



TEAMSTERS TRUST BENEFITS INSIDER

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When Virtual Visits Are Your Best Choice

Get the care you need, without an office visit

Connecting via our phones and computers is just a regular part of our lives. We keep up with friends online, check our bank accounts, schedule appointments, track our exercise or food, and so much more. Recently, technology has become an even bigger part of how we stay in touch and manage our lives—including how we get medical care.

Gone are the days of always needing to go into the doctor's office, or not being able to get seen outside business hours. Now with so many virtual care options available, getting quality care is easier than ever. There will continue to be times when your doctor will want to see you in person, but here are just a few instances where a virtual visit might be your best choice:

When you're feeling sick

When you or a family member is sick and feeling terrible, leaving the house is often the last thing you want to do. A virtual care visit with a doctor can help determine what illness you might have, any medications needed, and if an in-person visit or any tests are needed. Getting care virtually can save you a trip, get you the answers and care you need, and keep you from exposing anyone else.

For medication refills and questions

Anyone who takes medication regularly, or is starting a new medication, knows that sometimes questions come up about side effects, dosage, or reactions to other medications or vitamins. Virtual care is the perfect option for getting information and ordering any new prescriptions and refills you may need.

If you live in a rural area

If you live far away from a city center, you likely know that it can be sometimes difficult or time consuming to visit a doctor. Virtual care provides greater access to quality care, specialists, mental health services and more.

Seeing a specialist

Specialty providers can sometimes be difficult to get in to see as they are in high demand. A virtual visit may make it possible to meet with them sooner. Over virtual care you could see a dermatologist about a rash or concern, discuss symptoms with an allergist, get test results from a cardiologist, or meet with a physical therapist.

Mental health care

Virtual care gives you access to more mental health providers across the state. The majority of mental health professionals offer visits over the phone or telehealth, and report that virtual visits are just as effective as in person appointments.

DID YOU KNOW?

With Online Visit, Kaiser Permanente Plan participants and their eligible family members, can receive quick online care for many common conditions, get a treatment plan and, if needed, a prescription—without a trip to your doctor's office. Learn more at wateamsters.com/benefits/virtual-care.





Treating Lower Back Pain

Ways to treat lower back pain that might surprise you

Back pain is one of the most common physical ailments and nearly everyone will experience lower back pain at some point. Whether it is a nagging ache or debilitating pain, lower back pain can be stressful and put the brakes on our lives—keeping us from our jobs and from participating with family and friends. The good news is that there are a lot of options for treating lower back pain that can give you relief and keep you from needing expensive tests or surgeries.

First Things First

Be sure to talk to your doctor. Regardless of the intensity of your pain, you may want to let your doctor know what is going on. They can advise you if you might need to come in, prescribe medication if needed, or write you a referral. Keeping your doctor advised as you experience pain helps create a record which can be useful to your doctor in deciding on future care if needed.

If you've been in an accident, had an old injury flare up, or if your back pain is sudden and severe, or it has lasted more than three months (even if it comes and goes), be sure to seek care immediately.

Home Remedies

While we may want a quick fix, back pain typically can take some time to clear up. Before ordering imaging, like an MRI, or prescribing medications, your doctor might want you to try a few home remedies first. For most people their back pain will resolve given a little time and effort.

Here are a few recommended treatments you can do on your own:

- **Treat the pain.** Using hot or cold packs and over-the-counter pain medications like Advil or Tylenol won't cure the problem, but they can help make the pain more tolerable and help with muscle aches and stiffness. Medicated creams and patches that contain ingredients such as menthol, camphor, or lidocaine can cool, heat, or numb the affected area, offering temporary relief.
- **Keep moving.** While it may be tempting to stay in bed, doing so can make the pain worse over time, reduce flexibility, and weaken muscle tone. Going for walks may seem counterintuitive, but it is one of the best things you can do for back pain.
- **Strengthening your core.** Strong muscles, especially in your abdominal core, help support your back. You can strengthen your core and the muscles around your hips with simple at-home exercises, or by taking a Tai Chi, Pilates or yoga class.
- **Manage your stress.** Surprisingly, back pain can be caused and exacerbated not just by physical ailments, but also by emotional ones. Depression, anxiety, PTSD, and other forms of emotional stress can impact how our brain perceives pain. Finding ways to manage stress—by keeping moving, taking a yoga class, or talking to a mental health professional—could help you manage your lower back pain as well.



