

Focus on life. Focus on health. *Stay focused.*

Achieve Your Best Health
Health Coaching Asthma



Blue OptionSM

BlueChoice HealthPlan of South Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.



What Is Health Coaching?

Health coaching is a voluntary program for members diagnosed with certain health conditions. We take a personalized and tailored approach that helps you manage your condition and cope with everyday issues so you can meet your health goals.

You'll have a personal coach to support, guide and help you learn what motivates you to make healthy lifestyle changes at your own pace. Your coach can:

- Help identify barriers to reaching and maintaining your health goals.
- Personalize your plan for better health.
- Help you find a physician if you don't have one.
- Help you get the most out of your health benefits.

Is health coaching for me?

Health coaching is especially helpful to members who:

- Experience frequent hospitalizations.
- Want to know more about managing their health condition(s).
- Make frequent emergency room visits.

Your personal health coach

Your coach will work with you to establish goals for your health, then help you work toward achieving your goals. Each health coach is a health care professional with extensive training and knowledge. Your personal coach is a partner who can guide and support you to make positive lifestyle changes to better manage your health.

We are here for you

We know it's not always easy to make a lifestyle change and stick to it. Our health coaches will ensure you have the information and tools to make the transition to a healthier lifestyle. We also understand that managing a health condition can be complicated. You can feel confident knowing your coach is there to support you each step of the way. Also, your personal information is safe. Your health coach is a professional who respects your privacy and will keep the details of your action plan confidential.

Our health coaches care about you and want to help you reach your health goals. Your coach can provide the encouragement, support and education you need. He or she can help you identify the barriers that keep you from reaching your health goals, adopt healthy habits that fit your lifestyle and connect you with other helpful resources.

As you take steps to manage your health, you may face challenges. But you can overcome them with the help of your friends, family and our health coaching team!

What do you need to know about asthma?

Asthma is a lifelong condition that affects your airways, making it difficult to breathe. It causes the airways to become swollen, tighten up and produce too much mucus. Researchers believe a combination of genetic factors and environmental triggers cause it. With proper treatment and lifestyle changes, however, you can live a long, fulfilling life.

Symptoms vary from person to person, but the most common symptoms include:

- Coughing, especially at night
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness, pain or pressure

Your doctor will diagnose asthma and evaluate its progression by:

- Conducting a thorough physical exam
- Asking questions about your medical history and specific symptoms
- Ordering a lung function test called spirometry

What can you do to help manage your symptoms?

Take medications as prescribed. This may include taking long-term controllers to prevent symptoms and taking quick-relief medications when you have symptoms.

Use a peak flow meter daily. This inexpensive hand-held device measures how fast air comes out of your lungs when you exhale forcefully. By using your peak flow meter daily, you can track whether your symptoms are under control or worsening.

Know your triggers. There are common things in the environment that can set off your symptoms — and each person’s triggers are unique. When you know your triggers, you can take steps to avoid them.

Common triggers include:

- Smoking or secondhand smoke
- Infections, such as colds or flu
- Strong fumes, like perfume or car exhaust
- Air pollution and smog
- Weather changes
- Very cold or humid air
- Stress and anxiety

Once you identify your triggers, you can take steps to avoid them. Remember to have your rescue medicine with you at all times for the triggers you can’t avoid.

Lifestyle choices. When living with asthma, it’s especially important to maintain a healthy weight. Eat a heart-healthy diet that’s rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein. You should also aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. And don’t neglect your emotional health — identify ways to minimize your stress, and talk to your doctor if you have feelings of depression or anxiety.

Don’t smoke. And if you do, get the support you need to quit. Smoking irritates the lungs and can trigger an asthma attack. It also robs your body of oxygen and damages your heart and lungs. Quitting may not be easy. But it’s an important step to help you better manage your asthma. Your health coach can help you customize a plan to make quitting easier.

Follow an asthma action plan. This is a written plan that you develop with your doctor to help you control your asthma. Your action plan should describe your daily treatment, including which medicines you take and when to take them. This plan also helps you understand when to call your doctor or go to the emergency room. Your health coach can provide a sample action plan.

Don't Neglect Your Emotional Health

Manage stress

Individuals with certain health conditions may be more likely to feel down or depressed, and stress can make any of us feel worse. Take time for yourself, identify ways to minimize your stress and talk to your doctor if you have feelings of depression or anxiety. Here are some tips:

Exercise. Even moderate exercise can help reduce stress and relieve depression.

