

Fall 2024

# PrimeLines

A complimentary publication from PrimeWest Health

Member Services: 1-866-431-0801



## Take Care of Those Tiny Teeth!

Oral health problems can interfere with your child's speech development and nutrition, affect their self-esteem, and cause pain that makes it hard to focus at school. Teaching your child healthy habits and taking them to a dental provider regularly can help prevent these problems!

### Home care

- Taking care of your child's oral health starts early—even before they get their first tooth! Wipe your baby's gums with a soft, damp cloth at least 2 times a day. Make sure one of these times is right before bed. This removes bacteria that can cause cavities.
- When the first teeth come in, brush them 2 times a day with a small, soft-bristled toothbrush. You should use a "rice-sized" amount of toothpaste. At around age 3, you can start using a "pea-sized" amount of toothpaste.
- Once your child has teeth that touch, you should floss gently between them once a day.
- As your child gets older, teach them how to brush and floss. You'll want to supervise these activities until around age 8 or 10.

### Professional care

- Your child should have their first dental appointment by their 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, or within 6 months of getting their first tooth, whichever comes first. In general, children should visit a dental provider every 6 months.
- Talk to your child's dental or health care provider about having fluoride varnish applied to your child's teeth. This prevents early tooth decay and can be done as soon as the first tooth comes in.
- Fluoride is added to community water sources as a way to prevent cavities. If you get your water from a source other than the city water supply (for example, if you have a well), talk to your child's dental or health care provider about fluoride supplements.

Help your child have a healthy smile for life. Wipe those gums, brush those teeth, and make sure your child visits a dental provider regularly!

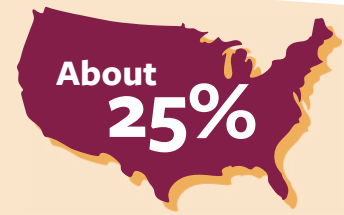
Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Nemours KidsHealth





# Why Should I Have a Primary Care Provider?

About 25% of people in the United States report not having a primary care provider. And many people stopped seeing a provider for routine care during the COVID-19 pandemic. PrimeWest Health encourages you to find a primary care provider if you don't have one. If you do, but haven't visited them for a while, we hope you'll make an appointment soon! Having an established primary care provider can help you stay healthy and get the most out of your health care.



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## What is a primary care provider?

A primary care provider is a health care professional who helps you manage your overall health. Things they can help you with include the following:

- **Preventive care**, such as checkups, screenings, and vaccinations
- **Chronic (long-term) conditions**, such as depression, high blood pressure, or diabetes
- **Health problems** that aren't emergencies, such as a sore throat, rash, or back pain
- **Medication management**, including a review of the medications you take to make sure you are getting the best possible results
- **Referrals to specialists**, such as a behavioral health provider

A primary care provider who you visit regularly will get to know you and your medical history. This creates a "full picture" of your health. Combined with routine checkups and screenings, this can help your provider find issues early. This is when they are usually easier to treat. Having a relationship with a provider you know can also help you feel

more comfortable talking about your health and asking questions.

## How can you find a primary care provider?

You can look in the *Provider and Pharmacy Directory*. Go to [www.primewest.org/programs](http://www.primewest.org/programs), and click the name of the program you are enrolled in. Then click *Provider and Pharmacy Directory* in the orange box titled "Member Materials." Primary care providers are listed in the section of the directory called "Primary Care Clinics."

Establishing a relationship with a primary care provider who meets your needs is a solid investment in your health! If you need any help finding a primary care provider or would like to request a copy of the *Provider and Pharmacy Directory*, call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801**. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.

Sources: Cleveland Clinic, Medical Economics

## Let Us Know about Other Medical Claims

If you have a medical claim related to a car accident or have a workers' compensation or liability claim, please report it to PrimeWest Health. Other sources may be responsible for paying for your medical care in these situations. When this happens, PrimeWest Health needs to recover the amount of any claims we paid for. Letting us know about your other claims helps us do this. It also means it's less likely that you will get confusing paperwork or claim denial notices. This is because the right source will be paying your claim from the start.

To report a claim you made for medical care to a source *other* than PrimeWest Health, call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801**. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.





# A Focus on 5 Important Vaccines

Vaccines are the best way to protect against many serious illnesses. It's important to make sure that you and your family have all the vaccines the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends. A few of these vaccines are listed below. Your provider can help you decide which ones you should get.

