



AmeriHealth Caritas
District of Columbia

Bright Start[®]

WELCOME BOOKLET FOR MOMS



SEPTEMBER 2025

CONGRATULATIONS

ON YOUR UPCOMING MOTHERHOOD!

We are excited to welcome you to AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia's **Bright Start**® program. Whether you will be a new mom or have used our services before, **Bright Start** is a safe place for you to ask questions and get the support you deserve throughout your pregnancy and after you give birth.

As a Bright Start member, you have a Care Manager who can help you:

- Find an OB/GYN, midwife, or doula
- Schedule transportation to and from your appointments
- Get connected to resources for diapers, a car seat, a breast pump, and other supplies
- Find breastfeeding support and childbirth classes
- Create a birth plan
- Sign up for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Sign up for home-delivered meals and other nutrition programs
- Help with family planning

We look forward to supporting you through your pregnancy journey and after your baby is born!

Contact Bright Start: 1-877-759-6883
Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



WHAT IS A MIDWIFE?

A midwife is a health care professional who provides an array of health care services for women including gynecological examinations, contraceptive counseling, prescriptions, and labor and delivery care. Providing expert care during labor and delivery and after birth is a specialty that makes midwives unique.

KEEPING MENTAL HEALTH IN MIND

Did you know that AmeriHealth Caritas DC also includes mental health services? We cover medically necessary mental health services in a variety of care settings, including telehealth services. This applies to all enrollees with mental health needs from mild to severe.

Mental health services may be with a network therapist, such as a counselor, licensed clinical social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist. We can help you find a network mental health provider, or you can use our online search in addition to calling a network provider directly. You don't need a referral to receive services.

AmeriHealth Caritas DC offers Headspace, so you can receive this support via text as well. Get guidance to help you navigate the challenges you face every day from your smartphone, whenever you need it. Enrollees ages 13 and older can access hundreds of guided meditation and mindfulness exercises, or chat with an emotional support coach anytime, anywhere all in the Headspace app. Visit <http://work.headspace.com/amerihealth/member-enroll> to get started.

Remember, your behavioral health is just as important as your physical health. This is important for people who might have postpartum depression or anxiety. For assistance in locating a provider, please call our Enrollee Services at **1-800-408-7511**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. TTY users should call **1-800-570-1190**.

You can also call the National Maternal Health Hotline at **1-833-9-HELP4MOMS**.



KEYS TO YOUR CARE® TEXT MESSAGING PROGRAM

Keys to Your Care is a texting program for pregnant AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees. The program will send you important educational and informative text messages every week during your pregnancy and for the first few months after your baby is born. Topics include:

- How our Bright Start maternity program will support you during your pregnancy.
- Important prenatal appointment reminders.
- Appropriate educational information for each stage of pregnancy.
- Tips for eating right and avoiding certain foods.
- The importance of using your dental benefit during pregnancy.
- Scheduling no-cost rides to your doctor's appointments.
- Joining a tobacco quit program if you smoke.
- Preparing for your baby's arrival.
- Labor signs and symptoms.
- Important information to know after your baby is born.



To join the program, call a member of our Bright Start team at **1-877-759-6883**.

The best way you can prepare for pregnancy is to take care of your health. Eating healthy, exercising, and getting enough sleep each night is a good place to start. The American Pregnancy Association also recommends these nutritional changes three months before trying to conceive:

- **TAKE A PRENATAL VITAMIN** | Prenatal vitamins typically contain more folic acid and iron than standard adult multivitamins. Folic acid supports babies' brain and spine development. Talk to your doctor about prenatal vitamins.
- **VISIT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER** | It's a good idea to let your provider know when you are planning to become pregnant. You can discuss existing health issues, get any vaccines or screenings you may need, and find out whether your medications are safe to use during pregnancy.
- **AVOID DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND CIGARETTES** | Recreational drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and secondhand smoke can be harmful to your future baby. If you have trouble quitting, we can connect you with a behavioral health provider who can help.

