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Member News

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) Expired

Optima Health has continuously monitored the spread of COVID-19 to keep you informed of the latest developments and how these changes could affect your health plan.*

Recently, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that “although COVID-19 remains a public health priority, we are in a much better place in our response than we were three years ago, and we can transition away from the emergency phase.” The federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19 expired on May 11, 2023.

What Does This Mean for Me?

The temporary provisions to waive cost sharing for COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and related services ordered by a physician or other provider, and over-the-counter (OTC) tests (eight per member per month) ended on May 11, 2023.



Please note the following about your cost sharing for these services started on May 11, 2023:

COVID-19 over-the-counter at-home test kits will continue to be covered as follows:

- with prescription: covered under your plan's pharmacy benefits at the tier 1 cost share and will be limited to four tests per month unless medically necessary
- without a prescription: not covered

COVID-19 tests or related services during a physician visit:

- will have the applicable cost share depending on where you visit your physician

COVID-19 vaccines:

- in-network: covered as a preventive health service and will continue to be \$0 for all plan types
- out-of-network: not covered under HMO plans

For more information and ongoing updates, visit optimahealth.com/covid-19. Please contact member services at the number listed on the back of your member ID card if you have additional questions.

* Please confirm your benefits with your human resources department.





Member News

Summer Safety Tips

Skin Cancer Awareness

Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays causes most cases of melanoma, the deadliest kind of skin cancer. To lower your skin cancer risk, protect your skin from the sun and avoid indoor tanning.

Summer is full of outdoor activities. You probably put sunscreen on yourself and your kids when you go to the pool or the beach. But do you know you should protect your skin with more than just sunscreen anytime you're outside?

Sun protection is important all year round, and it's best to use several different kinds. When you're working in the yard, watching a ballgame, or taking an afternoon walk, make sun safety an everyday habit so you can avoid getting a sunburn and lower your chance of getting skin cancer.

- Stay in the shade, especially during late morning through mid-afternoon.
- Can't stay in the shade? Wear a long-sleeved shirt and pants to protect your skin.
- Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.



Fast Facts About Skin Cancer

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States and includes different **types**.
- Unprotected skin can be damaged by the sun's UV rays in as little as 15 minutes.
- Even if it's cool and cloudy, you still need protection. UV rays, not the temperature, do the damage.
- Anyone can get skin cancer, but some things put you at **higher risk**.
- The most common **signs** of skin cancer are changes on your skin, such as a new growth, a sore that doesn't heal, or a change in a mole.





Member News

Drowning Prevention

Drowning is a major public health issue that can be prevented.

- More children ages 1–4 die from drowning than any other cause.
- Drowning happens in seconds and is often silent.
- Drowning can happen to anyone anytime there is access to water.

You can prevent drowning.

Learn basic swimming and water safety skills:

Formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning. However, children who have had swimming lessons still need close and constant supervision when in or around water.

Supervise closely: Designate a responsible adult to supervise closely and constantly when children are in or near water (including bathtubs). You can assign a specific adult to supervise each child when they have access to water. Adults watching kids in or near water should avoid distracting activities like reading, using the phone, and consuming alcohol or drugs, because drowning happens quickly and quietly.

Wear a life jacket: Life jackets reduce the risk of drowning while boating for people of all ages and swimming abilities. Life jackets should be used by children for all activities while in and around natural water. Life jackets can also be used by weaker swimmers of all ages in and around natural water and swimming pools. Do not rely on air-filled or foam toys as these are not safety devices.

Learn CPR: Your CPR skills could save someone's life in the time it takes for paramedics to arrive. Many organizations, such as the **American Red Cross** and **American Heart Association**, offer CPR training courses, both online and in-person.

Know the risks of natural waters: Lakes, rivers, and oceans have hidden hazards such as dangerous currents or waves, rocks or vegetation, and limited visibility. Check the forecast before activities in, on, or near water.

Use the buddy system: Always swim with a buddy. Choose swimming sites that have lifeguards when possible. The buddy system is especially beneficial for people with seizure disorders or other medical conditions that increase their risk of drowning.





Member News

What Is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease of the bones that causes bones to become weak and break easily. Osteoporosis affects mostly older women, but prevention starts when you are younger.

No matter your age, you can take steps to build bone mass and prevent bone loss. Broken bones from osteoporosis cause serious health problems and disability in older women.

What is bone loss?

Bone loss is the amount of minerals, such as calcium, that your body absorbs (takes) from your bones.

Bone loss can happen for several reasons.

Some of the most common reasons include:

- **You do not get enough calcium from food.** Your body uses calcium to build healthy bones and teeth and stores calcium in your bones. Your body also uses calcium to send messages through your nervous system, help your muscles contract, and regulate your heart's rhythm. But your body does not make calcium. You have to get all the calcium your body needs from the foods you eat and drink (or from supplements). If you don't get enough calcium each day, your body will take the calcium it needs from your bones.
- **You are past menopause.** As you get older, your bones don't make new bone fast enough to keep up with your body's needs. The calcium taken from your bones causes you to lose bone density. Bone loss also speeds up after menopause and can lead to weak, brittle bones.



