



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health



Are You Health Smart?

Tips for being a better health consumer

Are You Health Smart?

It's important to know as much as you can about your health. You have the right to ask questions, understand your choices and make decisions with your doctor. The tips in this brochure will give you the information you need to...

- Find the right doctor for your needs.
- Know what to ask your doctor.
- Keep track of your medicine.
- Make good health care choices.
- Be a smart consumer.

Health Insurance

- Health insurance is important because it protects you from high, unexpected medical costs.
- People now have more choices for health insurance.
- Individuals and families with low income may qualify for free or low-cost insurance.
- If you don't have insurance and want more information about your choices, call: The Health Consumer Center at 1-800-896-3202.

Find the Right Doctor for Your Needs

- Choose an experienced doctor who is a good listener and understands your culture.
- See your doctor regularly for checkups.
- Ask the doctor to explain your illness and all of the risks and benefits of treatment, including medication options.
- Talk to your doctor about your concerns and make decisions together.
- Don't sign any forms without reading and understanding them.



Things to Do Before You Visit Your Doctor

- Know your family's medical history. Know your current medical conditions, past surgeries, and illnesses.
- Have a list of all your shots and the dates you got them.

Learn more about shots at www.vaccines.gov/ or www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip.

During Your Doctor's Visit

- Ask for a translator if your doctor doesn't speak your language.
- Take notes or ask someone to take notes for you.
- Be open and talk to your doctor about all your health concerns so she or he can help you.
- Ask questions to make sure you understand what your doctor is telling you.
- You have a right to your medical record; ask for copies.
- Ask how to get medical attention when the doctor's office is closed and it is not an emergency.

Taking Your Medication

- Keep a current list of all the medicines, herbs, and vitamins you take.
- If you have more than one doctor, make sure they all know about the medicines you are taking.
- Read the label carefully and follow directions for taking your medicine.
- Ask for help if you have any questions about your medicine.
- Call if you have any serious side effects from your medicine.



Be a Smart Consumer

- When you sign up for health insurance, read all of the information and see if your doctor is covered under your plan.
- Know where to find the Member Services phone number for your health insurance company. It is usually on the back of your health insurance card.
- Call your health insurance company before any procedure to make sure it will be covered.
- Ask up-front what fees you will have to pay.
- Always check for errors or extra charges on your medical bill.
- Learn how to read your Explanation of Benefits (EOB) to make sure your insurance company pays the right amount.
- Carry your health insurance card(s) with you at all times.
- You have the right to appeal decisions made by your insurance company. Call the Member Services number for more information. You may also call the California Department of Managed Health Care (1-888-466-2219).
- Remember, if you don't understand, Ask!

Call the LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs if:

- You get a bill for services you didn't receive
- You were sold health products that didn't do what they said they would
- You were sold insurance that doesn't cover the services promised
- Someone is using your identity and information to get health care services
- Your credit is damaged because your insurance company is not paying your claim on time
- Your insurance company is paying only a portion of a bill when it should pay the full amount.

PHONE: 1-800-593-8222 **WEB:** www.dcba.lacounty.gov



Other Helpful Resources

California Department of Managed Health Care

PHONE: 1-888-466-2219

WEB: www.dmhc.ca.gov

- Can explain your health care rights and help you understand how to use your health care benefits
- Can resolve problems you may have with your health plan

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

PHONE: 1-888-463-6332

WEB: www.fda.gov

- Information about health fraud, drugs, medical devices, dietary supplements, infant formula, food, and cosmetics
- Report problems with the quality of these products

Federal Trade Commission

PHONE: 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)

WEB: www.ftc.gov

- Information on health care scams, fraud, and identity theft, as well as money, housing, and privacy concerns
- Report misleading advertising and promotion

Call the LA County Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health, for these services:

- Free or low-cost appointments and referrals for Pap tests, breast exams, and mammograms
- Health education about your risk for heart disease
- Referrals to local health care resources
- Information and referrals for health insurance.

PHONE: 1-800-793-8090

WEB: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/owh



SCAN TO CALL



My Primary Care Doctor's Information

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

My Personal Information

Allergies _____

Medical History _____

Emergency Contact

Name _____

Phone _____

Relationship _____

Other Doctor or Health Information



My Medication & Vitamin List

MEDICATION/VITAMIN	DOSE	FREQUENCY





Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Office of Women's Health

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/owh