*Discuss these recommendations with your provider before making any changes.



TRANSPORTATION

AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees can get rides at no cost to healthcare appointments and other medical visits. Call **1-800-315-3485** to schedule your ride as soon as you know you need it. Rides are not given on Sundays and holidays.

BEFORE PREGNANCY

PREPARING FOR PREGNANCY

DURING PREGNANCY

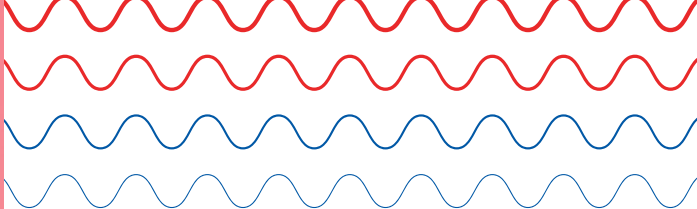
PRENATAL VISITS



It's important to schedule your first prenatal visit as soon as you find out you are pregnant. The Office on Women's Health recommends the following schedule for prenatal appointments:

RECOMMENDED PRENATAL VISIT SCHEDULE	
0 to 28 weeks	One visit every month
28 to 36 weeks	One visit every two weeks
36 weeks to birth	One visit every week

This schedule is a general recommendation. However, your OB/GYN or midwife may want to see you more often depending on your care needs.



DURING PREGNANCY

HEALTHY REWARDS

The AmeriHealth Caritas DC Healthy Rewards Program can save you money as well as earn you rewards. Earn \$25 in rewards if you visit your OB/GYN or midwife in your first trimester (before you are 13 weeks pregnant) and another \$25 if you visit your OB/GYN or midwife within one to 12 weeks (7–84 days) after delivery.

Once your provider notifies us that you have completed a healthy activity, you will receive a text or email with a link to the AmeriHealth Caritas DC Healthy Rewards Marketplace. Click the link and choose the gift card of your choice from a select list of retailers. Visit www.amerihealthcaritasdc.com/healthyrewards to learn more.





You may need to adjust your diet while you are pregnant. Certain foods can contain bacteria that are dangerous for your growing baby. Another concern is high levels of mercury found in certain fish. The Office on Women's Health recommends that pregnant women avoid or limit the following:

- Raw fish
- Tilefish, swordfish, king mackerel, and shark
- Undercooked meat
- Deli meat or hot dogs, unless steaming hot
- Unpasteurized milk, juice, or cheeses
- Raw sprouts
- Store-made salads, including chicken and egg
- Caffeine (Limit caffeine intake to 200 mg or less per day, which amounts to about a 12-ounce cup of coffee. Check the label of sodas and other drinks to see if they contain caffeine.)

DURING PREGNANCY

THINGS TO AVOID DURING PREGNANCY

Remember to avoid drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. All of these can cause serious harm to your baby. AmeriHealth Caritas DC offers programs to help you quit at no cost. Call Bright Start to find a program that works for you.

DURING PREGNANCY

HOME-DELIVERED MEALS

Nutrition is an important part of having a healthy pregnancy, so we offer healthy meals delivered to your home during your pregnancy and up until 8 weeks after you give birth. You will choose from multiple meal plans and receive nutrition counseling to help you make healthy choices for yourself and your growing baby.



EXERCISE AND NUTRITION

It is important to stay active during pregnancy. We recommend that you ask your health care provider which physical activities are right for you. Good options may include walking, swimming, water aerobics, stationary cycling, and prenatal yoga. Good nutrition means eating a balanced diet. It is key to good mental and physical health. Your diet should include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy. Some foods can help you fight diseases. The Bright Start team can help you figure out which foods you should eat when you are pregnant.



DURING PREGNANCY

DENTAL CARE

Having a healthy mouth can help you have a healthy pregnancy. Your body goes through many changes during pregnancy. Hormones during pregnancy can even affect the health of your mouth. Therefore, it's important to take good care of your teeth and gums while you're pregnant.

