



GEORGIA | FALL 2008

MEMBER FOCUS



WELLCARE OF GEORGIA AWARDED ACCREDITATION BY NCQA

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) has given us “Accreditation” for our Medicaid HMO. NCQA is a nonprofit group. It studies and reports on health care quality. This is good news for us and for you.

Plans that earn this status often perform better than those that don't. It shows that WellCare gives you quality health care.

We got this honor after NCQA looked at all areas of our plan. They looked at:

- Preventive health services
- Member satisfaction
- Physician credentialing
- Quality improvement

Who carried out the review? A team of physicians and managed care experts. Then a team of doctors looked over the findings and made the final decision.

NCQA's New Health Plan Accreditation Program applies to health plans that are less than 36 months old. The program is distinct from NCQA's MCO Accreditation Program.

We are very proud of this. It means you can be confident in the quality of health care we give you. Thank you for choosing WellCare of Georgia. Contact Customer Service at 1-866-231-1821.

MEMBER MATERIALS UPDATE

Have you checked the WellCare Member Web site lately? You can find valuable tools that can help you with your health care needs. Just go to georgia.wellcare.com and click on “MEMBERS.”

You can find information such as:

- Member handbook
- Benefits
- Free monthly personal care items
- 24-hour Health Advisor Line
- Member Newsletters
- Fraud and abuse information
- How to find a pharmacy
- How to find a dental provider
- Quick reference guide
- Pregnancy Health Guidelines

NEED INFO? GIVE US A CALL!

Have you called Georgia Customer Service at 1-866-231-1821 recently? We've made some changes. We've made it easier to get what you need. One phone number gives you access to:

- Your benefits like dental, vision and behavioral health
- 24-hour Personal Health Advisor
- Member voice mail
- Web support for georgia.wellcare.com

Representatives can help you Monday–Friday, 7am to 7pm Eastern. Please listen carefully to the options before making a selection. Remember, you can also leave a voice mail message for Customer Service after hours. Calls are returned within 24 business hours.

So call if you have any questions. Language services for all oral and written foreign languages are available. You can also call to request your member materials in a different format. This includes different languages, large print and audio tapes. There is no charge.

National Committee for
Quality Assurance (NCQA)
accredited for the
Medicaid product effective
July 28, 2008.





WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ASTHMA

WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a chronic disease, which means people who have it will always have it. When you have asthma, it causes the airways in your lungs to swell up and makes it hard to breathe. This can cause coughing, wheezing (a high-pitched sound coming from your chest) and shortness of breath. People with asthma will find that it is hard to breathe when they are exposed to certain things. These things are often called “triggers.” Examples of triggers are:

- Dust in carpets and other surfaces, pollen, cigarette, cigar or pipe smoke
- Allergies to animals such as dogs or cats
- Colds or viral infections

Different people can have different triggers, but for everyone with asthma, triggers will cause asthma symptoms to get worse.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE ASTHMA?

Your doctor will do a physical exam and ask questions about your health. If your doctor feels you have asthma, once a year your doctor will do a simple test in the office called “Spirometry.” You will be asked to breathe into a small plastic device that will measure the amount of air in your lungs when you breathe in and when you breathe out. This test can help the doctor decide what medications to order and determine how well your asthma is being controlled.

I HAVE ASTHMA. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- See your Primary Care Physician (PCP) and ask your doctor to complete an Asthma Action Plan
- Have your doctor teach you how to use a peak flow meter
- Record your peak flow readings as your doctor tells you, (usually once in the morning and once at bedtime)

- Learn what your “triggers” are and try to stay away from them
- Be sure to take your medicine as ordered by your doctor
- Ask your PCP about getting a yearly flu vaccine
- Ask your PCP if you should get a pneumonia vaccine
- Ask your doctor if you have questions about your asthma and or asthma medications

WHAT MEDICATIONS ARE USED FOR ASTHMA?

