



MedStar Family Choice

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Enrollee Newsletter

Summer 2025



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A message from Dr. Erica McClaskey



Dr. Erica McClaskey

Dear Enrollee,

MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia is here to support you as we start the transition safely back to school. This newsletter includes resources to help answer questions and provide guidance during this busy time. We are committed to improving your health and the quality of care we provide our enrollees.

In addition to our Let's Talk Behavioral Health section, there is important information on preparing to return to school, well-child visits, and dental health checks. Also, please take time to review our website. It is updated often with new programs and resources to help you and your family.

Our team is here to answer your questions, assist you with appointments, and support your healthcare needs. Please call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549** or visit us at **[MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com)** if we can help you in any way.

Stay safe and well,

Erica McClaskey, MD, MS, FAAFP, Chief Medical Officer
MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia

Getting the kids ready for back-to-school? We got you!



Be smart. Start smart.

It's time to plan ahead to get kids ready for the upcoming school year. Schedule your child's yearly well-child visit, dental screening, and immunizations so they are healthy and ready to learn.

From July 1 to September 30, 2025, students ages 3-20 can receive a back-to-school swag backpack and may qualify for gift card rewards for completing a well-child visit and dental screening.

Your child's healthcare provider must complete Universal and/or Oral Health Forms before they can enter school. Bring these forms to your child's doctor visits.

For more information on how you can receive a backpack and school supplies, scan the QR code or visit our website at **[MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/Back-to-school-Events](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/Back-to-school-Events)** or call **855-798-4244**, press 1, and then press 2.



Well-child visits can keep children healthy

Families will take their child to the doctor when they are sick, but experts recommend taking your child to the doctor even when they are healthy. These visits are called “well-child visits” and they are very important to ensure the health of children.

Here are the benefits and what you can expect from Academy of Pediatrics experts:

- During well-child visits, the healthcare provider will record your child’s growth and development by measuring their height and weight.
- They will also ask questions about your child’s eating habits and other activities.
- Some of the visits will include testing your child’s hearing and vision.
- Your child will be evaluated to ensure they receive scheduled vaccines (immunizations) to prevent illness. In the next section you will find important dates for vaccines.
- During this visit, you will also have the chance to ask any questions you have about your child. This may include questions about behavior, school readiness, and sleep patterns. You can even ask for suggestions on how to prepare your child for different developmental milestones.



Please bring a copy of the Universal Health Certificate to all well-child visits, lead screenings, and vaccinations. The Universal Health Certificate is available online at DCHealth.DC.gov/Service/School-Health-Services-Program. See the Well-Child Visits Matter brochure on our website at MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/News-Information-and-Resources to learn more.

MedStar Family Choice DC encourages you to keep regularly scheduled well-child visits starting at the first week of life. If you need help with scheduling an appointment or with transportation to the visits, call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**.

Keep your child safe with vaccines

Vaccines (immunizations) are recommended to provide the best protection from serious diseases. Children are the most at risk for getting very ill from diseases if they are not kept up to date with their recommended vaccines. MedStar Family Choice DC strongly supports the vaccine schedule that healthcare providers follow, and encourage all enrollees to make sure their children follow the recommendations for vaccinations.

The Center for Disease Control provides information on the recommended vaccines as well as an explanation for each one. To review this information, visit [CDC.gov/Vaccines-Children/Schedules/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/Vaccines-Children/Schedules/index.html).

Your child's healthcare provider will discuss the vaccine schedule with you during their well-child visit. However, you can schedule times separately to get the vaccines if you are behind in scheduling. If you need assistance with scheduling your vaccination appointment, contact Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**. We can also help you with transportation to your appointment.

What is a Dental Health Check?

MedStar Family Choice DC wants to ensure that you are healthy in all aspects of your life. One of the most important elements of overall health is keeping your mouth, teeth, and gums healthy. Good oral care can prevent tooth decay and cavities and also prevent infections. In addition to brushing and flossing regularly, it is important that you and your children attend routine dental checkups. Regular checkups, which are usually every 6 months, involve doing an inspection of your mouth along with a general cleaning. If there are concerns, the dentist may take x-rays or make recommendations for additional procedures or appointments.

