

SOONERCARE

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This newsletter is just for SoonerCare members. It will tell you about any changes or updates to your SoonerCare benefits. It will also give you other useful news to help keep you healthy. However, if you have specific questions about your health, please talk to your doctor.

Your SoonerCare Companion will arrive in your mailbox about every four months from the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. If you have questions about SoonerCare, please call the SoonerCare Helpline at 1-800-987-7767.

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www.okhca.org



COMPANION



Ouch!
What do I do for that?

Kids and their families tend to spend more time outside in the summer. No school and longer days mean more time for sports and other outdoor activities. But summer has its downside, too. Here are tips for handling some "not so fun in the sun" problems:

- ✓ **Ticks:** If you find a tick on your body, the best way to remove it is with tweezers. Wash the area and apply antiseptic. Call your PCP if the bite becomes swollen or painful. You also should call if the bite drains pus or you have flu-like symptoms (fever, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, rash or swelling).
- ✓ **Mosquito bites:** To avoid these, keep the body covered, stay away from places where mosquitos breed (such as standing water) and use an insect repellent. If you do get a mosquito bite, wash the area with soap and water. Using calamine lotion, an anti-itch cream or an ice pack may help you stop scratching.
- ✓ **Snake bites:** A bite from any snake can be serious. Get medical care as soon as possible.
- ✓ **Stings:** If you are stung by a bee or wasp, remove the stinger if one is left behind. Wash the area with soap and water, apply ice and take a pain reliever. Your PCP also may suggest taking an antihistamine. Some people are allergic to stings. If you develop hives, nausea, dizziness, a tight feeling in the throat or difficulty breathing, get medical help right away.
- ✓ **Sunburn:** If you get a sunburn, put cool, moist cloths on the sunburned skin several times a day. A 1 percent hydrocortisone cream or a moisturizing lotion also will help.
- ✓ **Poison ivy, poison oak:** Many of us have heard the saying, "Leaflets of three, let them be." Contact with the oil in these plants can cause an itchy rash and blisters. If you come in contact with some, wash all exposed skin with soap and water, or just water, to remove the oil. Calamine lotion helps calm the redness and itchiness. If the rash spreads to the face, eyes or genitals, or if you have a fever, headache, extreme redness or other severe symptoms, call your PCP.

If you need more help with any of these problems, call your PCP. If you don't know who your PCP is or you want to change PCPs, call the SoonerCare Helpline at 1-800-987-7767.



Oklahoma Cares helps women with breast, cervical cancer

Women who may have breast or cervical cancer may qualify for help through Oklahoma Cares even if they do not qualify for SoonerCare.

Oklahoma Cares is a partnership among the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, other state agencies and community partners. It provides health coverage to women ages 19-65 who are not insured for breast or cervical cancer treatment.

Women start out by qualifying for the Take Charge! program, which screens for breast and cervical cancer through clinical breast exams, Pap tests and mammograms. If cancer is found, the woman is referred to the Oklahoma Cares program so she can get cancer treatment. Benefits continue until the woman no longer needs treatment or no longer qualifies financially.

To find a screening provider in your area, call the Oklahoma State Department of Health at 1-866-550-5585 or visit the Web site, www.okhca.org/care. To see if you qualify for Oklahoma Cares or for more information, call 1-888-669-5934 and speak with the Take Charge! patient navigator.

If you get sick while you are out of town or out of state, call your primary care provider (PCP). Explain your condition to the nurse and follow his or her instructions.

If your PCP's office is closed, call the Patient Advice Line after 5 p.m. on weekdays and anytime on weekends and holidays. The number for PAL is listed on the back of your SoonerCare card.

For emergency out-of-town care, go to the nearest medical provider (doctor, clinic or hospital). You do not need a referral from your PCP if you have an emergency.

Not all doctors and other medical providers will take your Soon-

Ask the Tooth Fairy

What is a temporary filling?



