

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

Achieve Your Best Health

Health Coaching for Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)



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 motivate 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:

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

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 chronic kidney disease?

Your kidneys remove waste and other products from your body. When your kidneys become damaged, waste products and fluid can build up in your body. If left untreated, your kidneys may eventually stop working. Loss of kidney function is a serious and potentially fatal condition. Following the tips in this guide can help improve your health and reduce your risk for complications.

What causes CKD?

The two main causes of CKD are uncontrolled diabetes and uncontrolled high blood pressure.

But it can also be caused by:

- Long-term use of medicines that can damage the kidneys
- Kidney problems you were born with, such as polycystic kidney disease
- Having a narrowed or blocked renal artery from kidney stones, tumors or an enlarged prostate gland
- Repeated urinary infections

Signs and Symptoms

Most people with CKD do not experience severe symptoms until their kidney function is poor. You may notice, however, that you:

- Feel tired and sluggish
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Have decreased appetite
- Have trouble sleeping
- Have swollen feet and ankles
- Have puffiness around your eyes, especially in the morning
- Need to urinate more or less often, especially at night
- Have trouble catching your breath
- Experience muscle cramps
- Experience nausea and vomiting

Five Stages

With CKD, the kidneys usually don't fail all at once. Kidney disease progresses slowly and if caught early, medicines and lifestyle changes may help prevent further damage.

Stage 1: Normal kidney function but some evidence of kidney disease

Stage 2: Mildly reduced kidney function with evidence of kidney disease

Stage 3: Moderately reduced kidney function

Stage 4: Severely reduced kidney function

Stage 5: Kidney failure

What can you do to help manage your symptoms?

Eat smart. Eating right is essential for people with kidney disease. That's why it's important to have a registered dietitian (RD) on your health care team. Your RD can teach you about the types and amounts of food that can help you feel your best.

Most patients in the early stages of kidney disease need to limit the amount of sodium in their diet. Some patients may also be told to limit protein in their diet. The DASH diet is often recommended for individuals with kidney disease. Be sure to talk to your health care provider about your specific nutrition needs.

Exercise. Regular exercise can help you take control of your underlying conditions and ultimately improve your kidney function. Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week. Going to the gym is great, but it's not the only way to stay active. Try taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking on your lunch break or jogging in place during TV commercials. These are excellent ways to incorporate fitness into your life without drastically changing your daily routine.

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 CKD is to develop a good relationship with your health care team, which may include your primary care physician, a dietitian, an ophthalmologist, 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's causing my condition?
- What's the level of damage to my kidneys and can it be reversed?
- Is my kidney function worsening?
- What are my treatment options and are there potential side effects?
- Can you refer me to a registered dietitian?
- Should I also see a specialist?
- How often should I come back to have my kidney function tested?



Take your medications as directed

Diabetes and high blood pressure cause the majority of kidney disease. Taking your medication as prescribed for these conditions can help improve your kidney function. Make sure you take your medication at the same time each day and tell your doctor if the medication causes any side effects, such as headaches or dizziness.

Angiotensin-converting enzymes (ACEs), angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) and diuretics are some of the most commonly prescribed medications for treating high blood pressure. If you have been taking these medicines for six months or longer, it's important to schedule lab tests with your doctor to make sure your medication regimen is working. The recommended lab tests include serum potassium therapeutic monitoring and serum creatinine therapeutic monitoring.

Important lab tests

There are tests your doctor may use to help monitor your health and prevent additional kidney damage:

Serum creatinine and estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR): This test estimates how well your kidneys are filtering blood. As CKD worsens, the creatinine goes up and the eGFR goes down.

Urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio (UACR): This test checks for the level of kidney damage. Lower numbers indicate a lower level of kidney damage.

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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 disease 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

These resources can provide additional information about living well with CKD.

These are independent organizations that provide health information that you may find helpful.

The National Kidney Foundation

www.kidney.org

National Kidney Disease Education Program

www.nkdep.nih.gov

Mayo Clinic


www.mayoclinic.com/health/kidney-failure/DS00682

DaVita

www.davita.com

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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BO-200735-03-2019