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Our Purpose Is You

### 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](mailto:ChristusHealthSIU@ChristusHealth.org)

**SECURE FAX:** 210.766.8849

If you prefer anonymity, call the Integrity Line at 888.728.8383 or visit [ChristusIntegrityLink.org](http://ChristusIntegrityLink.org).

For compliance questions or concerns, you can email us at [CHPCompliance@ChristusHealth.org](mailto:CHPCompliance@ChristusHealth.org)



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SPRING 2023

# Health Matters

Our Purpose Is You

## DEPRESSION AND MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Depression is a medical disease that causes ongoing feelings of sadness and loss of interest. It affects how you feel, think and act, and if left untreated, it can lead to a variety of emotional problems and physical problems. Symptoms can include:

- Losing interest in things that used to bring happiness
- Not sleeping well or sleeping too much
- Gaining or losing weight

Depression is treatable, and some improve with medication, counseling, or other options. With the right care, integrating the right antidepressant medication with behavioral therapy can lead to positive outcomes. If you think you may be depressed, CHRISTUS encourages you to make an appointment with your doctor.

## WHAT IS “LONG COVID”?

Long COVID is diagnosed when common symptoms of a COVID-19 infection last longer than a few months, such as:

- Feeling very tired (fatigue)
- Trouble breathing
- Chest discomfort
- Cough

Other symptoms are diminished sense of smell or taste, headache, runny nose, joint or muscle pain, trouble sleeping or eating, sweating, diarrhea, brain fog, depression, and PTSD.

### HOW IS LONG COVID TREATED?

Treatment involves addressing symptoms and may combine a few different approaches like:

- Getting enough rest
- Prioritizing your energy use
- Improving sleep quality

Depending on your situation, you might also need:

- Medicines to relieve symptoms like cough or pain
- Measures to improve heart health
- Lung strengthening exercises
- Physical and occupational therapy, (learning exercises, movements, and ways of doing everyday tasks)
- Medicine or counseling for anxiety and depression
- Memory and focus tasks

Over a year ago, the United States Department of Justice added long COVID to the list of protected disabilities covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Fortunately, recent studies indicate that people are less likely to develop long COVID symptoms after being infected with the Omicron variant than with the more deadly Delta variant.

## PRIORITIZE YOUR POSTPARTUM CARE

Approximately one in eight (8) mothers develop postpartum depression (PPD) near the time they give birth, but it can start during pregnancy, within a month after childbirth, or up to a year later.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Feeling restless or moody
- Feeling sad, hopeless, or overwhelmed
- Losing interest in/connection with the baby, or feeling as if the baby belongs to someone else
- Having trouble focusing or making decisions
- Having thoughts about death, suicide, or harming oneself or the baby

### RISK FACTORS

- Has a personal history of depression or bipolar disorder
- Has a family history of depression or bipolar disorder
- Does not have support from family and friends
- Was depressed during pregnancy
- Has problems with a previous pregnancy or birth
- Has low thyroid hormones

### IF YOU NEED HELP ...

- Call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline website connecting those experiencing a mental health, substance abuse or suicidal crisis with trained crisis counselors by dialing 988 (or 1-800-273-TALK) for free and confidential help that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. To use the Lifeline Chat, visit the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline website at <https://988lifeline.org/>
- Dial 911 in an emergency
- Call the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline, a free, confidential hot line for pregnant and new moms in English and Spanish by dialing or texting 1-833-9-HELMOMS (1833-943-5746). TTY users can use a preferred relay service or dial 711 and then 1-833-943-5746.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Your health matters and we are dedicated to your best care. You may have received a survey in the mail asking you to evaluate your experiences with our health plan and healthcare providers. We hope you take this opportunity to share your thoughts with us.

## HEART HEALTH AND WHY IT MATTERS

Often, high blood pressure is called the “silent killer” as it can cause damage to your blood vessels without you knowing. Measuring your blood pressure regularly is quick, painless and it is the only way to know if you have hypertension.

