This can be done with a sample you send in or with a procedure. Finding these early can help prevent cancer.

You have options for screening

Many people avoid getting checked because they think a colonoscopy is the only way. But that's not always the case.

For most people, screening can start with a simple test you can do at home. You collect a small stool (poop) sample and send it to a lab. It's private, easy, and does not disrupt your daily routine.

A colonoscopy may still be needed if you are at higher risk or if your at-home test shows something unusual.

Know the signs – and speak up

Even though symptoms often appear later, it's important to pay attention to your body.

Watch for:

- Changes in bowel habits, such as ongoing diarrhea or constipation
- Blood in your stool
- Losing weight for no reason
- Abdominal pain or bloating
- Feeling very tired or weak

If you notice any of these symptoms, let your doctor know. These may not be colon cancer, but they could be signs of other health problems that can be treated. You do not have to ignore them or live with the discomfort.

Talk with your doctor

At your next visit, ask which test is right for you. Your doctor will look at your age and family history to help make a plan.

Whether it's a yearly at-home test or a colonoscopy every 10 years, the most important part is just getting it done. It can make a big difference for your health.



DID YOU KNOW?

You may be eligible to receive a \$25 gift card for completing a colon cancer screening this year. Visit My Wellness Rewards at wellnessrewards-la.healthmine.com to register and find out more about the program.



Health education

Take classes at no cost that help you eat healthier, be active, and more. You can also get benefits notices and health brochures in your preferred language or in alternative formats. To learn more, call Customer Service at [\(800\) 605-2556 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:8006052556), 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday. Or go to blueshieldca.com/health-education-classes.



Strength is knowing when to ask for help

Your mental health is an important part of your well-being. If stress, worry, sadness, or other concerns are making daily life harder, support is available.

Your Medi-Cal mental health benefits are provided through two systems.

	Mild to moderate mental health services	Specialty mental health services
Managed by	Blue Shield Promise	County Mental Health Plan
Examples of care	Therapy or psychiatry for stable and manageable mental health needs	Support for serious or complex mental health needs
Examples of challenges	Help with stress and learning coping skills	Help with conditions that make it hard to do daily tasks like work, school, or self-care

Not sure where to start? Don't worry. You can contact any option below for help with a quick screening. This can help match you with the level of care you need. You do not need prior authorization to get a mental health evaluation to begin getting help.

For mild to moderate mental health services: Call our behavioral health services team at [\(855\) 765-9701 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:8557659701), 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday. You can also find providers online at blueshieldca.com/medi-cal/fad.

For specialty mental health services: Call Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health at [\(800\) 854-7771 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:8008547771), 24/7.



Community programs

Please visit blueshieldpromise.findhelp.com for community resources and agencies that can help you with issues like domestic violence or elder care. You can also call Customer Service at [\(800\) 605-2556 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:8006052556), 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday.

1 Taking part in GEDWorks is optional and at no cost for all eligible Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan members. You can stop taking part at any time, for any reason. Taking part in this program will not affect your Medi-Cal benefits or coverage. GEDWorks is independent of Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan and is contracted by Blue Shield Promise to provide GED preparation and GED testing services. GED and GED Testing Service® are registered trademarks of the American Council on Education. Used under license.

Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan is contracted with L.A. Care Health Plan to provide Medi-Cal managed care services in Los Angeles County. You can get this document for free in other formats, such as large print, braille, or audio. Call [\(800\) 605-2556 \(TTY: 711\)](tel:8006052556), 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday. The call is free.

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