The pulp of your tooth is very sensitive. That's where the blood vessels and nerves are located. If you have decay close to the pulp, your dentist may place a medicated layer of filling over the area. This is called a temporary filling. Once the pulp heals, the temporary filling is usually removed and replaced with a permanent filling.

What is a permanent filling?

While temporary fillings are meant to last a few months, permanent fillings last longer. Well-made permanent fillings can last decades, if not a lifetime. A well-placed permanent filling usually lasts 20-25 years or more if you take proper care of it.

TRAVELING OUT OF STATE?



erCare card. SoonerCare only pays providers that have a contract with SoonerCare. Many providers in Oklahoma – and some in towns bordering the state – do take SoonerCare. Call the SoonerCare

Helpline to see if

any providers in the town you are in are contracted with SoonerCare – before you see them. If you see a provider or go to a hospital that is not contracted with SoonerCare, you will have to pay for those services.

Thinking about scheduling your baby's birth?



- **If possible, it's best to stay pregnant for at least 39 weeks.**

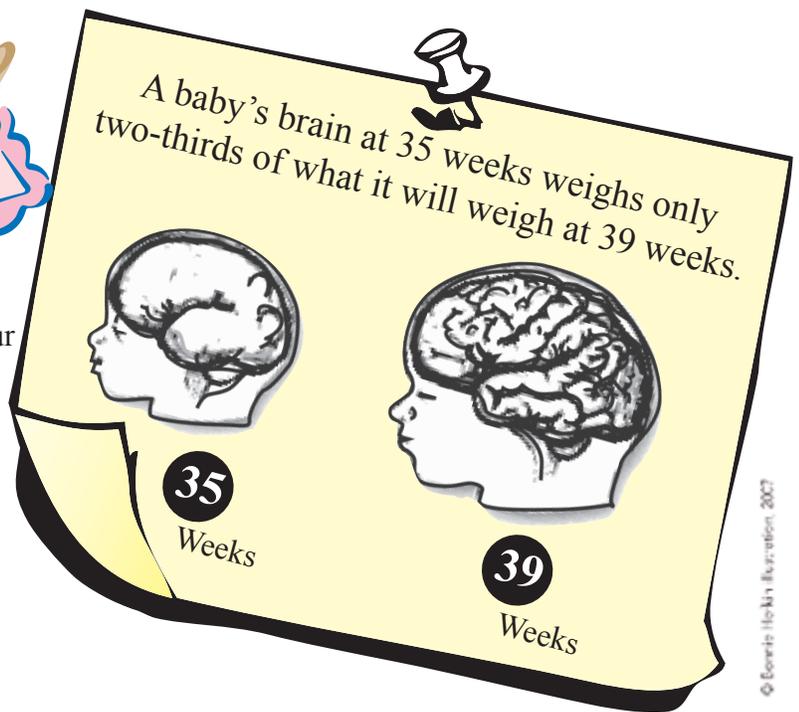
You might not have a choice about when to have your baby. If there are problems with your pregnancy or your baby's health, you may need to have your baby earlier. But if you have a choice and you're planning to schedule your baby's birth, wait until at least 39 completed weeks. Babies born too early may have more health problems at birth and later in life than babies born full term. They also may have to stay in the hospital longer and may not go home at the same time as their mothers.

- **Why babies need time**

If your pregnancy is healthy, being pregnant 39 weeks gives your baby's body all the time it needs to grow.