## Flu

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone age 6 months and over. There are a few vaccine options. These include a higher-dose vaccine for older adults and a nasal spray. Your provider can help you decide which is right for you. Most people should get vaccinated by the end of October. But if you aren't able to get the vaccine by then, get one when you can!

## COVID-19

The CDC recommends everyone age 6 months and over get an updated vaccine. COVID-19 vaccines are regularly updated for new strains of the virus. This means if you got a vaccine earlier, you may still need an updated vaccine. You can check with your provider to find out. You should be vaccinated even if you've had a prior COVID-19 infection.

## RSV (respiratory syncytial virus)

RSV is a cold-like virus. It can be especially serious in older adults and infants. That's why the CDC says you should talk to your provider about getting the vaccine if you're age 60 or over or if you're pregnant. Vaccination during pregnancy protects infants after birth.

## Pneumococcal

In addition to childhood vaccines, the CDC recommends adults age 65 and over get a pneumococcal vaccine. It protects against pneumococcal disease, which can cause pneumonia, meningitis, and sepsis (blood poisoning).

## HPV (human papillomavirus)

This 2- or 3-dose vaccine series protects against a virus that can cause many types of cancer. These include cancer of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, and anus. The CDC recommends kids start the vaccine at age 11 or 12, but the series can start as early as age 9. Vaccination through age 26 is recommended for those not vaccinated earlier.

Source: CDC



**Did you  
know?**

**You can get many of these vaccines at the same time!**





# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that usually shows up in early childhood. It can cause social and behavioral challenges and make communication difficult. There are many different signs and symptoms of ASD, and they are different for everyone. This can make knowing how to best help a child with ASD confusing. Having the right services and resources can help.

## SERVICES

Services that can help children under age 21 with ASD are called “Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention (EIDBI).” These services are designed to do the following:

- ✚ Educate parents and family members about ASD and related conditions
- ✚ Help the person with ASD learn to be more independent
- ✚ Improve quality of life for the person with ASD and their family

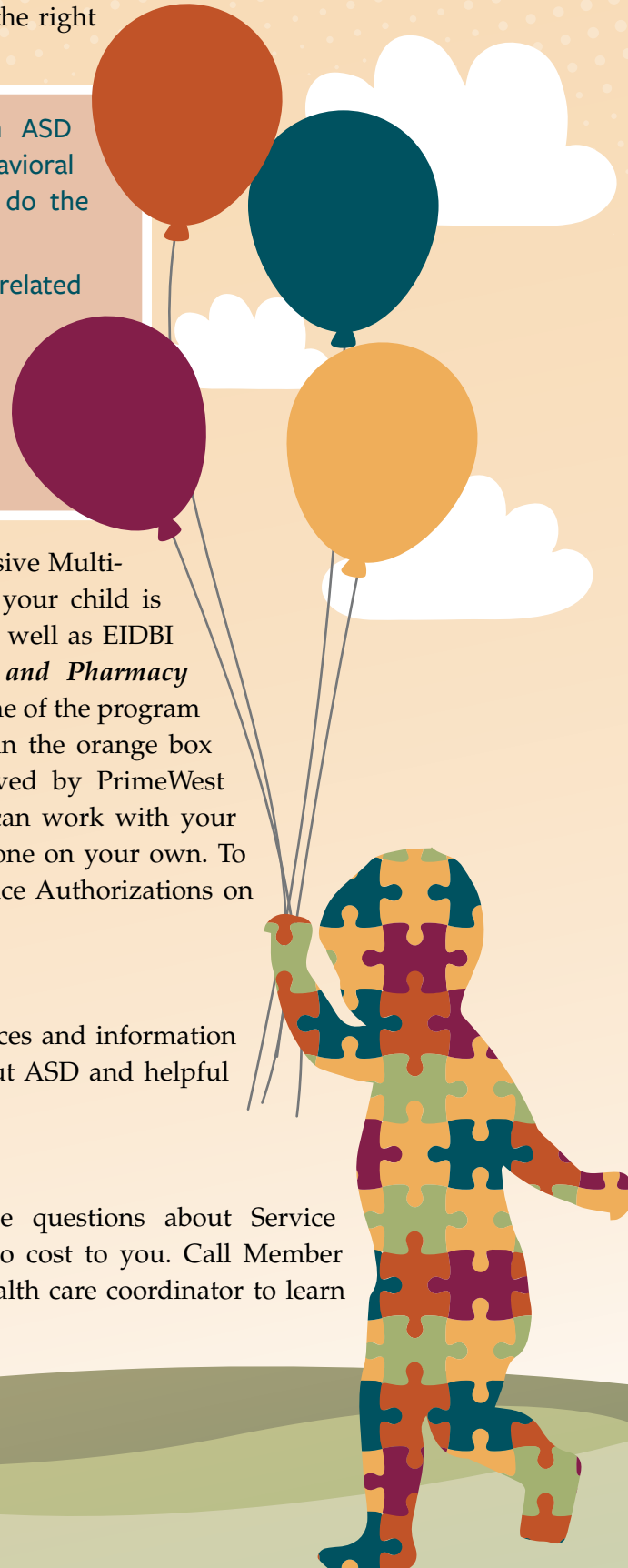
To get these services, your child will need to have a “Comprehensive Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (CMDE).” This is an exam that tells if your child is eligible for EIDBI services. Providers who can give this exam, as well as EIDBI service providers, are listed in PrimeWest Health’s *Provider and Pharmacy Directory*. Go to [www.primewest.org/programs](http://www.primewest.org/programs), and click the name of the program you are enrolled in. Then click *Provider and Pharmacy Directory* in the orange box titled “Member Materials.” All EIDBI services must be approved by PrimeWest Health in advance. This is called a Service Authorization. You can work with your provider to submit a Service Authorization. Or, you can submit one on your own. To learn how, call Member Services. You can read more about Service Authorizations on page 7.

