

Need to Know: Smoking and Asthma

You probably know that smoking isn't good for you. But if you have asthma, it's even worse.

How Does Smoking Affect Your Asthma?

First, asthma swells, blocks, and narrows your airways. Smoking does the same thing. That's a double whammy on your lungs. If you smoke, you'll have more frequent and severe asthma attacks, take more medicines, and make more trips to the emergency room.

Just being around others who smoke can be harmful. Smoke also seeps into carpets, upholstery, clothes, and even walls. This secondhand and thirdhand smoke can trigger asthma attacks.

How Do You Avoid Smoke?

You'll need to talk seriously with friends or family who smoke. Ask them not to smoke around you or in the house or car. Encourage them to quit through free programs like we've listed below.

Take your long-term asthma medicine as prescribed. Keep your fast-acting inhalers handy, as well.

If you're a smoker, we can help you quit (see article on this page).

Help to Quit Smoking

The **Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine** is free to all Tennessee residents who want to stop smoking or using spit or chew tobacco. When you call, you'll be assigned your own specially trained quit coach. Counseling is available in both English and Spanish. You can call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or visit **tnquitline.com**. Visit **smokefree.gov** to find text-messaging services and apps to help you quit.

Source: Kidshealth.org



Who Have You Been Kissing?

Believe it or not, kissing can spread disease!

Mononucleosis, or mono for short, is known as the “kissing disease.” Symptoms of mono can include some or all of the following:

- **High fever**
- **Headache**
- **Severe sore throat**
- **Swollen glands (lymph nodes)**
- **Fatigue**
- **Muscle aches**
- **Abdominal tenderness**

Mono affects teens more than anyone else. Symptoms usually last about four weeks. Feelings of fatigue may last longer. The virus that causes mono is in spit. You can be exposed to mono by kissing or by sharing utensils for eating and drinking. There is no cure for mono. The treatment consists of getting plenty of rest, drinking lots of fluids, and taking meds. Don't share drinks or utensils. Be cautious about kissing, and visit your dentist every six months for a checkup so that your teeth will stay healthy and your smile bright!



If you need help finding a dentist, call **DentaQuest at 1-855-418-1622.**

Additional Resources

webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/understanding-mononucleosis-causes#1

Teen Mental Health

Being a teenager is hard. You're under stress to be liked, do well in school, get along with your family, and make big decisions. These are typical teen pressures. Worrying about them is normal. But feeling very sad, hopeless, or worthless could be warning signs of a mental health problem. Mental health problems are real, painful, and sometimes severe. Mental health problems can be treated.



Where to Find Help

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please seek help immediately:

- Talk to your parents or an adult you trust.
- Call **911**.
- Visit a nearby emergency department or your health care provider's office.
- Call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.

Mononucleosis (Mono)

True or False

How much do you know about mono?

Take the quiz.



T or F 1.

Mono is called the “kissing disease” because kissing is the only way it’s passed on.

1. False. Kissing isn’t always the cause, but mono is spread by contact with saliva. You can be exposed to another person’s saliva by sharing drinks, straws, kitchen utensils, lip balm, or lipstick, or by sneezing and coughing. Your best protection is avoiding close contact with anyone who has mono or had it recently.

2. True. Mono may feel like the flu or strep throat. Symptoms include

T or F 2.

The symptoms of mono are a lot like those of the flu.

constant tiredness, fever, sore throat, muscle aches, headaches, and swollen glands. You’ll need to see your health care provider for a diagnosis.

3. True. Mono is usually caused by the Epstein–Barr virus (EBV), and it lives in our bodies for life. Many of us are exposed to the virus but never get mono. But there’s a chance others can catch it from us.

T or F 3.

The virus that causes mono will live in your body for life.

T or F 4.

Mono isn’t serious.

We can’t predict if they’ll also develop mono.

4. False. Mono requires some extra care. Healthy eating, fluids, and ibuprofen or acetaminophen are usually the best treatments. But it can take several weeks to get your energy back. In rare cases, it could also damage your spleen.

Source: Kidshealth.org

Introduction to KidsHealth

Get Healthy Facts at Your Fingertips

UnitedHealthcare and KidsHealth have teamed up to provide advice you need, when you want it. Get answers to your health questions at UHCCommunityPlan.com/TNkids.

• **TNrents**—find answers you can trust. Get doctor-approved advice without the medical mumbo-jumbo.

• **Kids**—find fun health quizzes, games, and videos. Learn how your body works, what’s happening when you’re sick, and how to get or stay healthy.

• **Teens**—find straight talk and personal stories. Get answers and advice on questions about your body and mind.

Visit us at home, school, the library, or anywhere in between.



Use any computer or smartphone with access to the internet.



Search by topic, read or listen to articles, or watch videos.



You can even download an easy link for your smartphone.

For healthy facts at your fingertips, visit UHCCommunityPlan.com/TNkids today.

Do You Have Special Needs? You Still Need a Checkup

If you're a teen with special needs, you may have health issues or intellectual or developmental differences. You're more likely to see health care providers, have therapy, or receive treatments often.

But just like every teen, you also need a checkup once a year. You'll usually see your primary care provider (PCP) for your TennCare Kids checkups. These visits are free through age 20.