There are two main types of medicines for asthma:

- Quick-relief medicines—these are taken when asthma signs first start. They help with things like wheezing, coughing and tightness of the chest. You will feel them working within minutes. Examples are albuterol, ipratropium and metaproterenol.
- Long-term control medicines—these are taken every day for a long period of time. They help stop asthma symptoms. They also can stop asthma attacks. It takes a few weeks before you feel the full effects of these drugs. People who have asthma most of the time use them. The main type in this group is anti-inflammatory drugs. They stop or reverse swelling in the airways. They make the airways less sensitive. This keeps them from reacting as easily to triggers. Examples are Qvar, Asmanex and Flovent.

Many people need both quick-relief and long-term medicines to control their asthma. You need a prescription for these drugs. Ask your PCP which treatment may be right for you.

Based on asthma guidelines for physicians from www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/asthgdln.htm Full Report 2007.

PREGNANT? WELLCARE SPEAKS YOUR LANGUAGE

WellCare wants to help you have a healthy baby. We will help you find your way through the health care system and get other services that help you and your baby.

Have a healthy baby by:

- Taking care of yourself
- Using your extended family for support
- Making appointments with your doctor
- Telling your doctor about any type of folk medicines you are taking

Take care of yourself by being positive. Eat well and get plenty of rest. Look to female family members for support. Please call your doctor or call Customer Service at 1-866-231-1821 to set up an appointment.

WHY SHOULD YOU SEE A DOCTOR?

- \$0 co-pay for mothers under 21 years old
- Free transportation to doctor's office
- Prenatal rewards program
- Be assured of baby's welfare
- Women who are attentive mothers are highly respected
- WellCare doctors are trained on cultural diversity

- Plan a vaginal birth
- Involve your extended family
- Communicate your need for extra privacy
- Remove potential fears by asking questions

Doctors can also help you know if you may be at risk. If the doctor finds problems early, they may be able to stop or slow down those problems.

A free transportation service can help you get to your appointments. Their number is in your handbook. Call them weekdays from 7am to 7pm Eastern.

WellCare wants you to have access to the care you and your baby need. We will make sure you can communicate easily to get health care. Six percent of our members speak Spanish, so we added 17 additional Spanish-speaking doctors. We have Spanish-speaking representatives available when you call Customer Service. More than 20 percent of the doctors in our network are female.

WellCare keeps you in mind when providing tailored health services. We will support you and do our best to make sure you have a healthy and happy baby. At WellCare, we put you and your family first.

SURVEY SHOWS WELLCARE MEMBERS ARE SATISFIED

WellCare wants our members to be happy with their health care. We recently held a survey to make sure of this. We were pleased to learn that most of our members are happy with their doctors and with WellCare.

Here is some of your good feedback:

- Members who said their children got routine care as soon as they wanted? 87.3%.
- Members who said their children got care right away when needed? 87.8%.
- Members who said waiting for approval from the health plan was "not a problem." 95.8%.

- Members who said their children "usually" or "always" got courtesy and respect at the doctor's office or clinic? 92.6%.
- Members who said that they "usually" or "always" got courtesy and respect from Customer Service? 91.3%.

We also surveyed our doctors to make sure they were happy with WellCare. We are working to improve their satisfaction too.

Thanks to the members who took the time to fill out and return the survey. It helps us to find out what we can do to make you happier with your health care.

WHAT IS OBESITY?

Being obese means having so much body fat that your health is in danger. Having too much body fat can lead to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, sleep apnea, and stroke. Because of these risks, it is important to lose weight even if you do not feel bad now. It is hard to change eating habits and exercise habits. But you can do it if you make a plan.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE OBESE?

A measurement called a body mass index, or BMI, can help you decide whether your weight is dangerous to your health. The BMI is a combination of your height and weight. A BMI of 30 or higher means extra weight is putting your health in danger. For Asians, your health may be at risk with a BMI of 27.5 or higher.

Where you carry your body fat is important too. People who carry too much fat around the middle are more likely to have health problems. In women, a waist size of 35 inches or more raises the chance for disease. In men, a waist size of 40 inches or more raises the chance for disease.