## Resources

The Minnesota Autism Resource Portal has a collection of resources and information about ASD to help parents and other caregivers learn more about ASD and helpful services. The portal is at <https://mn.gov/autism>.

## Questions

Let us know if you need help finding a provider or have questions about Service Authorizations. We also provide care coordination services at no cost to you. Call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** and ask to speak with a behavioral health care coordinator to learn more. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.



## Let Our Care Team Help!

Would you like some help managing your health care? If so, you're in luck, because PrimeWest Health offers a program called Care Management that does just that! As part of the program, members are matched with a care coordinator, community health worker, or case manager who is specially trained to do the following:

- ✓ Help you find answers to questions about your health care or prescriptions
- ✓ Teach you about good health practices that may prevent problems
- ✓ Schedule health care appointments
- ✓ Help you arrange services you need to stay safe and healthy at home
- ✓ Connect you with community resources to help with things like housing, food, or transportation

This program is offered at no cost to PrimeWest Health members. If you or a member you care for could use this help, call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** and ask to talk to Shannon K. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.

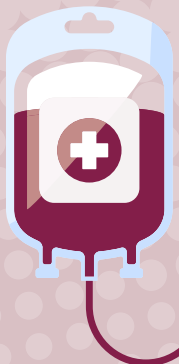


# Pregnant?

Here are **5** things to do and know!



- 1 Tell your county or MinnesotaCare worker.** They will update your eligibility to show you are pregnant. This means you won't have copays or premiums while you're pregnant, and for up to 12 months after pregnancy.
- 2 Make a prenatal appointment.** Do this as soon as you know you are pregnant to lower the risk of complications. Your first appointment should be within the first 8 – 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- 3 Get a car seat from your local Public Health agency.** Tell them you are a PrimeWest Health member and they will set you up with a car seat and make sure it is installed correctly.
- 4 Ask questions about your health and your child's health.** Call Member Services at the number below and ask for Sheila.
- 5 Learn about your benefits.** The links on the web page at [www.primewest.org/pregnancy](http://www.primewest.org/pregnancy) describe many of these benefits. For more information, call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** and ask for Sheila. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.



# Blood Donation



Did you know? Someone in the United States needs blood every 2 seconds! Donations are used to help people who are injured or sick, or who are undergoing surgery or cancer treatment. In general, to donate, you must:

- ✚ Be at least 17 years old (16 with parental/guardian permission)
- ✚ Weigh at least 110 pounds
- ✚ Be in good health on the day of donation

You can talk to your health care provider to learn more about donating. The American Red Cross also has information on its website at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org).

Source: American Red Cross



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# Talking to Your Teen about Substance Use

Teenagers are at a stage in life when they start making decisions for themselves. Having honest and ongoing conversations about drugs and alcohol can help your teen make decisions that will keep them safe.

Teenagers may sometimes act like they know everything, but the truth is they don't! Talking to your teen about substance use is a way to make sure they have the right information. You can correct any misinformation they may have gotten from friends or the media. These conversations also give you the opportunity to make sure your teenager knows your concerns and expectations. Plus, they give your teenager the chance to ask questions.

