

## Thank you!

Thank you for being a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) Medicare Advantage member. This newsletter is designed to provide you with tools and resources to help meet your health care needs.

As always, you can reach us by calling **888-488-9850 (TTY:711)**.

Additional resources are also available online at [medicare.nebraskablue.com/medicareadvantage](http://medicare.nebraskablue.com/medicareadvantage).

Would you like to receive this communication electronically? Please email [getstarted@nebraskablue.com](mailto:getstarted@nebraskablue.com) or call **888-488-9850** to provide your contact information and email address.

## In this issue:

Summer Safety Tips . . . . .	1
What You Should Carry in Case of a Medical Emergency . . . . .	2
Rheumatoid Arthritis . . . . .	2
Managing Your Medications . . . . .	3
Making Clinic Appointments . . . . .	3
Dental Benefit . . . . .	4
BFCC-QIO . . . . .	4
Is your contact information correct and up to date? . . . . .	4



## SUMMER Safety Tips

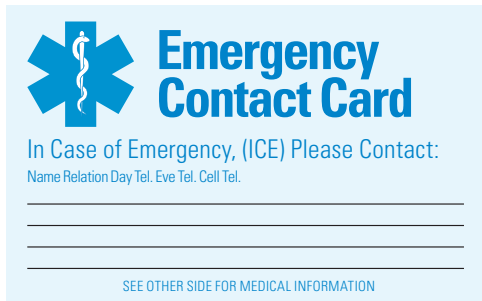
- **Pick the right outfit:** Wear loose, lightweight and light-colored outfits with long sleeves to help protect your skin from the sun. Wear wide brimmed hats to keep the sun off your face. Full coverage (wrap around) sunglasses offer the best eye protection. Eye glasses that block UVA and UVB rays can help reduce damage linked to cataracts and age-related macular degeneration.
- **Wear sunscreen:** Sunscreen helps prevent sunburns. Look for a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more. Apply it about 15-30 minutes before sun exposure. If you are enjoying water activities, be sure to reapply your sunscreen frequently.
- **Drink plenty of fluids:** Aim to drink six to eight glasses of water every day. The feeling of thirst decreases as we age, so be sure to increase your water intake especially if you are exercising or doing any type of prolonged physical activity.
- **Use fans and air conditioning:** Try to keep your indoor temperatures pleasant when it is hot and humid outside. Plan your outings in places that have air conditioning such as a shopping mall, senior center or movie theater.
- **Watch for heat stroke:** Some signs to look for are confusion, disorientation, dry skin, excessive tiredness, headache, lack of energy, nausea and a rapid heart rate. If you or someone you know experiences these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.
- **Review your medications:** Some medications can cause side effects. Review your medications with your primary care provider or pharmacist for any extra precautions you may need to take in the summer months.
- **Be an early bird or night owl:** The sun is strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you must be outside, limit your outdoor activity to the morning and the evening when the temperature is lower and the sun is less intense.

Continued >



# What You Should Carry in Case of a **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

If you experience a medical emergency, the emergency personnel and your family should know who to contact so you get fast and effective treatment.



**Emergency Care Contact List:** In your wallet or purse, please carry an emergency contact list. This list should include:

- Your name, address and phone number
- At least two individuals who should be notified during a medical emergency
- Your medications and dosage

**Medical Alert Bracelet:** If you have a serious medical condition, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, wear a medical alert bracelet. This can be purchased at your local drug store. This bracelet serves as an alert to medical personnel that you have special medical needs during an emergency or upon hospital admission.

These two items can potentially save your life. Remember to keep your information up to date. The goal is to make sure the people who are caring for you in an emergency are well informed of your medical needs.

---

## **RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS**

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) can be difficult to diagnose in its early stages because the early signs and symptoms mimic those of many other diseases. There is no specific blood test to confirm the diagnosis. Medical research indicates that control of symptoms is more likely to occur when treatment begins early with medications known as disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs).

### **Why is DMARD therapy prescribed?**

DMARD therapy is essential in helping prevent long-term damage and disability from RA.

### **Why is a rheumatologist important?**

A rheumatologist is a specialist in joint disease such as RA and osteoarthritis. A referral to a rheumatologist is **highly recommended** to confirm the diagnosis and to treat this disease promptly. When appropriately treated, you may experience a reduction of:

- disease progression
- joint damage
- long-term disability
- the need for surgery

DMARD therapy should be monitored at least four times a year by your treating provider. A rheumatologist therefore provides expertise that improves the quality of your care.