Your checkup will include:

- **Health history**—You'll answer questions about how you're feeling, your medicines, and your health issues.
- **Complete physical exam without clothes**—This can be uncomfortable, but it's important.
- **Lab tests and vaccines (as needed)**—You may need a shot or a test with a needle.
- **Vision/hearing/dental screenings**—You'll be sent to a specialist if needed.
- **Developmental/behavioral screenings (as needed)**—Are you feeling down or anxious? This is a good time to ask for help if you need it.
- **Advice on living as healthy as possible**—The right diet and exercise can benefit everyone. Your health issues will be taken into account.

A checkup also gives you a chance to ask some questions. You can talk about anything with your PCP.

Taking care of your overall health can improve your life.

Talk with your parent or guardian about getting a checkup. Your assigned PCP is listed on your member ID card.

Sources: Kidshealth.org

TennCare—tn.gov/tenncare/section/tenncare-kids



Have You Had Your TennCare Kids Screening?

In addition to caring for you when you are sick, your primary care provider (PCP) also wants to see you for regular well-child visits (TennCare Kids exams). These visits focus on keeping you healthy.

At these visits, your PCP will check your growth and development. He will also perform a physical exam and any necessary screening tests. He will also check your vaccine records to make sure you are up-to-date. Your PCP will be there to guide you as you start making your own decisions about your health.

If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them with your PCP. Call your PCP's office today and make an appointment for your TennCare Kids screening!

Suicide Prevention



You may have heard a lot about suicide recently. The popular Netflix TV show *13 Reasons Why* got a lot of attention. Some people thought it mistakenly made suicide look like a good choice. Others thought it gave us all a chance to talk about a serious subject.

We're not promoting or debating a TV program. We're talking about suicide because it's a tragedy that doesn't have to happen.

Suicide Warning Signs

Traumatic events, painful losses, and brain chemistry that's not balanced are some of the reasons that people consider taking their lives.

Many teens who consider suicide are depressed. That isn't just feeling sad or down—we all sometimes feel like that. Depression is a serious disease with symptoms that may include:

- Feeling irritable, sad, withdrawn, or bored most of the time
- Taking no pleasure in things that used to be fun
- Losing or gaining weight
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Feeling hopeless, worthless, or guilty
- Having trouble concentrating, thinking, or making decisions
- Thinking about death or suicide a lot

Thankfully there are many ways to treat depression. You can feel better.

Everyone should know the warning signs of suicide. Get immediate help if you or someone else is:

- Planning to act on thoughts of suicide
- Thinking about how to do it
- Doing something to prepare to commit suicide

This is a scary subject. But talking about it, getting help, and helping others are the keys to preventing loss of life.

Help Is Available Now

If you're considering suicide, stop. Reach out for help right now. You're not alone. Tell your parents; a friend; your teacher, coach, or pastor; your health care provider; or a school counselor.

If you feel there's no one you know who can help, go to the closest hospital emergency room. You can also go to a walk-in mental health clinic.

There are others who are just a phone call away. The **Tennessee Statewide 24/7 Crisis Line, 855-CRISIS-1 (1-855-274-7471)**, is a free 24-hour hotline available to anyone. Your call will be routed to the nearest crisis center. You can connect online to **Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network—tspn.org**. They're ready to help you **right now**.

Find Treatment

Your health plan covers behavioral health care (for mental health or addiction issues). You don't have to see another provider first and get a referral. Can we help you with these benefits or find a provider? Contact us at **1-800-690-1606**.

Additional Resources

Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network
tspn.org/warning-signs

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)
cssrs.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/Community-Ace-Card_-Teens.pdf

Checkup Checklist

My next checkup is due _____. Not sure when it is due? Call your primary care provider (PCP) and ask. Not sure who your PCP is? To find out, call your health plan at **1-800-690-1606**.

Be prepared for your checkup. Write down questions for your PCP.

One question I have for my PCP is: _____

OR Something my PCP needs to know about me is: _____

What Would It Take for You to Go Get a Wellness Checkup?

You're growing up so fast, and each year may bring new changes. One of the best things you can do to stay as healthy as possible is to see your primary care provider (PCP) every year, even when you're not sick. This is called a wellness checkup in which your PCP can give you an exam and look for any health problems before they get serious.

Other Reasons You Would Get Yearly Wellness Checkups

Check all the reasons that apply to you or write your own reasons in the space below.

Then cut out this card and drop it in the mail.

- I want to be healthy and live longer.
- I want to stay active and be able to do the things I enjoy.
- I'm the main caregiver for a family member with special needs.
- I don't want to be a burden to anyone else.

Other: _____

Mail to: **UnitedHealthcare Community Plan**
8 Cadillac Dr. Suite 100
Brentwood, TN 37027



Are You Dealing with Abuse?

Abuse of children can take many forms. All forms of abuse are serious. It may be emotional, sexual, verbal, or physical.

There is nothing that you can do or say to deserve being abused. The abuse is never your fault. Everyone has the right to a safe and healthy relationship.

To report suspected child abuse, call **1-877-237-0004**. If you are in immediate danger, call **911**. You do not have to have proof that abuse has occurred. Each concern will be reviewed on a personal basis.



Call **1-866-405-0238**. This service is free to all members younger than 21. If you are younger than 18, you can have a parent or guardian ride with you. Your parent or guardian needs to schedule the ride.

Need a ride to your checkup?



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