Did you know that if you are an AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollee, you also have dental coverage? As soon as you know you are pregnant, make an appointment with your dentist for a routine checkup. Your baby is also eligible for dental visits once they get their first tooth or when they turn 1 – whichever comes first.

To keep a healthy mouth during pregnancy:

- See your dentist for a routine checkup as soon as you know you're pregnant. Dental checkups are safe and encouraged during pregnancy. They're an important part of your prenatal care.
- Brush your teeth two times a day with a soft bristled toothbrush. Be gentle, but thorough.
- Floss between your teeth every day.
- Eat a balanced diet of healthy foods and drink at least eight glasses of water each day. Eat and drink fewer sugary treats like sodas, candy, and cookies.

Call your dentist right away if:

- You have pain in your gums.
- You have bad breath that doesn't go away.
- You lose a tooth.
- You have a lump or growth in your mouth.
- You have a toothache.

Some procedures require prior authorization. If you have any dental questions or need help finding a dentist, call Enrollee Services at 1-800-408-7511 (TTY 1-800-570-1190).



DURING PREGNANCY

DOULA SERVICES

What is a doula? Doulas are trained to provide emotional and physical support for mothers throughout childbirth. A doula's first priority is to meet the needs of the birthing family while also acting as a guide and valuable source of information. What kinds of things might a doula do during birth?

- Answer questions and help facilitate communication between families and health care providers.
- Help moms relax, breathe effectively, and find comfort throughout the different stages of labor.



All pregnant individuals have access to doula visits across the prenatal, childbirth, and postpartum periods. If you are interested in working with a doula, please call Bright Start at 1-877-759-6883, and we will help you find one.

DURING PREGNANCY

BIRTH PLAN

A birth plan is a simple, personal guide for you and your care team to use before, during, and after labor and delivery. Consider it your pregnancy wish list. What would you like your team to know about creating a comfortable atmosphere for you and your baby? Here are some things to consider:

1. Where do you want to give birth?

A birth center? In a hospital? You have options, each one coming with its own pros and cons. Think about your available options and write down what feels best for you.

2. Who do you want with you during labor?

Include the names and phone numbers of all the important people involved in your delivery. In addition to your OB/GYN or midwife, this could include your partner, family, or friends you want present. Also consider anyone you do not want present.

NOTE: Be sure to ask if there is a limit to the number of people who can be in the delivery room with you.

3. What is your health history?

This information is important for your care team to know. Include what medications or supplements you are taking, allergies, any other medical conditions, each of your past pregnancies and deliveries, and sexually transmitted infections.

4. What would make you feel comfortable?

Think about what will help you feel most comfortable. You could personalize your space by dimming the lights or playing soft music. Would you like to take photos or videos? Make sure to add anything that makes you feel uncomfortable too.

5. How should we care for your new baby?

There are many options to consider once you've given birth, so ask your OB/GYN or midwife for advice. Do you want your baby to sleep in your room or in the nursery? What about a circumcision if you have a boy? Any other special requests for immediately after birth?

You can find a birth plan template in the back pocket of this booklet. Bright Start is available if you'd like someone to help you think through your birthing options. Give us a call at 1-877-759-6224.



AFTER PREGNANCY

POSTPARTUM VISITS

It's important to have an appointment with your OB/GYN or midwife after you give birth. Your provider will usually want to see you between 4 and 6 weeks after you give birth to make sure you are having a healthy recovery.

Your baby's checkups are sometimes called "well-child visits." These visits allow a pediatrician to help make sure your baby is healthy and growing normally, give your baby any needed vaccinations, and talk to you about how to keep your baby safe and healthy. During the first year, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends your baby have an appointment with a pediatrician at the listed times.

Call Bright Start if you need help finding a pediatrician or scheduling an appointment.