What are the symptoms of osteoporosis?

You may not have any symptoms of osteoporosis until you break (fracture) a bone. A fracture can happen in any bone of the body, but fractures are most common in the hip, wrist, and spine (vertebrae). Vertebrae support your body, helping you to stand and sit up. Osteoporosis in the vertebrae can cause serious problems for women. When you have osteoporosis, a fracture in this area can happen during day-to-day activities like climbing stairs, lifting objects, or bending forward.

Fractures in the vertebrae can cause it to collapse and bend forward. If this happens, you may get any or all of these symptoms:

- sloping shoulders
- curve in the back
- height loss
- back pain
- hunched posture



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How is osteoporosis diagnosed?

Your doctor will do a bone density test to see how strong or weak your bones are. A common test is a central dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA or DEXA). A DXA or DEXA is a special type of X-ray of your bones. This test uses a very low amount of radiation. Your doctor may also use other screening tools to predict your risk of having low bone density or breaking a bone.

How is osteoporosis treated?

If you have osteoporosis, your doctor may prescribe medicine to prevent more bone loss or build new bone mass. The most common types of medicine to prevent or treat osteoporosis include:

- **Bisphosphonates** help treat bone loss. They may also help build bone mass.
- **Selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERMs)** may help slow the rate of bone loss after menopause.
- **Denosumab**, an injectable drug, may help reduce bone loss and improve bone strength if you are past menopause and at higher risk for broken bones from osteoporosis.
- **Calcitonin** is a hormone made by your thyroid gland that helps regulate calcium levels in your body and build bone mass. Taking calcitonin can help slow the rate of bone loss.
- **Menopausal hormone therapy**, often used to treat menopausal symptoms, may also help prevent bone loss. The Food and Drug Administration recommends taking menopausal hormone therapy at the lowest dose that works for your menopause symptoms for the shortest time needed.

- **Teriparatide** is an injectable form of human parathyroid hormone. It helps the body build up new bone faster than the old bone is broken down.

Your doctor may also suggest getting more calcium, vitamin D, and physical activity. All medicines have risks. For example, menopausal hormone therapy may raise your risk of a blood clot, heart attack, stroke, breast cancer, or gallbladder disease. Talk to your doctor or nurse about the benefits and risks of all medicines.





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How can I prevent osteoporosis?

One of the best ways to prevent weak bones is to work on building strong ones. Building strong bones during childhood and the teen years is important to help prevent osteoporosis later.

As you get older, your bones don't make new bone fast enough to keep up with the bone loss.

And after menopause, bone loss happens even more quickly. But you can take steps to slow the natural bone loss that occurs with aging and prevent your bones from becoming weak and brittle.

- Get enough calcium and vitamin D each day.
- Get active. Choose weight-bearing physical activities like running or dancing to build and strengthen your bones.
- Don't smoke. Smoking raises your risk for broken bones.
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation (for women, this is one drink a day at most).
- Too much alcohol can harm your bones. Also, too much at one time or mixed with certain medicines can affect your balance and lead to falls.
- Talk to your doctor about whether you need medicine to prevent bone loss.



Content Source: [Office on Women's Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Osteoporosis](#). Retrieved from Osteoporosis | Office on Women's Health ([womenshealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov))

**Sentara Halifax Regional Hospital – Labor and Delivery Services**

In May, Sentara Halifax Regional Hospital (SHRH) began phasing out obstetric services (care of women during pregnancy and childbirth). Despite the hospital's efforts to try to continue this program, due to a significant drop in the number of births over the past couple of years, the ability to continue to offer obstetrics services is no longer feasible for SHRH.

Current obstetrics patients delivering prior to August 4, 2023, will be contacted directly to arrange continued services through the end of their pregnancy. Obstetrics patients who are projected to deliver after August 4, 2023, will be contacted and supported in their transition to other regional obstetrics providers. Women's healthcare will continue to be provided, including gynecology services and mammograms, as well as care for children of all ages. To search our provider directory, you can visit optimahealth.com/findadoc.



Member News

Where To Go for Care

If you feel sick, knowing where to go to get the best care can help you save time and money. Need to find a doctor? You'll find a complete list of doctors, urgent care centers, and other facilities in the Optima Health network at optimahealth.com/findadoc.

Call Your Primary Care Provider (PCP) or Have a Virtual Visit



Cost: \$
Wait Time: Short

See your PCP for routine health issues. Your PCP is your main point of contact to identify an illness or condition, offer methods of care, and recommend specialists or facilities if additional diagnoses and follow up are needed. Your PCP may also offer virtual visits for certain conditions.

- refill and renew medications
- chronic illness
- vaccines
- long-term urine/bowel issues
- most behavioral health needs
- flu, sore throat, fever
- toothache
- any symptoms listed under urgent care/virtual consult

Go to Urgent Care



Cost: \$\$
Wait Time: Moderate

The following can be handled by your PCP but urgent care or a virtual consult may be a better option when your PCP's office may be closed, such as weekends or holidays.