During your child's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) dental checks, they will receive teeth cleaning and other dental services. Also, you and your child will receive education on caring for teeth and developing healthy dental habits.

When do dental checks start?

Dental health checks should start early in your child's life. Starting dental health checks early can set your child on a path to good oral health and create a positive attitude towards dental care.

- For children aged 1-year, dental screening is done by the pediatrician during well-child visits.
- For children ages 1-3 years, the pediatrician can perform the screening, or your child can visit a dentist once a year.
- For ages 3-20 years, dental services are provided by the dentist during checkups every six months.

3 reasons for early dental health checks

- Baby teeth assist in the development of your child's speech.
- Untreated baby teeth can negatively affect the development of permanent teeth.
- A child's smile affects their self-esteem and confidence.

See the Dental Health Checks Matter brochure on our website at [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/News-Information-and-Resources](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/News-Information-and-Resources) to learn more. You'll find the brochure in the Well-Child Visit and Vaccines section.

Tooth decay is a common early childhood disease

Tooth decay can cause:

- Loss of teeth and expensive emergency treatments
- Infections that make a child more vulnerable to infections in other parts of the body, such as the ears, sinuses, and brain
- Future oral health problems in adulthood

Silver Diamine Fluoride is a topical treatment used for tooth decay. It is a new MedStar Family Choice DC value-add benefit. There is no cost for enrollees. Here's how Silver Diamine Fluoride works:

- It contains silver ions, which have antibacterial properties. When applied to a cavity, it kills the bacteria responsible for decay.
- It promotes remineralization of tooth structure. It helps strengthen the remaining healthy tooth tissue by encouraging the buildup of minerals like calcium and phosphate.
- It can provide pain relief from tooth sensitivity and discomfort associated with cavities.

Silver Diamine Fluoride is typically used in cases where traditional treatments, such as fillings, are not feasible due to patient factors (For example young children or patients with special needs). One side effect is that it stains the decayed area black. This staining indicates that the treatment has been effective in stopping the decay.

Silver Diamine Fluoride is a valuable tool for managing tooth decay in specific situations. For more information talk to your dental provider.





Let's Talk Behavioral Health

Topic: Back-to-school

When children return to school after the summer break, parents may notice changes to their emotions and behavior. Parents also can be affected by the change. It is important to remember that it is normal to feel affected by a new school year, and to know when more support may be needed to help with the transition.

For children, it is normal to take time to adjust to new routines and settings. Starting a new school year can be very exciting and scary. Understanding the typical reactions to starting a new school year can help parents support children during this time.

Common emotions and behaviors that children express include:

- **Anxiety:** children can feel worried about new teachers, classmates, or homework. Children can show their worry through changes in their eating or how they act around others. Some children also show their worry through physical complaints like stomachaches and headaches, or a loss of energy.
- **Mood swings:** children can have rapid changes in their feelings, from excitement to frustration to sadness, as they experience many changes and new challenges.
- **Homesickness:** children may feel sad at school, wanting to go home or be with their parents or caregivers. This is especially common in younger children or children who are attending a new school, who may feel afraid of a new setting.
- **Irritability:** children can feel easily frustrated or irritated as the school year brings homework, early wake-up times, and days with less freedom than during the summer.
- **Changes in sleep:** school schedules are very different than summer schedules and can affect children's sleep. This can lead to tiredness during the day which can make it harder to focus and increase feelings of stress.

Parents can also have a range of feelings about the start of a new school year. It is important that parents take care of their emotions, too. In addition to feeling excited and proud about seeing their child grow, parents may also feel sad about the passing of time.

Stress and anxiety are also common feelings that parents experience during this time. Parents may worry about how ready their child is for school, how well they will do, and if they will make friends. Parents are also responsible for preparing their children for school on a daily basis. This can feel overwhelming, particularly for parents who work or have other caregiving responsibilities.

Understanding these common reactions to a new school year can help families with the transition. Staying supportive, communicating openly about feelings, and keeping consistent routines can help children during this time of change.

It is important to understand that reactions to change are normal and can vary. For most, the feelings improve with time. If the feelings are not improving or getting in the way of work, school or relationships, it is important to tell your medical provider. There are other supports that your provider can share with you to help.

