



True to Your Health: A Quarterly Wellness Bulletin for Our APS Members

Summer 2021

Catch up on your care

More and more New Mexicans have been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus. As a result, COVID restrictions are easing across the state. You're probably using this time to get caught up on things like hobbies, socializing, and physical activity. But it's also an ideal time to catch up on any healthcare services you and your family need.

I urge you to consider what doctor visits, screening tests, vaccine booster shots, and other care you may be behind on. In the health insurance world, we call this "closing gaps in care," but you can call it "making sure I'm as healthy as I can be." Our preventive care story below can help you figure out where to begin.

Virtual visits are also an option for you. Ask your current providers if they offer video visits.

Don't forget about your mental health! Our APS members have access to outpatient behavioral health visits – including substance-abuse treatment – at a \$10 copay. You can search for a physical or mental health provider at truehealthnewmexico.com. Our Care Management team can help you find a provider, if needed; you can reach them at **1-844-691-9984**.

Healthcare and health insurance are complicated. We're here to simplify them for you. Let us know how we can help, and enjoy your summer.

Mark Epstein, MD, MBA
President and CEO



Regular preventive care helps you maintain your good health

One important way to maintain your good health is to get regular preventive care: checkups, vaccinations, and tests that screen for signs of disease.

Are you wondering what preventive care you or your family members need at different stages of life? Check out our lists for women, men, teens, and children at truehealthnewmexico.com/preventive-health-screenings. Discuss these screenings with your primary care provider (PCP).

Do you need to find a PCP or other in-network provider? You can search for one at truehealthnewmexico.com. Click on *Find a Doctor* near the top of the page.

Have you tried Mindful You?

May was Mental Health Month nationwide, but every month is Mental Health Month at True Health New Mexico. Our APS health plan members have a **\$10 copay for outpatient behavioral health visits**, including substance-abuse treatment. Contact your pharmacy benefit manager, Express Scripts, to learn about covered medications commonly prescribed to manage mental health conditions. Learn more at truehealthnewmexico.com/aps.

Visit truehealthnewmexico.com/behavioral-health to find local resources, a behavioral health assessment, information on different types of behavioral health providers, and more.

What if you simply want to learn how to cope better with stress and anxiety? We have a program for that: Mindful You. We work with Michelle DuVal, MA, a teacher with 20 years of experience in mindfulness, to offer a science-based mindfulness program to all of our members at no charge. Michelle offers many guided and self-paced online courses. Some courses also include downloadable or emailed meditations for you to practice whenever you want.

Recent and upcoming Mindful You courses (this is not a complete list):

- May 17-June 7: Mindfulness for Increased Life Engagement
- June 5: Mindfulness and the Overthinking Mind
- June 19: The Middle Ages and Beyond: Making the Mindful Shift
- Ongoing: Life on Mindfulness

To take advantage of these programs, log in to the TRUE member portal at truehealthnewmexico.com/aps. After logging in, scroll down the home page and select the Mindful You link to register for a course. Spots are limited, so register soon!

Your APS Employee Wellness benefits also offer the Life on Mindfulness program with Michelle DuVal. While many of the program elements are the same, there are some differences. The good news is it's **all free for you!**

Time out: Take five mindful breaths

We have partnered with Michelle DuVal, MA, of The Mindful Center to offer the Mindful You program. Michelle welcomes you to Mindful You with the following simple tip.



Michelle DuVal, MA

I've taught mindfulness for 20 years, and there's one tip that seems to help everyone: the practice of **taking five mindful breaths five times a day**.

Mindfulness means intentional awareness, so taking a mindful breath means that you practice choosing to put your awareness fully on the feeling of the breath – in this case, for five cycles.

We tend to live with our minds all over the place. And during COVID-19, this seems to be getting worse. We wish life could go back to the way it was before. If we look more closely, we'll see that all these problems are either in the past or the future.

When we take five mindful breaths, we essentially move our minds out of the past and the future and into the present. And in the present, we're usually okay. Though we might have legitimate fears about the past and the future, it's not good for our mental health to spend all our time there.

Think of this practice as a little break from your worries. A space where it's okay to just sit and breathe. You deserve it.

Michelle DuVal, MA, Director of The Mindful Center

Important health plan benefits for women and newborns

Know your mastectomy benefits

Your health plan provides benefits for mastectomy-related services. This includes all stages of reconstruction and surgery to achieve symmetry between the breasts. It also includes prostheses and complications resulting from a mastectomy, including lymphedema. These benefits are required by the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998. Call Customer Service at 1-877-210-8339 to learn more.

Delivery requires a minimum hospital stay

New Mexico law requires at least 48 hours of inpatient care after a vaginal birth and at least 96 hours after a Cesarean section. Only the doctor in charge of the mother's and baby's care can decide to reduce the period of inpatient care for the mother or baby. The doctor must talk with the mother before making that choice. To learn more, please see your Summary of Benefits at [truehealthnewmexico.com/aps](https://www.truehealthnewmexico.com/aps).

Don't forget to enroll your newborn baby on your plan!

Please remember that for your newborn to be covered on your True Health New Mexico health plan, you must enroll him or her within 60 days of birth. Contact your benefits specialist through APS Benefits: <https://www.aps.edu/human-resources/benefits-staff-listing>.



Online resources for mothers-to-be

Looking for trustworthy medical information about your pregnancy, labor and delivery, or postpartum period? You'll find a wealth of information in our Pregnancy Health Center at [truehealthnewmexico.com/pregnancy-resources](https://www.truehealthnewmexico.com/pregnancy-resources). Click on the *Pregnancy Health Center* button and the blue hyperlinks beneath it.

Keep scrolling down the page to learn about breast-pump benefits and local resources, such as the Lovelace Labor of Love program, which offers women in Albuquerque and Roswell pregnancy and postpartum perks such as a book, e-newsletters, classes, and special treats for moms.

Dispose of unused or expired medications safely and properly

Proper disposal of medications you no longer need can prevent unintentional use, overdose, or illegal abuse. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration offers a disposal guide online: <https://bit.ly/fda-safe-drug-disposal>.

Numbers you need to know

- Customer Service: 1-877-210-8339 or aps@truehealthnewmexico.com
- Care Connect Nurse Advice Line: 1-844-308-2552
- Express Scripts®, your pharmacy benefit manager: 1-866-563-9297

Visit our site just for Albuquerque Public Schools members

[truehealthnewmexico.com/aps](https://www.truehealthnewmexico.com/aps)

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APS Employee Wellness

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Opioid medications: How to use them safely and appropriately



Opioids are potent medications used to treat severe pain. Examples include hydrocodone, oxycodone, codeine, morphine, fentanyl, and others. Although opioids may provide effective pain relief, there are risks associated with use, including the potential for patients to become dependent upon them.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that use of opioids for acute pain be limited to as short a duration as possible to avoid the risk of dependence. Check with your pharmacy benefits manager, Express Scripts, about its recommendations and limits.

Ask your doctor these questions when use of an opioid for treatment of acute pain is being considered:

1. Is there a non-opioid medication or other treatment that would effectively treat my pain?
2. Are there any drug interactions between opioids and other medications that I am taking?
3. Should I stop taking any of my medications while I'm taking the opioid?
4. What is the smallest quantity that will effectively treat my pain?