WHAT CAUSES OBESITY?

You gain weight when you take in more calories than you burn off. How you eat, how active you are, and other things affect how your body uses calories. This affects whether you gain weight.

Parents who are obese may pass this on to their children. And your family also helps form your eating and lifestyle habits. These may lead to obesity.

Also, our busy lives make it harder to plan and cook healthy meals. Many of us find it easier to go out to eat or go to the drive-through. But these foods are often high in fat and calories. Portions are often too large. Work and other commitments also cut into the time we have for physical activity.

There is no quick fix to being overweight. To lose weight, you must burn more calories than you take in.

MAKING CHANGES

To make big changes in your lifestyle, you have to be committed. Ask yourself if this is the right time. Are you ready to make a well thought-out plan and stay with it? Do you have the support of your family and friends? Have you talked with your doctor, and do you know what your first steps will be?

Ask your doctor to help you:

- Identify things that cause you to gain weight.



- Identify any medicines you are taking that may make it harder for you to lose weight.
- Make lifestyle changes instead of dieting.

Your doctor may recommend the following professionals to help you make changes:

- A registered dietitian can help you determine how many calories you need and how best to get them.
- An exercise specialist or personal trainer can help you plan a safe and effective exercise program.
- A counselor or psychiatrist can help if you have an emotional problem such as depression or anxiety, have experienced sexual or physical abuse, have family problems, or abuse drugs or alcohol.
- A surgeon may be needed if you and your doctor think that obesity (bariatric) surgery is an option.

When you are ready to start making changes, do not take on too much too soon. Anything you can do today that was healthier than yesterday is a step in the right direction.

Set small goals. Your goals should be specific, within your reach, and flexible enough to break once in a while. A goal to be more active and eat better is too general. Instead, make a plan to be active 3 to 4 times per week. Perhaps start with a goal of walking for 15 minutes 3 times per week, and then increase it to 4 times a week. When you reach this goal and it has become routine, set a new one. But realize that you may have setbacks now and then—these do not mean that you have failed.

Think about a time that you were successful in making a change, and remember what motivated you. Try to draw on a similar motivation, and set small, realistic goals. Experiencing success, no matter how small, is important. Each time you meet one of your goals, set another one.

Source: 1995-2008 Healthwise, Incorporated.

WHAT IS BASIC DENTAL CARE?

What does basic dental care mean? Brushing and flossing your teeth regularly are a big part of it. But it also means getting regular dental checkups and cleanings. It also includes eating foods that are good for your mouth. These are foods like whole grains, vegetables, fruits and dairy products.

WHY IS BASIC DENTAL CARE IMPORTANT?

Basic dental care prevents tooth decay and gum disease, which can damage gum tissue and the bones that support teeth. It prevents bad breath. It can even save you money by reducing the need for costly procedures.

ARE THERE WAYS TO AVOID DENTAL PROBLEMS?

Keeping your teeth and gums healthy requires good nutrition and regular brushing and flossing.

- Brush your teeth twice a day. Floss once a day.
- Use a toothpaste that contains fluoride. This fights tooth decay and cavities.
- Avoid foods with a lot of sugar.
- Avoid tobacco products. Tobacco can cause gum disease and oral cancer.
- Clean your tongue. You can use a tongue cleaner or a soft-bristle toothbrush, stroking back to front.
- Schedule regular trips to the dentist based on how often you need exams and cleaning.

EAT A MOUTH-HEALTHY DIET

- Eat a balanced diet that includes whole grains, vegetables and fruits.
- Mozzarella and other cheeses, peanuts, yogurt, milk and sugar-free chewing gum are good for your teeth.
- Avoid foods that contain a lot of sugar. Sugar hurts teeth when it sticks to them.
- Do not snack before bedtime. Food left on the teeth can cause cavities at night.