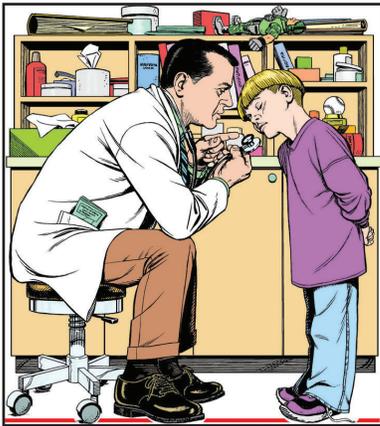
Here's why your baby needs 39 weeks:

- Important organs, like the brain, lungs and liver, get all the time they need to develop. If the lungs are not well developed at birth, the baby will have some trouble breathing.
 - Your baby is less likely to have vision, hearing and learning problems after birth.
 - More time in the womb means more time to gain weight. Babies born at a healthy weight have an easier time staying warm than babies born too small.
 - A full-term baby can suck and swallow and stay awake long enough to eat after he/she is born. Babies born early sometimes can't do these things.
- **Experts are learning that scheduling an early birth for non-medical reasons can cause problems for mom and baby. For example:**
 - Your due date may not be exactly right. Sometime it's hard to know just when you got pregnant. If you schedule to induce labor and have a cesarean birth (also called a C-section)



and your date is off by a week or two, your baby may be born too early. That puts the baby at risk for problems such as breathing difficulties and poor feeding.

- Inducing labor may not work. If your labor is induced, the medicine your doctor or certified nurse midwife gives you may not start your labor. When this happens, you may be advised to have a C-section.
- A C-section may cause problems for your baby. Babies born by C-section may have more breathing and other medical problems than babies born vaginally.
- C-sections can cause problems in future pregnancies. Once you have a C-section, you may be more likely in future pregnancies to have a C-section. The more C-sections you have, the more problems you and your baby may have, including problems with the placenta.
- A C-section is major surgery for mom. It takes longer for you to recover from a C-section than from a vaginal birth. You can expect to spend two to four days in the hospital after a C-section. Then you'll need four to six weeks after you go home to fully recover. You also could have complications from the surgery, like infections or bleeding. So it's important to stay in touch with your health care provider even after you go home.



It is very important to keep your medical appointments

No one wants to sit at the doctor's office all day. Have you ever had to wait to see the doctor? You're not alone. Everyone has.

Your doctor's office is a very busy place. Some patients – maybe even you – may require more time than the average visit. This can cause other appointments to be delayed. All of us need to

be patient and respectful of everyone.

There are ways to speed up your doctor's visit. Arrive at least 15 minutes before your appointment time. (If it's your first appointment, office staff will tell you how early you need to arrive.) When you are sick, call your doctor right away. Your doctor's office will try to schedule you as soon as possible based on your symptoms. Remember, too, that it may take up to three weeks to get a checkup.

If you can't make the appointment, please call right away to cancel or reschedule. Someone else could use your appointment time. Even if the time for your appointment has passed, it is a good idea to call and apologize for not showing up. Your doctor can dismiss you as a patient for not keeping an appointment.

Here are some tips for making and keeping a doctor's appointment

- Write your appointment on a calendar where you will see it every day.
- Try to schedule routine appointments on one day or a day that is easy for you to remember, like the first day of the month or the same date as your birthday.
- People with early morning appointments have less waiting time.
- If you can only be away from your job during certain hours of the day, tell your doctor's office staff. They may be willing to work with you on appointment options.
- Arrive to the appointment early. You may have to fill out some papers.
- If you are running late, please call ahead. Let them know how late you will be, and ask if the doctor can still see you. Always get the name of the person you spoke to.
- Make sure that you take all your medical ID cards and show them to the front desk staff.
- If you need a ride, you can call SoonerRide at 1-877-404-4500. Call right after you make your appointment. SoonerRide will call you the day before to verify your appointment.
- If you are looking for a doctor who keeps late office hours, call the SoonerCare Helpline at 1-800-987-7767. They can help you find doctors that are open after hours.



Planning pays off if you have asthma!

Asthma is a potentially life-threatening lung disease that causes breathing problems. It is common

in children and adults. Talk to your doctor if you think you or your child might have asthma.

Common signs of asthma:

- Cough.
- Wheezing.
- Tightness in the chest.
- Shortness of breath.

What should you do if you have asthma?