2 to 5 days after birth

1 month old

2 months old

4 months old

6 months old

9 months old

12 months old

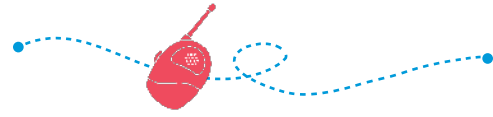
AFTER PREGNANCY

SAFE SLEEP

Our Safe Sleep program offers education to new parents about newborn sleeping safety.

- Monthly classes in English, Spanish, and Amharic provide resources to help you give your baby a safe sleeping environment.
- Enrollees will receive a Cribette (portable crib) at no cost upon completion of the course.

The Safe Sleep program is open to all AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees from 36 weeks of pregnancy until six months after delivery. For more information, contact our Community Outreach Solutions team at 202-216-2318, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.





AFTER PREGNANCY

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

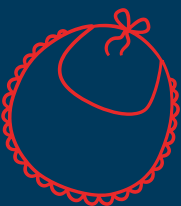
Postpartum depression is a mood disorder that affects about one in nine women after they give birth, according to the Office on Women's Health. It can appear anywhere from days to months after giving birth and can make it difficult for a new mom to take care of herself and her baby.

**Need specialized assistance related to your healthcare?
Call Complex Case Management at 202-408-2233.**

Signs of postpartum depression may include:

- Feeling sad or angry
- Crying more often than usual
- Feeling distant from your loved ones
- Feeling disconnected from your baby
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Thinking you are not a good mom
- Thinking you may hurt your baby, by accident or on purpose

If you have any of these symptoms, tell your doctor or contact Bright Start. He or she can help determine if you are experiencing postpartum depression and offer a treatment plan.



AFTER PREGNANCY

BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding is one of the greatest things you can do for your baby! Breastfeeding can lead to better health for both you and your baby. Babies can digest breast milk better than formula, and breast milk contains essential vitamins and minerals they need.

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises that babies be fed breast milk for the first six months. After that, you can begin introducing your baby to soft, puréed foods while you continue breastfeeding until your baby is one year old, or as desired by both you and your baby. Your child's pediatrician may recommend a different feeding plan.

Support is available if you plan to breastfeed. Your OB/GYN or midwife's office may have a lactation specialist, so you can ask to set up an appointment if they do. The WIC program also provides breastfeeding support. You can always call Bright Start for help accessing these resources or other options.



GENERAL

PLANNING FOR YOUR FAMILY'S FUTURE

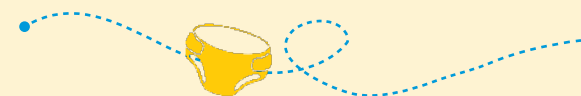
WHAT IS FAMILY PLANNING?

Family planning services help you control how many pregnancies you have and when you have them, in addition to helping you stay healthy between pregnancies.

As an AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollee, these are some important family planning services you can receive from your primary care provider at no cost:

- **Pregnancy testing and follow-up counseling** | "It's important to get tested as soon as you think you may be pregnant. Beginning prenatal care early in your pregnancy is best for both you and your baby's health. If your pregnancy was unplanned, your provider can talk to you about your options.

- **Routine and emergency contraception (birth control)** | There are many methods for preventing pregnancy, including condoms, oral birth control, intrauterine devices (IUDs), vaginal rings, and hormone injections. Condoms are the only birth control method that prevent transmission of sexually transmitted infections. Your provider can help you choose the best option for you.
- **Sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention, testing, and counseling** | The DC Department of Health recommends getting tested for STIs once per year and when you have a new sexual partner. Your provider may not automatically test for common STIs at your annual physical, so make sure you ask to be tested. Condom use is the most reliable way to prevent transmission of STIs.
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine** | HPV is a sexually transmitted infection that can cause reproductive cancers in both men and women, particularly cervical cancer in women. The vaccine series is recommended for girls and boys 11 to 12 years of age, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. People also can receive the vaccine up until age 26 if they were not vaccinated when they were younger.