Relaxation and breathing exercises. Relaxation exercises, such as yoga, are proven to help relieve stress.

Relax and communicate. When you feel tired, take a break. And when you feel stressed, talk it out. Sharing your thoughts with others can help.

Think positively. Be mindful of your “self talk” — the mental images you create for yourself.

Don't depend on alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to cope with stress. If you think you may be dependent on any of these substances, contact your doctor right away for help.



“I am so glad we have a program available to us and that I can call with any questions. I think I am doing a good job, but it is nice to know that I can call when I need to.”

– Health coaching participant

Tackle the blues

When you have a health condition, you may be more likely to feel down or depressed. Depression is common, but treatable. To see if you may need additional support, look over these statements and think about how you’ve felt in the last two weeks. Check if you have:

- Felt sad or down.
- Not cared about things you liked before.
- Been eating more or less than usual.
- Felt tired.
- Felt anxious.
- Not been able to think or make up your mind.
- Felt like you are not worth much.
- Been sleeping more or less than usual.
- Thought about dying or killing yourself.

If you checked five or more, talk to your health care provider or your health coach about whether you might be depressed. If you are, it’s important to get help so you can get back to enjoying life.

Your Relationship With Your Health Care Team Is Important

The best thing for preventing complications with asthma is to develop a good relationship with your health care team, which may include your primary care physician, a health coach and others. Keeping open communication with your health care team is important and helps you play an active role in your care.

During your visit

Questions for your health care team may include:

- What are the three most important things I can do to manage my asthma?
- What changes should I make to my diet and lifestyle?
- Is medicine necessary? If so, how long should I take my medicine?
- Are there any side effects to my medicine? If so, is there anything I can do about them?
- When should I come back for a follow-up appointment?





Your child and asthma

If your children have asthma, being with them 24/7 to ensure proper care for their condition is nearly impossible. Luckily, you can take these simple measures to make sure your children's asthma is taken care of when they are at school.

- Make sure your child's medical record is updated and easy to read.
- Meet with your child's school nurse, teachers and coaches to discuss his or her asthma action plan.
- Find out about your child's school district or college medical policy.
- Talk with your child about taking medications as directed, avoiding triggers and how to ask for help.
- Make sure your child is current on all recommended preventive screenings and immunizations, and gets a yearly flu shot.

Participant's Bill Of Rights

Health coaches respect the wishes of participants and their family members and recognize that participants have RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES, including the:

- Right to know the philosophy and characteristics of the health coaching program.
- Right to have personally identifiable health information shared by the health coaching program only in accordance with state and federal law.
- Right to identify a staff member and his or her job title, and to speak with a supervisor of a staff member, if requested.
- Right to receive accurate information from the health coaching program.
- Right to receive administrative information about changes in or termination of the health coaching program.
- Right to decline participation, revoke consent or disenroll at any time.
- Responsibility to submit any forms necessary to participate in the program, to the extent the law requires.
- Responsibility to give accurate clinical and contact information, and to notify the health coaching program of changes in this information.
- Responsibility to notify their treating providers of their participation in the health coaching program, if applicable.
- Understand when case management information will be disclosed to third parties.

Health coaches inform members of these rights and uphold them at all times during the program. All members receive a written copy of these rights and responsibilities within 30 days of program enrollment.

“Thank you for being there for me. The combination of having you and my doctor has really turned my life around.”

– Health coaching participant

You Make The Choice

Health coaching is completely voluntary and free.

Your decision to participate will not affect your health benefits in any way. If you decide that having a personal health coach is not for you, you can opt out of the program at any time by calling 855-838-5897. If you have a problem or complaint during your health coaching experience, you can call 855-838-5897 and ask to speak to the program manager. In an emergency, please contact your doctor or call 911.

Additional Resources

Here are some resources for additional information about living well with asthma. These are independent organizations that provide educational information you might find helpful.

Allergy and Asthma
Foundation for America
800-727-8462
www.AANMA.org

American Association
for Respiratory Care
972-243-2272

www.YourLungHealth.org
American Lung Association
800-548-8252
www.LungUSA.org/Lung-Disease/Asthma


and Prevention
www.CDC.gov

National Heart, Lung
and Blood Institute
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/asthma/

Centers for Disease Control

These links lead to third party websites. Those companies are solely responsible for the contents and privacy policies on their sites.

The information contained in this brochure is for educational purposes only. It does not represent a standard of care. Your physician must determine the appropriateness of the information in light of all your circumstances. It is important to discuss options with your physician when deciding on the best treatment for you.



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