- Monitor the flow of your breathing with a peak flow meter.
- Visit your doctor to make a care plan. It will tell you what to do if you show signs of an asthma attack. An asthma care plan will include directions for the following zones:
 - GREEN when your asthma is under control.
 - YELLOW when your symptoms are getting worse.
 - RED when you may be close to having an asthma attack.
- Follow up with your doctor regularly.

What can I do to prevent asthma attacks?

- Take all medications and inhalers as directed.
- Recognize and avoid common triggers of asthma attacks:
 - Food allergens.
 - Chemical allergens.
 - Other allergens (dust, mold, pollen, etc.).
 - Cigarette smoke.
 - Stress.

You can get more information about asthma at www.lungusa.org.

Choosing your PCP

When you qualify for SoonerCare Choice, you must choose a Primary Care Provider (PCP) for yourself and each covered member of your family. A PCP can be a doctor, physician assistant or nurse practitioner who provides primary care services. If you do not know who your PCP is, call the SoonerCare Helpline at 1-800-987-7767 and ask.



That warm, burning feeling in your chest might not be love

What is heartburn?

When you eat, food travels down the esophagus, the passage connecting the mouth with the stomach. A muscle lets food enter the stomach from the esophagus. If this muscle weakens, acid from your stomach can come up into the esophagus, causing heartburn.

Heartburn is the main symptom of gastroesophageal reflux disease, also known as “GERD.”

GERD symptoms may last minutes to a few hours and include:

- A burning feeling that starts in the lower chest and moves up the throat.
- A feeling that food is coming back up.
- A sour or bitter taste in the throat.
- Pain that increases when bending over, lying down, exercising or lifting heavy objects.

How can I prevent heartburn?

Some heartburn can be eased by making lifestyle changes:

- Avoid alcohol, spicy foods, chocolate, caffeine, citrus fruits, tomatoes and high-fat foods.
- Stop smoking. Nicotine can weaken the muscle that keeps the acid from entering your esophagus.
- Eat four to five small meals a day, instead of three large meals.
- Wait at least two or three hours after eating before you lie down.
- Lose weight if you are overweight.

What medicines may help?

There are three main types of heartburn medications. Many of these medicines are available as generics that cost less and work just as well as the name-brand products.

Antacids

Over-the-counter antacids work quickly to neutralize stomach acid and help heartburn symptoms. Examples of these are Maalox[®], Tums[®], Rolaids[®] and Mylanta[®]. They can help for short periods but may cause problems if used for a long time. Do not take these for more than 14 days without talking to your doctor first.

H2 Blockers

Other heartburn medicines, called “H2 Blockers,” work by stopping the stomach from making too much

acid. Examples of these are Tagamet[®], Pepcid[®] and Zantac[®]. They are available over the counter, work within 30 to 90 minutes, and last up to 24 hours. These also shouldn't be taken for more than 14 days without talking to your doctor first.

PPIs

Another type of heartburn medicines, called Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs), also work by stopping the stomach from making too much acid. PPIs are strong medicines, but they don't work as quickly as other types of heartburn medicines. People usually need to take PPIs for 14 days in a row. Prilosec[®] is a PPI that is available over the counter. It should not be used more than three 14-day periods per year without talking to your doctor.

Can my doctor help?

Be sure to talk to your doctor if you take any of these medications but still have heartburn symptoms. There are other prescription-only medicines that may help, or you may have a more serious health problem that only your doctor can treat.

Chest pain not only symptom for women's heart attacks

Medical experts have learned that women and men's bodies respond differently to some diseases, and heart attack appears to be one of them.

According to the American Heart Association, chest pain or discomfort is the most common symptom for both sexes. But women are more likely than men to have some of the other common symptoms, especially shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

Also, unlike the heart attacks in the movies, which come on quickly and intensely, most heart attacks happen more slowly. Often people feel mild pain or discomfort, but they aren't sure what's wrong. These people may wait too long before getting help.