For questions about family planning services or help scheduling an appointment, call Bright Start at 1-877-759-6883.



GENERAL

URGENT CARE OPTIONS

Urgent care is medical care you need within 24 hours that may not be an emergency. Examples of urgent care needs include a cough or cold, a sore throat, an earache, a diaper rash, or a sprained ankle. AmeriHealth Caritas DC offers multiple options for receiving urgent care:

1. **Access in-person care** | Get a same-day ride to and from an urgent care clinic near you for no cost. To schedule a ride, call **1-800-315-3485**. If you need help finding an urgent care clinic near you or scheduling a ride, call our Rapid Response Team at **1-877-759-6224**.
2. **RelyMD** | Get urgent care without leaving your home using a phone or video call. You can access RelyMD in three ways:
 - a. Use the **RelyMD app** on your phone.
 - b. Call **1-855-879-4332**.
 - c. Visit **relymd.com**
3. **24-Hour Nurse Call Line** | Talk to a nurse about whether you need care right away by calling **1-877-759-6279**.
4. **DispatchHealth** | Get urgent care at home. To schedule an appointment, call **844-228-0154** or book online at **www.dispatchhealth.com**. A representative will ask about your symptoms and give you a time frame for arrival. DispatchHealth typically arrives within three hours.

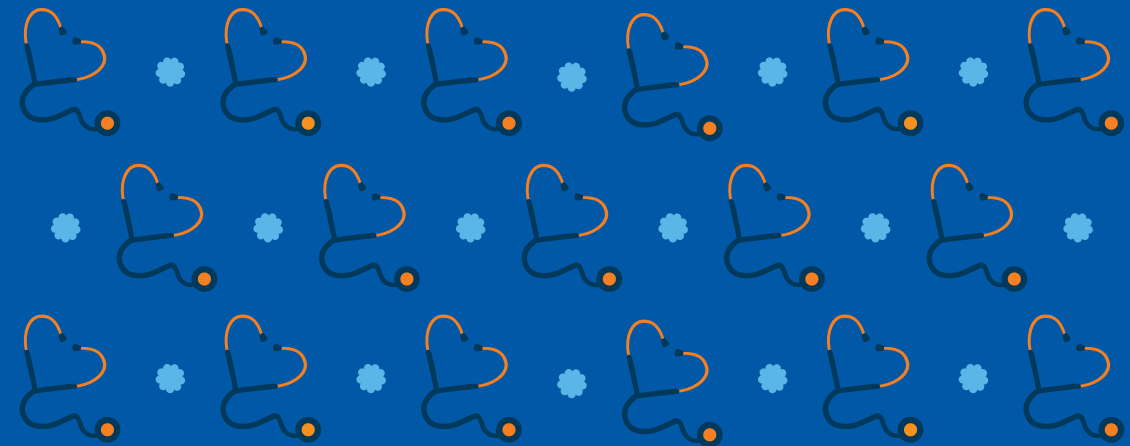


RESOURCES

- **Centering Pregnancy** | Provides prenatal care, including OB/GYN visits and classes in which women can connect with other women who have similar due dates. To enroll in this program, contact your primary care provider or go to <https://www.centeringhealthcare.org/what-we-do/centering-pregnancy> for more information.
- **Greater DC Diaper Bank** | A central resource for diapers at no cost throughout DC and parts of Maryland. Find more information at <https://greaterdcdiaperbank.org/our-programs/diaperhubs/>.
- **Virginia Williams Family Resource Center** | Provides assistance for families experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Call 202-526-0017.
- **Akoma Counseling Concepts** | Provides counseling services to pregnant and postpartum women at home, online and in the office. Call 202-914-1235 or email info@akcctherapy.com.
- **Horton's Kids** | Provides diapers and baby supplies. Call 202-544-5033 and press 3 to be connected to the diaper bank.
- **Mamatoto Village** | Provides access to a variety of services including breastfeeding and fitness classes, labor support, and postpartum support. Call Bright Start at 1-877-759-6224 for more information.