If you have high blood pressure, your doctor may ask you to monitor your pressure at home with a blood pressure cuff and keep track of your numbers.

Source: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure>

BLOOD PRESSURE	SYSTOLIC Pressure when the heart beats		DIASTOLIC Resting pressure between heart beats
<b>Normal</b>	Less than 120	And	Less than 80
<b>Elevated</b>	120 - 129	And	Less than 80
<b>High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1</b>	130 - 139	Or	80 - 89
<b>High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2</b>	140 or higher	Or	90 or higher
<b>Hypertensive Crisis (Consult your doctor immediately)</b>	Higher than 180	And/ Or	Higher than 120

## PTSD AT ANY AGE

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event. It can develop in children and adults alike.

Fear is a part of the body’s normal ‘fight or flight’ response, which helps people to avoid or respond to potential or real danger. It is important to note that not everyone who lives through a dangerous event develops PTSD. People may experience a range of reactions after trauma, and most will recover over time. Those who continue to experience problems may be diagnosed with PTSD.

PTSD symptoms include nightmares, depression, irritability, avoiding people or events that are reminders of the trauma, and more. They usually begin within three months of the trauma but can emerge years later.

In children, PTSD can manifest as restlessness, fidgeting, and attention problems, so it is often misdiagnosed as ADHD.

**To be diagnosed with PTSD, an individual will typically exhibit the following symptoms for at least 1 month:**

- Re-Experiencing Symptoms (at least 1): flashbacks/reliving the event, recurring memories/dreams related to the event, distressing thoughts, or physical signs of stress.
- Avoidance Symptoms (at least 1): Staying away from places, events, or objects that are reminders of the experience, avoiding thoughts or feelings related to the trauma.
- Arousal and Reactivity Symptoms (at least 2): Being easily startled, feeling tense, on guard or on edge, having difficulty concentrating, having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, feeling irritable, angry or aggressive outbursts, engaging in risky, reckless, or destructive behavior.
- Cognition and Mood Symptoms (at least 2): Trouble remembering key features of the trauma, negative thoughts about oneself or the world, distorted thoughts about the event that causes feelings of blame, ongoing negative emotions, such as fear, anger, guilt, or shame, loss of interest in previous activities, feelings of social isolation, difficulty feeling positive emotions, such as happiness or satisfaction.

Anyone who has experienced a traumatic event such as abuse, an accident, a disaster, a terror attack, or similar event can develop PTSD at any age. If you, your child or loved one are experiencing signs of PTSD, please contact your primary care provider.

Source: National Center for PTSD/U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - *How Common is PTSD in Adults?* - PTSD: National Center for PTSD ([va.gov](http://va.gov))  
National Institute of Health/National Institutes of Health/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - NIMH » *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* ([nih.gov](http://nih.gov))

## SMOKING CESSATION AND E-CIGARETTES

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the US. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 34 million US adults smoke cigarettes. Every day, about 1,600 people under age 18 years smoke their first cigarette, and 235 begin smoking cigarettes daily. Over 16 million people live with at least one disease caused by smoking, and 58 million non-smoking American are exposed to secondhand smoke.

Even though e-cigarettes are not as harmful as regular tobacco products, they still can cause damage. Consider stopping smoking tobacco and vapes to improve your health and the health of others.

### KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY

Establishing health routines for your child will generate healthy habits as a young adult and beyond. Start small with three key areas:

#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Preschool children need 3 hours of activity per day.
- School age kids and teens need around 1 hour of medium-level activity per day.

#### NUTRITION

- Teach kids to eat a variety of nutritious foods like: veggies, fruits, nuts, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat options (when applicable.)
- Discourage processed foods, refined carbs, sweet beverages, and treats.

#### SCREEN TIME

- Limit screen time to 1-2 hours per day, separating screen time for enjoyment vs. school.

**FOR QUESTIONS OR HELP WITH YOUR PLAN, PLEASE CONTACT MEMBER SERVICES AT 1-844-282-3025**