Seek help immediately if you experience these signs that a heart attack is under way:

- Chest discomfort that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. These include one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

Time counts when someone is having a heart attack. Seek medical help IMMEDIATELY by calling 911 or going to the closest place you can get medical treatment.

For more information, talk to your PCP's staff or visit www.americanheart.org.



Breast-feeding babies is good for moms, too

Breast-feeding is important to help you baby grow into a healthy child. Breast-feeding is good for babies, mothers, families and society.

According to information from the state Health Department, mothers who breast-feed:

- Are less likely to develop breast/ovarian cancers.
- Are less likely to develop type 2 diabetes.
- Bond with their babies easier.
- Have less risk for postpartum depression.

Breast-fed babies have:

- Better immunity.
- Fewer infections.
- Fewer allergies.
- Less risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Fewer trips to the hospital for serious illnesses.

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority encourages soon-to-be mothers to breast-feed their babies because breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. It contains vitamins and nutrients that your baby needs during the first six months.

Breast-feeding is natural, but sometimes it takes a little while for babies and mothers to learn what works best for them. That is why SoonerCare offers lactation (breast-feeding) consultation services.

Lactation consultation services give mothers one-on-one support and training so they can begin and continue breast-feeding. The lactation consultant addresses each woman's specific breast-feeding issues and can be there to help if problems arise. A woman enrolled in SoonerCare can receive this service during pregnancy and up to 60 days after the baby is born.

If you are already a SoonerCare member and have Internet access, please visit our Web site at www.okhca.org. Click on the "Individual" section, then the "Find a Provider" tab, and then "Lactation Consultants" to find a provider near you.

You can self-refer to a lactation consultant if you are a first-time mother and need prenatal education, if you have a history of breast-feeding problems, or if you have latch-on difficulties, low milk supply or any other breast-feeding difficulty.

For questions about this service, call the SoonerCare Helpline at 1-800-987-7767 or the Child Health Unit at 1-405-522-7188.

Don't smoke if you're pregnant!

Cigarette smoke contains more than 2,500 chemicals. It includes some of the same chemicals found in such items as antifreeze, gasoline, battery acid and nail polish remover. Smoking during pregnancy can harm the health of both the woman and the unborn child.

The health risks for the baby include low birth weight, early birth and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Babies of mothers who smoked also have more childhood respiratory illnesses and possible learning disabilities and conduct disorders.

If you smoke and are pregnant, we can help. SoonerCare offers counseling and stop-smoking products to pregnant women willing to quit using tobacco. Please discuss this option with your doctor at your next appointment.

You also can call the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669).

Had your tubes tied? You still need a Pap smear

Women who have had sterilizations are still at risk for cervical cancer and need regular checkups that include Pap smears.

OB/GYN doctors recommend that most women get a Pap smear at least every year, based on their risk factors for cervical cancer. Women should begin getting the tests at age 18 or when they become sexually active.

A Pap smear checks for changes in the cells of your cervix and can detect precancerous conditions.

Early detection gives the best chance of preventing cancer through simple treatment. Pap smears can also help detect some cervical or vaginal infections. Those infections can put a woman at risk for cervical cancer even if she can no longer have babies.

Syphilis is no party

State Health Department officials say group sex parties may have led to an outbreak of syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease, among central Oklahoma teenagers.

Syphilis is an infection caused by bacteria. It is primarily spread through intimate sexual contact, including kissing (when a sore is present in the mouth). Syphilis can be cured with antibiotics if caught early. Untreated, it can damage major organs and cause serious birth defects.

Because the initial lesions are painless, youths may ignore or not notice the signs and continue spreading the disease. People also can be reinfected after treatment.

Other symptoms are rashes that appear as rough, red or reddish-brown spots on the palms of hands and soles of the feet, swollen lymph glands, sore throat and fatigue.

Anyone showing symptoms of syphilis should see their PCP right away.

Play it safe in the sun

Summer is a great time to have fun outdoors. It's also a time to take defense against sunburns, which can raise your risk of skin cancer.