- cough/cold/runny nose
- throat pain or sore throat
- ear pain
- pain/burning in urine
- headache
- nausea/vomiting
- loose stools/diarrhea
- fever less than 104°F
- rash
- back pain
- penile/vaginal discharge
- minor injuries, cuts, burns

Go to the Emergency Room (ER) or Call 911



Cost: \$\$\$
Wait time: Long

In any life-threatening emergency situation, always go to the closest ER or call 911.

- chest pain
- head trauma
- trouble breathing
- broken bones
- poisoning
- seizures
- severe bleeding
- loss of vision
- stroke
- fever over 104°F
- vaginal bleeding when pregnant
- plans to harm yourself or others



Still unsure where to go for help?

Contact the toll-free 24/7 Nurse Advice Line by calling 1-800-394-2237



Member News

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Take time to remember this number—988. According to WebMD, suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States. Learn the risk factors and warning signs of suicide.

If you or someone you know is at risk of suicide, call or text 988 or chat online at 988lifeline.org. This 24/7 lifeline can provide confidential support.





Member News

Gym Network 360 Is Now Husk Wellness

Effective immediately, Globalfit has rebranded its health and wellness discount program to “Husk Wellness.” All services will remain the same; only the name of the program has changed. Husk Wellness offers curated benefits that are designed for sustainable well-being.

Through this partnership, members can get access to premier fitness, nutrition, and wellness brands at discounted pricing along with the education, resources, and tools to engage and motivate them to become more active and adopt healthier behaviors.

For access to Husk Wellness and other exclusive discounts for members, visit optimahealth.com/members/health-and-wellness/discounts/.





Pharmacy News

Pharmacy Changes Effective July 1, 2023

For groups with pharmacy benefits administered by Optima Health, the pharmacy changes are available online.

[Download a printable listing of pharmacy changes effective July 1, 2023.](#)



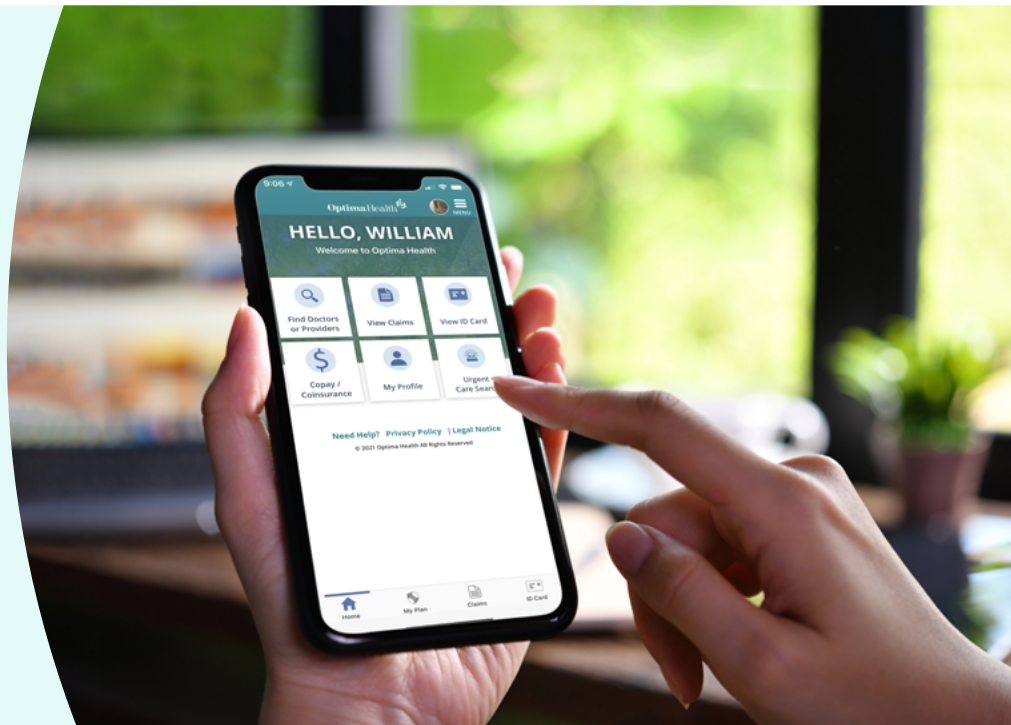
Healthcare at Your Fingertips

Download the **Optima Health Mobile App** today for instant access to your important plan information and questions, including:

- commonly asked questions and answers
- common forms and documents
- contact information
- tools to find doctors and facilities
- claims and authorizations
- wellness tools
- member ID card
- virtual consult scheduling
- cost calculation for treatments and services
- account access for your HSA or HRA¹
- important preventive care notifications

Whether you're accessing your plan information from the mobile app, a computer, or a tablet, Optima Health digital solutions provide a cohesive experience across all platforms.

Look for the Optima Health Mobile App



To learn more about the Optima Health Mobile App, visit optimahealth.com/members/features/get-the-optima-health-mobile-app

¹ Applies to members with Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) plans