Medi-Cal Pregnancy FAQ

Foster Youth, Former Foster Youth, & Transition Age Youth

Why is health care important during pregnancy?

If you are pregnant, it is important to get regular health care throughout your pregnancy and after you give birth. This will help to keep both you and your baby healthy. Having regular health care will also help ensure you are best prepared for a smooth labor and delivery.

What health care services can I get if I am pregnant?

Medi-Cal provides the full range of pregnancy care, including prenatal care, labor and delivery, and postpartum care.

PRENATAL CARE

For prenatal care, Medi-Cal covers the following:
- Examinations, counseling, and testing,
- Home blood glucose monitors for patients with diabetes,
- Injections to prevent preterm births, genetic counseling, and tobacco cessation services,
- Mental and behavioral health services, and substance use disorder services.

LABOR AND DELIVERY CARE

For labor and delivery care, Medi-Cal covers both vaginal deliveries as well as cesarean births. Medi-Cal covers hospital births and births at freestanding birth centers.

POSTPARTUM CARE

For postpartum services, Medi-Cal covers hospital and office visits, contraception counseling, and breast pumps. Medi-Cal can also cover specific services under the [Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program](#), which include nutrition services, health education, and care coordination.

Who can I receive care from?

You may choose to access pregnancy care from an OB/GYN or from a certified nurse midwife. Starting on January 1, 2023, all Medi-Cal enrollees will have access to [full spectrum doula care](#). This means you can have the support of a birth worker during the prenatal period, for the duration of your labor and delivery, and after the end of your pregnancy.

What if I am trans or gender non-conforming and pregnant?

Medi-Cal covers all pregnancy services, regardless of sexual and gender identity. Here are some helpful and supportive pregnancy resources for trans and gender non-conforming people:

Preparing for Pregnancy as a Non-Binary Person: https://www.familyequality.org/resources/preparing-for-pregnancy-as-a-non-binary-person/

Resources from the LGBTQ Perinatal Wellness Center: https://lgbtqperinatalwellnesscenter.org/resources

Can I get pregnancy-related services on my own?

Youth of any age can get pregnancy-related services without the permission of, and without having to notify a parent/guardian, spouse/partner, social worker, foster caregiver or the biological parent of the fetus. Your health care provider also cannot tell those people, unless you give the health care provider permission.

What if I encounter any challenges accessing my chosen care providers?

The Health Consumer Alliance (HCA) offers free assistance over-the-phone or in-person to help people who are struggling to get or maintain health coverage and resolve problems with their health plans. Information and legal assistance is provided by phone or in-person. The HCA can assist individuals who are not sure about their eligibility for Medi-Cal, Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Women, FamilyPACT, and other programs. They can also assist individuals accessing health care services, including abortion care. You can reach the HCA at 1-888-804-3536 (TTY 1-877-735-2929) or at https://healthconsumer.org/.

You can call your attorney. If you are in foster care in Los Angeles County, Placer County, or Sacramento County, you can call your attorney at Children's Law Center. You also can call your social worker and/or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) to ask for help: https://www.californiacasa.org/ or (510) 663-8440.

You can also talk to the Foster Care Ombuds Office. This office can provide more information about your rights and help address your complaints. To seek help go to fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov or call 1-877-846-1602 or email fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov.

Additional Resources

LAist has a series about how to navigate pregnancy, including articles on how to advocate for yourself, finding a doula, and getting your pregnancy questions answered. Please refer to this resource: https://laist.com/news/health/heybb-guide-pregnant-now-what.

If you have any questions on your legal rights and responsibilities related to sex, pregnancy, and/or being a young parent, please check out: http://www.teenhealthrights.org/.

The Reproductive Health Equity Project (RHEP) for Foster Youth brings together youth in foster care and the agencies that serve them to promote systems that normalize, support, and promote the bodily autonomy and healthy sexual development of youth in foster care. This is a great resource if you have more general questions on reproductive health: https://fosterreprohealth.org/.

For more information on mental health resources, please check out: [insert link].

For more information about accessing Medi-Cal support for transportation, please see this resource from Maternal Child and Health Access: https://www.mchaccess.org/pdfs/alerts/MCHA%20NMT%20Aug%202022.pdf.

For more information on general reproductive health care coverage in Medi-Cal, please check out: https://healthlaw.org/storage/documents/NHeLP-ReproHC-MediCal-Web-F.pdf.