RESOURCES CONTINUED

- **The Northwest Center** | Provides medical/prenatal care, adoption services, domestic violence support services, legal services, housing, educational opportunities, job training, and transitional housing for pregnant women ages 18 to 30. Call **202-483-7008**.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** | Provides an electronic card you can use like a debit card for purchasing food at most grocery stores and farmers markets. For more information or to sign up, visit <https://dhs.dc.gov/snapinfo>.
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** | Provides breastfeeding support, access to formula, and other nutrition and education services to women and children up until age 5. To sign up, call **1-800-345-1WIC (1-800-345-1942)** or go to <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/apply-wic> for more information.
- **Domestic violence support** | A variety of organizations and agencies in DC offer support for people experiencing domestic violence. Below are just a few:
 - **The District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH)** can help you find temporary, permanent, or emergency housing. Call **202-290-2356 ext. 101** or visit dashdc.org.
 - **The Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)** ensures that high quality behavioral health services are available to all DC residents. See the list of DBH's community-based providers at <https://dbh.dc.gov/page/list-community-based-service-providers>.
 - **DC Crisis Helpline: 202-561-7000**
 - **DC Sexual Assault Hotline: 202-333-RAPE**



Learn More About AmeriHealth Caritas DC

For questions about benefits and eligibility, call **Enrollee Services** at **202-408-4720** or **1-800-408-7511**.

Use the **AHC Mobile app** for iPhone and Android phones.

Visit us online at <https://amerihealthcaritasdc.com>.

Connect with us on **Instagram (@amerihealthcaritasdc)**, **Facebook (@amerihealthcaritasdc)**, and **X (https://twitter.com/AmeriHealthDC)**.

AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, including sex characteristics, including intersex traits; pregnancy or related conditions; sexual orientation; gender identity, and sex stereotypes (consistent with the scope of sex discrimination described at 45 CFR § 92.101(a)(2)).

AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia does not exclude people or treat them less favorably because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

English

If you do not speak and/or read English, please call **1-800-408-7511 (TTY 1-800-570-1190)**, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A representative will assist you.

Español

Si no habla y/o lee inglés, llame al **1-800-408-7511 (TTY 1-800-570-1190)**, línea disponible las 24 horas del día, los siete días de la semana. Un representante le ayudará.

አማርኛ

እንግሊዝኛን መናገር እና/ወይም ማንበብ የማይችሉ ከሆኑ፣ እባክዎ በ **1-800-408-7511 (TTY 1-800-570-1190)** ይደውሉ፣ በቀን 24 ሰዓታት፣ በሳምንት ሰባት ቀናት ይገኛል። ተወካይ ይረዳዎታል።

Tiếng Việt

Nếu quý vị không nói và/hoặc đọc Tiếng Anh, vui lòng gọi **1-800-408-7511 (TTY 1-800-570-1190)**, 24 giờ một ngày, bảy ngày một tuần. Sẽ có người đại diện hỗ trợ quý vị.

繁體中文

如果您不會講或讀英文，請致電 **1-800-408-7511 (TTY 1-800-570-1190)**，此電話每天 24 小時，每週 7 天開通。您將得到一位服務代表的協助。

한국어

영어를 말하거나 읽지 못하는 경우, 365일 24시간 이용 가능한 **1-800-408-7511 (TTY 1-800-570-1190)**번으로 전화하십시오. 직원이 도와드릴 것입니다.

Français:

Si vous ne parlez, ni ne lisez anglais, veuillez appeler au numéro **1-800-408-7511 (TTY 1-800-570-1190)**, disponible 24 heures sur 24, 7 jours sur 7. Un représentant pourra vous aider.

All images are used under license for illustrative purposes only.
Any individual depicted is a model.

www.amerihealthcaritasdc.com
ACDC-1815677