KNOW YOUR DENTAL BENEFITS

A great way to keep your teeth health is to see your dentist on a regular basis. The benefits your WellCare plan offers can help you and your family keep your teeth healthy.

Kids who need dental services can get their care through a plan dentist. Services include:

- 2 exams per benefit year
- 2 cleanings per benefit year
- 2 fluoride treatments per benefit year
- 1 filling per tooth
- Dentures—1 pair, every 3 years
- Denture repairs—2 adjustments per benefit year
- Oral surgery
- Orthodontic treatment

WellCare offers expanded dental benefits to adults (age 21 and over) in the health plan. Dental services for adults include:

- 2 exams per benefit year
- 2 cleanings per benefit year
- X-rays once a year
- Prescriptions for dental services

*** Pregnant members also receive 1 filling per tooth, fluoride treatments and periodontal treatment.*

PeachCare for Kids dental services include:

- 2 exams per benefit year
- 2 cleanings per benefit year
- 2 fluoride treatments per benefit year
- 1 filling per tooth
- Dentures—1 pair, every 3 years
- Denture repairs—2 adjustments per benefit year
- Oral surgery
- Orthodontic treatment

Doral Dental provides these services. Call them at **1-800-516-9615** to choose a dentist. They can also answer your questions about dental care.



WELLCARE OF GEORGIA MEMBER RIGHTS

AS A WELLCARE MEMBER, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

- To get information about the plan, its services, its doctors and providers.
- To get information about your rights and responsibilities.
- To know the names and titles of doctors and other health providers caring for you.
- To be treated with respect.
- To be treated with dignity.
- To have the right to privacy.
- To decide with your doctor on the care you get.
- To talk openly about care you need for your health, no matter the cost or benefit coverage, and the choices and risks involved. The information must be given in a way you understand.
- To have the risks, benefits and side effects of medications and other treatments explained to you.
- To know about your health care needs after you get out of the hospital or leave the doctor's office.
- To refuse care, as long as you agree to be responsible for your decision.
- To refuse to take part in any medical research.
- To complain about the plan or the care it provides. Also, to know that if you do, it will not change how you are treated.
- To not be responsible for the plan's debts.
- To be free from any form of restraint or seclusion as a means of force, discipline, convenience or revenge.
- To have access to your medical records.
- To have your records kept private.
- To make your health care wishes known through advance directives.
- To have a say in the plan's member rights.
- To appeal medical or administrative decisions by using the plan's or the State's grievance process.
- To exercise these rights no matter your sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, education or religion.

- To have all plan staff observe your rights.
- To have all the above rights apply to the person legally able to make decisions about your health care.

YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER:

- To give information that the plan and its doctors and providers need to provide care.
- To follow plans and instructions for care that you have agreed on with your doctor.
- To understand your health problems.
- To help set treatment goals that you and your doctor agree to.
- To read the member handbook to understand how the plan works.
- To carry your member card at all times.
- To carry your Medicaid card at all times.
- To show your ID cards to each provider.
- To schedule appointments for all non-emergency care through your doctor.
- To get a referral from your doctor for specialty care.
- To cooperate with the people who provide your health care.
- To be on time for appointments.
- To tell the doctor's office if you need to cancel or change an appointment.
- To pay co-payments to providers as specified by the Georgia Families program.
- To respect the rights of all providers.
- To respect the property of all providers.
- To respect the rights of other patients.
- To not be disruptive in your doctor's office.
- To know the medicines you take, what they are for and how to take them the right way.
- To make sure your doctor has copies of all previous medical records.
- To let your plan know within 48 hours, or as soon as possible, if you are admitted to the hospital or receive emergency room care.

KIDS GET MIGRAINE HEADACHES TOO

About 8 million children in the United States get migraine headaches. As many boys get them as girls through age 10. But after age 12, girls get them three times more often than boys.

WHAT IS A MIGRAINE?

Almost everyone gets headaches. Some types of headaches may happen only once in a while. Others can happen as often as everyday. Most headaches make a dull pain around the front, top and sides of your head. It almost feels as if someone stretched a rubber band around your head.