# Managing your MEDICATIONS

1. **Maintain a list** of all the medications you are taking, including the name of the drug, dose and the time of day you take it. Also include all over-the-counter medications, herbal and nutritional supplements. Remember to keep this list updated with any changes your health care provider may make.
2. **Take your medications as directed**, even if you don't have noticeable symptoms. Always talk to your primary care provider before stopping any medications.
3. **Ask your primary care provider or pharmacist about getting a 90-day supply of your daily medications.** Getting a 90-day supply at your pharmacy or through a mail-order service will help you stay on track with fewer refills or trips to the pharmacy.
4. **Be aware of any food interactions.** Check whether your medication should be taken on a full or empty stomach. This could affect how well your body absorbs it.
5. **Be aware of potential side effects.** Familiarize yourself with the potential side effects of your medications and be sure to inform your primary care provider if you experience any reactions or allergies to medications.

## MAKING CLINIC APPOINTMENTS

- **Be ready.** Have a pen and paper, your calendar, insurance card and any other paperwork you need in front of you when you call the clinic.
- **Give your name, birth date and the reason for your call.** Let the office know if you have urgent medical needs, are a new or returning patient or if you have been referred by another health care provider.
- **Get an appointment that works for you.** If you cannot get an appointment when you want it, ask if there is a cancellation list you can be put on.
- **Ask about any special instructions.** You may need to fast for lab testing, bring x-rays or medical records.
- **Discuss your insurance coverage.** If you have questions on your copay or insurance coverage, don't hesitate to ask.
- **Confirm your appointment.** Call the clinic at least one day ahead of time. Always remember to take your medications with you.



# DENTAL Benefit

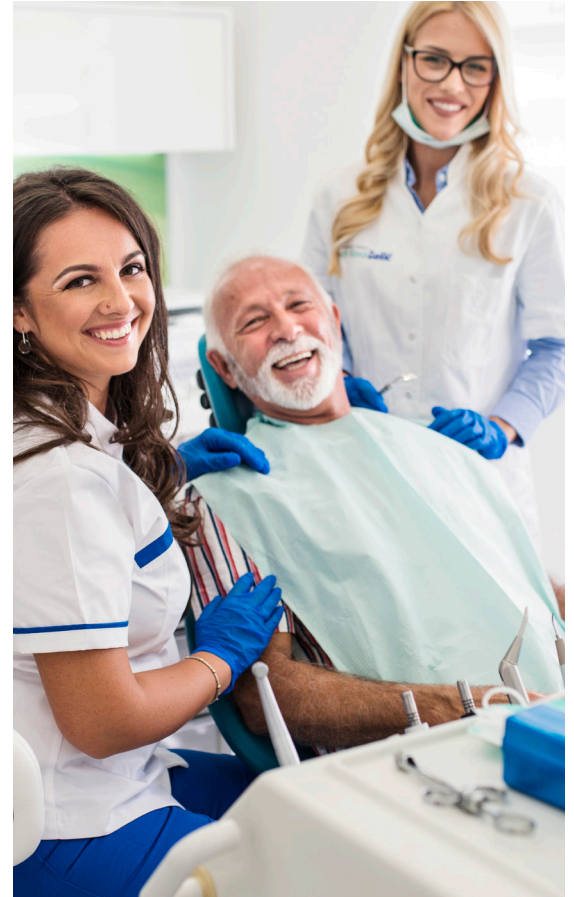
Your dental benefit with BCBSNE Medicare Advantage is a reimbursable benefit to you. To be reimbursed for services, you will need to complete a Dental Claim Reimbursement form after you have received the dental services. The claim form can be found at [medicare.nebraskablue.com/MedicareAdvantage/Resources](https://www.medicare.nebraskablue.com/MedicareAdvantage/Resources).

Complete one form per person, including an itemized bill from your dental provider or the original receipt from your service. The information on your dental provider's bill should be on clinic letterhead and should include:

- date service was provided
- provider name
- provider NPI/TIN
- total amount charged for service(s)
- procedure description and/or codes

Your dental benefit allows up to two oral exams, two cleanings and/or one dental x-ray with an annual maximum benefit of \$250 for the Core plan and \$300 for the Choice plan.

For questions about this benefit please call customer service at 888-488-9850, TTY users call 711.



---

## Beneficiary and Family Centered Care Quality Improvement Organization (BFCC-QIO)

Starting June 8, 2019, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is directing all calls for BFCC-QIO services including discharge appeals, quality complaints and immediate advocacy for Medicare patients and families in Nebraska to the Livanta Medicare Helpline at 888-755-5580, TTY users call 888-985-9295. Livanta will handle these cases initiated with a phone call. Faxes, emails and other forms of communication are not accepted at this time. If you have any questions about this program, please contact BCBSNE customer service at 888-488-9850.

---



### IS YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION CORRECT AND UP TO DATE?

- **Please call: customer service at 888-488-9850, TTY users call 711**
- **Oct. 1 - March 31 we are available seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT**
- **April 1 - Sept. 30 we are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT**