



Health Matters

Member newsletter

WINTER 2025

Signs and symptoms of glaucoma

Glaucoma is often called the “silent thief of sight” because it frequently has no noticeable symptoms in its early stages. It’s a group of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve, often due to high pressure inside the eye, which can lead to irreversible vision loss. The most common form, open-angle glaucoma, typically progresses slowly. Advanced symptoms can include patchy blind spots in your side or central vision.

Early detection through comprehensive dilated eye exams is crucial. If caught early, treatment (usually eye drops) can manage the condition and protect your sight. Don’t wait for symptoms; schedule your annual eye exam.



Contact us

For any questions,
contact member services at
1.844.282.3025

We want to hear from you



Let us know what you would like to see in your next quarterly newsletter by scanning the QR code, or [CLICKING HERE](#).



Cervical cancer screening

Cervical cancer used to be one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths among women. The good news is that regular screening and preventive care have made a big difference in cervical cancer death rates. Still, many cases occur in people who have either never been screened or haven't had an appropriate screening. Regular cervical cancer screenings are one of the most effective ways to prevent cervical cancer. These screenings, often through a Pap test (which looks for cell changes) or an HPV test (which looks for the virus that causes most cervical cancers), can detect pre-cancerous cells early, when they are highly treatable.

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screenings starting around age 21 and continuing regularly, usually every three or five years, depending on the type of test and your history. Both tests are quick, usually painless and can be done in your doctor's office. Sometimes, they are combined as a co-test for more comprehensive screening. Talk to your health care provider to understand the right screening schedule for you. It's a simple step that offers powerful protection for your health. Don't skip your screening!

Colon cancer screening

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S., yet it is one of the most preventable cancers. Most cases start as small growths called polyps in the colon or rectum. Often, there are no symptoms for colon cancer developing silently. By the time symptoms appear, the disease may be advanced and harder to treat. Colon cancer is highly preventable and treatable when detected early. Make regular screenings a part of your health routine and urge your family and friends to do the same.

For people at average risk, screening typically starts at age 45. There are several effective options, including a colonoscopy, which allows a doctor to view the entire colon and remove precancerous growths (polyps), and less invasive stool-based tests that check for blood or abnormal DNA. Your doctor can help you choose the best screening method based on your personal health history. Scheduling your colon cancer screening is a proactive way to safeguard your future well-being. Talk to your provider about getting screened today.



Understanding high blood pressure

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is often called the "silent killer" because it usually has no obvious symptoms. It's a serious condition where the force of your blood against your artery walls is consistently too high. Over time, this extra stress can damage blood vessels and vital organs like your heart, brain, kidneys and eyes, significantly increasing your risk of a heart attack or stroke. Nearly half of all adults in the U.S. have high blood pressure, and many don't know it. That's why regular monitoring is crucial. You can often manage and prevent hypertension through lifestyle changes, like maintaining a healthy weight, eating a balanced diet low in sodium, getting regular exercise, limiting alcohol and not smoking.

Talk to your primary care provider about getting your blood pressure checked regularly. If you've been diagnosed, work with your doctor to create a treatment plan, which may include medication. Adherence to your treatment plan along with close observation allows you and your health care provider to adjust your treatment plan as needed, protecting your future health!



Importance of hand washing

Simple but mighty, hand washing is your best defense against countless germs and infections. Think of it as a mini-vaccine you administer yourself several times a day! Germs like those that cause the common cold, flu and even COVID-19 are often spread by touching surfaces and then touching your face. Always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds — that's the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice. Key times to wash include before eating, after using the restroom and after coughing or sneezing. Make it a habit to protect yourself, your family and your community from illness.

Anxiety, mental wellness and low self-esteem

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Feeling anxious, struggling with low self-esteem or simply feeling overwhelmed are common experiences, but they don't have to control your life. Mental wellness involves practices like mindfulness, prioritizing sleep and engaging in activities you enjoy. If anxiety or low self-esteem is persistent, it can deeply affect your quality of life. Seeking support through therapy or counseling is a sign of strength, not weakness. Professionals can provide tools to manage anxiety and build a stronger, healthier sense of self. Remember, prioritizing your mental health is self-care.