To help avoid sunburns while having fun outdoors, try these tips:

- Seek shade, especially during midday hours. Ultraviolet (UV) rays are strongest and do the most damage from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Cover up exposed skin. A long-sleeved shirt and long pants with a tight weave are best.
- Get a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears and neck.
- Wear shades that wrap around and block as close to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays as possible.
- Put on sunscreen with SPF (sun protective factor) 15 or higher and both UVA and UVB protection before you go outside, even on cloudy or cool days. The sun's UV rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes.

Double up

It's always wise to choose more than one way to cover up when you're in the sun. Use sunscreen and put on a shirt. Seek shade and grab your sunglasses. Wear a hat, but put on sunscreen, too. Combining these actions helps protect your skin.

Did you know that just a few serious sunburns could increase your child's risk of skin cancer later in life?

UV rays reach you on cloudy and hazy days, as well as bright and sunny days. Kids don't have to be at the pool, beach or on vacation to get too much sun. Their skin needs protection whenever they're outside. Parents, help your children play it safe in the sun. Remember, you're an important role model, so protect your own skin as well.

Wash away worms!

Pets get extra playtime with the kids during the summer – but make sure they wash their hands after touching their animal playmates.

Pets can pick up ringworms (a fungus) or roundworms by going outside and playing in the dirt or in the normal course of grooming.

Roundworms are actual worms that are usually contracted from pet to you by not properly washing your hands after touching an animal that has roundworms.

Even if your animals are inside pets, you should always wash your hands after touching them.

Cut out this checklist and tape to your door or refrigerator.

Suit up for the sun!

Before going outdoors to play, I check my Sun Safety list and protect myself from the sun!



- 1. Sunscreen. Apply every two hours and after swimming.
- 2. Hats.
- 3. Swimming and play clothes that protect my body from too much sun. *Sunburns hurt!*
- 4. Sunglasses.
- 5. Plenty of water to drink while outside.
- 6. A shady place under a sun umbrella, tree or shaded area to cool off.



SUN!

Make summer memories

Keep a journal or scrapbook of summer fun. Good memory makers are: **1.** Go on nature walks. Press flowers and leaves to glue in your book. **2.** Watch the stars at night or funny clouds from a blanket on the lawn. **3.** Plant and care for flowers and vegetables. **4.** Paint pictures on rocks and pebbles. **5.** Catch lightning bugs. **6.** Eat dinner on the lawn. **7.** Build sand castles. **8.** Make and eat popsicles. **9.** Talk and tell stories with family and friends. **10.** Draw a hopscotch pattern on the driveway with chalk and have a contest. **11.** Make necklaces and crowns out of wildflowers. Write about your day and take photos or draw pictures for your book.

HAVE FUN!



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PA is for Prior Authorization

Some medical services require prior authorization (PA). Any SoonerCare provider can request a PA for you. PAs are different from referrals. PAs are reviewed by a medical team at the Oklahoma Health Care Authority to make sure services are medically needed before they are provided.

You will get a letter letting you know if the service has been approved. If you have any questions about prior authorization, please call the SoonerCare Helpline at 1-800-987-7767.

R is for Referral

When your primary care provider (PCP) feels you need to see a specialist or have a test done, you may be referred to a specialist. Your PCP will review your medical history and talk with you before deciding who would be the best provider for you to see. Once your PCP arranges for you to see a specialist, it is very important that you keep your appointment. Your PCP and the specialty provider will discuss your case and advise you of any other services you may need. Only your PCP can request a referral, so call your PCP if you feel you need to see a specialist. Your PCP's office will help you arrange all health care you need outside your medical home. Call your PCP if you have any questions about your referral.

Si usted quiere leer este artículo en español, visite la pagina web del OHCA al <http://www.okhca.org/sooner-care-companion>

Disclaimer: Clinical, legal and other comments are offered for general information only. Please talk to your doctor about specific health concerns.