If you need mental health support, call the MedStar Family Choice DC Nurse Helpline at **855-798-3540** or the DC Department of Behavioral Health Access Hotline at **888-793-4357**. You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you believe you are in immediate danger of hurting yourself or others, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Clinical Practice Guidelines

MedStar Family Choice DC has Clinical Practice Guidelines that are provided to assist physicians and other clinicians in making decisions regarding the care of their patients. To see these guidelines, visit our website at [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Providers/Provider-Resources/Provider-Support/Clinical-Practice-Guidelines](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Providers/Provider-Resources/Provider-Support/Clinical-Practice-Guidelines).

Reminders from the Appeals and Grievances Department

- To avoid medical bills, bring MedStar Family Choice DC insurance ID cards to every doctor's appointment.
- To access medications quickly, bring MedStar Family Choice DC insurance ID cards to pick up prescriptions during each visit to the pharmacy.
- To receive ID cards as soon as possible, make sure the current address is up to date with the Economic Security Administration (ESA) office. Making changes with MedStar Family Choice DC is only temporary.
- To assist enrollees better, a valid phone number must be on file with MedStar Family Choice DC.
- To avoid filing an appeal, remind the doctor to send medical records proving medical necessity when requesting prior authorization.
- Enrollees who pay for a service or product that is not approved or not covered under the benefit plan may be responsible for the cost or charges.
- Enrollees cannot file an appeal for providers.
- Enrollees cannot file an appeal if a provider did not get paid. This is a provider appeal.
- Enrollees cannot file an appeal if they are not financially responsible for a payment.
- Enrollees cannot file an appeal if an authorization request was approved.
- Enrollees cannot file an appeal if they were not denied authorization.
- Enrollees cannot file an appeal if there is no request for authorization on file.
- Enrollees have one level for appeal before requesting a Fair Hearing.
- Enrollees must provide written approval for a representative to submit appeals on their behalf.



Compliance Corner

Topic: Telehealth Services

The D.C. Telehealth Reimbursement Act of 2013 directs Medicaid to “cover and reimburse for healthcare services appropriately delivered through telehealth if the same services would be covered when delivered in person.”

Effective June 23, 2016 (for services rendered on or after that date), the District of Columbia Medical Assistance Program (“the Program”) will reimburse eligible providers for eligible healthcare services rendered to Program participants via telemedicine in the District of Columbia. The Program will implement this telemedicine service for both providers and participants in the fee-for-service and MCP program.

Enrollee Eligibility

The program may reimburse approved telemedicine providers only if enrollees meet the following criteria:

1. Enrollees must be enrolled in the District of Columbia Medical Assistance Program;
2. Enrollees must be physically present at the originating site at the time the telemedicine service is rendered; and
3. Enrollees must provide written or verbal consent to receive telemedicine services in lieu of in-person healthcare services, consistent with all applicable District laws.

A provider shall document the enrollee's consent to receive telemedicine services in writing. Written consent includes any method that documents in writing the enrollee's agreement to receive the service via telemedicine, including but not limited to an e-mail, text message, or signed PDF. If verbal consent is obtained, a detailed service note that describes the beneficiary's verbal consent is required.

MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or sex.

If you do not speak and/or read English, please call **888-404-3549** between 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. A representative will assist you.

Si no habla o lee inglés, llame al **888-404-3549** entre las 8:00 a.m. y las 5:30 p.m. Un representante se complacerá en asistirle.

Nếu bạn không nói và/hoặc đọc tiếng Anh, xin gọi **888-404-3549** từ 8 giờ 00 sáng đến 5 giờ 30 chiều. Sẽ có người đại diện giúp bạn.

‘영어로 대화를 못하시거나 영어를 읽지 못하시는 경우, 오전 8시 00분에서 오후 5시 30분 사이에 **888-404 3549** 번으로 전화해 주시기 바랍니다. 담당 직원이 도와드립니다.

Si vous ne parlez pas ou lisez l'anglais, s'il vous plaît appeler **888-404-3549** entre 8:00 du matin et 5:30 du soir. Un représentant vous aidera.

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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The Enrollee Newsletter is a publication of MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia. For more information on your plan or anything in this newsletter, please visit **MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com** or call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**.

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