Tips for smoking cessation

Quitting smoking is one of the most important decisions you can make for your health. While challenging, it is absolutely achievable! Start by setting a quit date and letting friends and family know for support. Look into resources like nicotine replacement therapy (patches, gum) or prescription medications, which can significantly ease cravings. Identify your triggers — the times or places you usually smoke — and plan alternative activities. If you slip up, don't give up! Use it as a learning experience and get back on track. Your health plan offers resources; call us to learn more about support programs.

Signs and symptoms of arthritis

Arthritis is not a single disease but an umbrella term for conditions involving joint inflammation and pain. The most common types are osteoarthritis

(wear-and-tear) and rheumatoid arthritis (an autoimmune disorder). Common signs and symptoms include joint pain, stiffness (especially in the morning), swelling and a decreased range of motion. While it often affects older adults, it can strike at any age. If you experience persistent joint pain, stiffness lasting more than a few weeks or unexplained joint swelling, it's important to consult your doctor for an accurate diagnosis and a personalized treatment plan. Early management can significantly improve your quality of life.



Coming Next Year:

**We're partnering
with CVS Caremark®**

Starting January 1, 2026, CHRISTUS Health plan will partner with CVS Caremark to deliver your pharmacy benefits and help keep your medication costs low.





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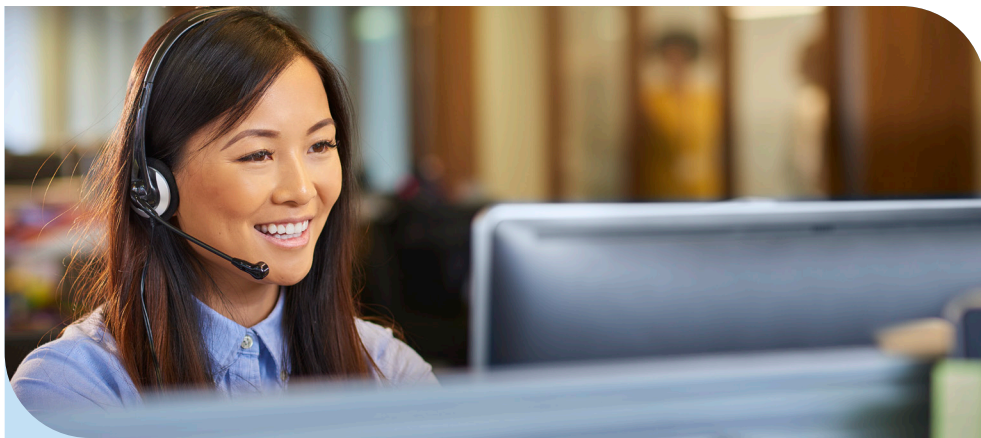
Access your member portal

Get the latest updates, newsletters and more online. If you haven't already



registered for your account, scan the QR code to get started.

For any questions, contact member services at **1.844.282.3025**.



Get help from Care Management

Our Care Management program can help you plan and manage care for complex, chronic health issues as well as acute, episodic, or short-term needs. The goal is to provide quality care, enhance quality of life and manage health care costs.

What types of services does the Care Management team provide?

- Condition management
- Medicine support
- Coordination of appointments
- Health care provider support
- Self-management goal planning
- A Care Management referral can come from a provider, member, caregiver or discharge planner

Care Management is provided at NO COST. Call 800.446.1730 option 2 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (CST) to speak to a Care Management nurse.

A **24-hour nurse line** is also available at **844.581.3175**.



FRAUD, WASTE OR ABUSE?

Report potential fraud, waste or abuse in the CHRISTUS Health Plan Network by submitting details to the Special Investigations Unit via email, secure fax or phone.

FWA HOTLINE: 855.771.8072

EMAIL: christushealthsiu@christushealth.org

SECURE FAX: 210.766.8849

If you prefer anonymity, call the Integrity Line at 888.728.8383 or visit **CHRISTUSintegritylink.org**.

For compliance questions or concerns, you can email us at chpcompliance@christushealth.org

CHRISTUShealthplan.org