A migraine is worse than a regular headache. Migraines usually occur about one to four times a month. The pain is often throbbing and on one or both sides of the head. Children with migraines often feel dizzy or sick to their stomachs. During the headache, some children are sensitive to light, noise or smells. They may want to sleep. When they wake up, they usually feel better. Most migraines last from 30 minutes to 6 hours. But some can last a day or two.

Children should understand that migraines aren't contagious. You can't catch them from someone who has them.

WHAT CAUSES A MIGRAINE?

A migraine begins when blood vessels in the brain get narrow temporarily. This makes the amount of blood and oxygen flowing to the brain drop. So the brain sends a message that it needs more blood and oxygen. This then causes other blood vessels to expand. When the blood vessels expand, they become inflamed. They throb. And they cause a pounding pain. Because it involves the changes in blood vessels, a migraine is a vascular headache.

No one is really sure why people get migraines. Chances are that if your child gets migraines, another family member may get them as well. Some scientists think that migraines are genetic. This means that certain genes are passed on from parents and may make the child more likely to get them. Some scientists believe that people get migraines because of changes in their bodies or their environment. Certain things may trigger a reaction in the person's nervous system and start a migraine attack. Some of the common triggers are:

- stress (good or bad)
- menstruation (having a period)
- skipping meals



- too much caffeine (like sodas)
- certain foods like cheese, pizza, chocolate, ice cream, fatty or fried food, lunch meats, hot dogs, yogurt, or anything with MSG (a seasoning often used in Asian foods)
- too much or too little sleep
- weather changes
- travel

WHEN DO YOU KNOW A MIGRAINE IS COMING?

Migraines begin differently. Some children just don't feel right. Light or sound may bother them or make them feel worse. They may even get sick to their stomachs. Some children may have muscle weakness. They lose their sense of coordination, stumble or even have trouble talking.

About one in five kids gets an aura, a kind of warning that a migraine is on the way. The most common auras include blurred vision and/or seeing spots, colored balls, jagged lines or bright lights, or smelling a certain odor. An aura usually starts about 10 to 30 minutes before the start of a migraine headache, although auras can happen the night before the headache starts. An aura usually lasts about 20 minutes.

TREATMENTS FOR MIGRAINES

It can be annoying for your child to have a bad migraine once in a while, but it usually doesn't cause any big problems. Make sure your child lets you know if they have headaches that:

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Para solicitar este documento en español, llame al Servicio al Cliente al 1-866-231-1821 (TTY/TDD: 1-877-247-6272).

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“KIDS GET MIGRAINE HEADACHES TOO” *continued from page 7*

- last a long time
- seem to be getting worse
- happen more often
- cause problems with balance
- interfere with school or after-school activities

Your child's doctor will want to know about those problems and can try to help. Your child's doctor may also want you to keep a headache diary. By keeping track of your child's headaches, this can help to figure out what triggers them. This information will help your child's doctor figure out the best treatment.

Your child's doctor may suggest one or more medicines to take. They include:

- pain relievers like acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- medicines that reduce nausea and vomiting
- sedatives, which can help your child go to sleep and get rid of the headache
- medicines to prevent migraines or make them less severe

Some doctors may also try to teach your child ways to relax. If a migraine begins slowly, many people can use relaxation techniques to remain calm and stop the attack.

HOW TO PREVENT A MIGRAINE

The good news is that many kids outgrow migraines. In the meantime, it is important that you follow the instructions of your child's doctor and for your child to take the medicine as instructed.

Also it is important for your children to stay away from migraine triggers. If certain foods like chocolate, cheese or sodas trigger your children's migraines, it is a good idea to have them avoid these foods. Also, have your children take breaks from activities that seem to trigger their migraines, such as using the computer for a long time or listening to loud music.

When children experience chronic headaches, it affects them at home and in school. The more you understand about migraines, the better prepared you are to help your child fight them.