Regular conversations keep the lines of communication open. This can make it easier for your teen to come to you with concerns. It also makes it easier for you to check in if you notice changes in your teenager and address situations as they arise.

## Tips for talking

- **Have a 2-way conversation.** Don't lecture. Ask questions and listen to the answers. Give your teenager the chance to express their views. You don't need to agree with everything your teen says,

but making sure they feel heard and respected can go a long way.

- **Establish rules.** Make it clear that you don't approve of your teenager drinking or using drugs. Don't assume your teen knows where you stand until you have specifically told them.
- **Explain why not to use drugs or alcohol.** Offer facts about the dangers of substance use, but try not to use scare tactics. Talk about how substance use can affect the things most important to your teenager. For example, if your teen plays sports, let them know substance use can negatively affect their performance—and getting caught using substances may mean getting suspended from or kicked off the team.
- **Discuss ways to say "no."** Peer pressure is real. Talking about what to do in a potentially dangerous situation can make it easier to say "no" when the real thing arises. Let your teen know they can always contact you for help. Assure them you won't get mad in the moment and that you'll wait to talk about what happened until the situation has passed.

Sources: Harvard Health, Healthy Youth Development Prevention Research Center at the University of Minnesota, Mayo Clinic



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## Talk to a Nurse

Hurt or sick and not sure what to do? Try our 24-hour nurse line! Just call **1-866-201-4601** (TTY 711). You'll get advice about whether you can take care of yourself at home, if you need to make an appointment with your health care provider, or even if you need to go to the emergency room.\* Calls to the nurse line are free.

*\*In an emergency that needs treatment right away, call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room.*



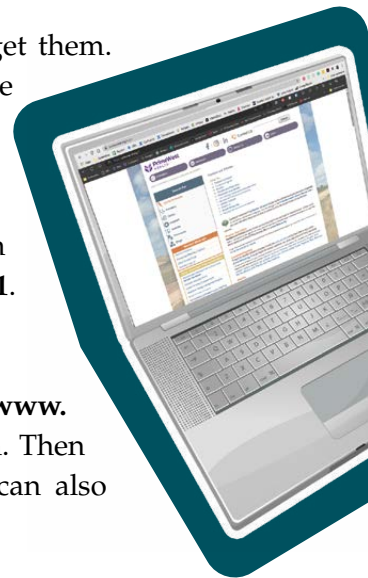


## Service Authorizations

PrimeWest Health needs to approve, or authorize, some services before you get them. This is called “Service Authorization.” Many of the services that require Service Authorization are listed in your *Member Handbook*. Your *Member Handbook* also includes more information about the Service Authorization process.

You can work with your health care provider to get a Service Authorization when you need one. You can also call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801**. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.

You can find your *Member Handbook* on the PrimeWest Health website at **www.primewest.org/programs**. Click the name of the program you are enrolled in. Then click *Member Handbook* in the orange box titled “Member Materials.” You can also request a copy from Member Services by calling the number above.



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**Get Out and Stay Out—of the Hospital!**



“**Hospital readmission**” is when someone is released from the hospital but needs to go back within a short time. A couple of things you can do to avoid readmission are to **arm yourself with information before release and follow up after your release**.

This information will likely be given to you in a written document called a *discharge plan*. Be sure to go over it with a provider in the hospital. Ask questions about anything you don’t understand. If you can, have a friend or family member with you when the provider is giving discharge instructions. Another set of ears never hurts!

### Before you leave the hospital

**Make sure you understand the following:**

- ☒ Why you were in the hospital and other health problems you may have
- ☒ How to care for yourself after release, including what you should do and what you should not do
- ☒ What medications you should take and when, as well as any special equipment you may need, like a walker
- ☒ When your next health appointments are

### After you leave the hospital

**Follow the instructions in your discharge plan and go to your follow-up appointments.** This is important even if you feel better. Your provider will want to check how you are doing. They can talk to you about any new medications you were prescribed or diagnoses you were given. Take your discharge plan with you to your appointments.

If you would like some **extra help** managing your care after a hospitalization, PrimeWest Health can help! Read the information on page 5 about working with our care team.

Source: PBS News



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NOTE: The information in this magazine is not professional medical advice. It is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment. Do not ignore your health care provider's advice or wait to ask for it because of something you read here. Links to other websites are provided as a resource only. PrimeWest Health does not endorse, recommend, or pay for products or services offered by such sites.



**1-866-431-0801 (toll free); TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711**

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

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ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

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