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Medical Options

Your primary care doctor is always your best first call, but there are many other medical professionals who may be able to help. Talk to your doctor about what they recommend, and for any referrals you may need.

Here are several alternative types of treatment to try:

- **Physical Therapy.** Physical therapy (PT) is often prescribed for low back pain and can help you safely work past pain and teach you exercises to improve your mobility, flexibility, and strengthen your core. PT is also often available now over telehealth, giving you more options for who to work with and when to meet.
- **Massage Therapy.** Massage has been proven to aid in relieving back pain. It can help loosen up muscles, increase circulation and blood flow (which reduces inflammation) and improve your range of motion.
- **Acupuncture.** Acupuncture is a traditional therapy based on the idea of energetics in the body and uses needles to stimulate specific nerves and areas of the body. The needles are not meant to be painful, and research on chronic lower back pain shows that acupuncture helps relieve muscle and nerve tension, and increases blood flow.
- **Chiropractic Adjustments.** Using manual therapies, chiropractic professionals focus on spinal manipulation (adjusting the spine and surrounding structures), and mobilization (stretching the joints and muscles) to increase range of motion. Chiropractic adjustments are a commonly prescribed treatment for back pain.

TAKE ACTION

Your benefits offer co-pay visits to many kinds of specialists and alternative practitioners, like massage, acupuncture, physical therapy and more. Call **Kaiser Permanente** to find out what's available on your plan, and to find an in-network provider: **(888) 901-4636**.

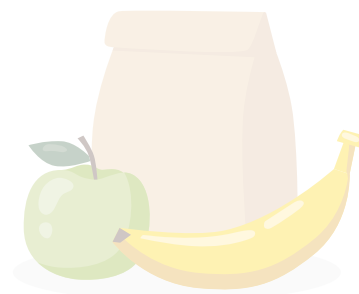


Healthy Snack Ideas

Eating healthy doesn't have to be boring

Packing a healthy snack doesn't necessarily mean using a long list of ingredients to create something elaborate, or only being able to eat "rabbit food." There are many easy and yummy options to improve your diet while benefiting your health. Try packing these for your next workday:

- Apple slices with almond/peanut butter
- Plain yogurt with berries or honey
- Carrots with hummus
- Protein-packed bars
- Hard-boiled eggs and few crackers
- Cucumber slices and guacamole





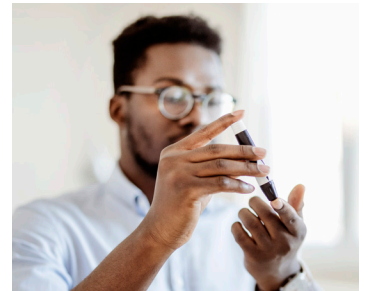
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THE TAKEAWAY

Get Help Managing Chronic Conditions

Support services for ongoing or complex conditions

If you have an ongoing health condition, also known as a chronic condition, it's likely something you manage on a daily basis. Conditions like diabetes, asthma, and heart disorders can be challenging, and if not well maintained they can impact your quality of life. One of the keys to successfully managing any chronic condition is to have a good support to help you stay motivated and help you follow the treatment plan established by your providers.



Kaiser Case Management

Your Case Manager will coordinate access to care, assess chronic conditions, monitor your progress, assist with discharge planning and follow-up, and help ensure that your benefits are used effectively. Most importantly your Case Manager will be there to support you and your entire family through a potentially difficult time. To find out more, visit: wateamsters.com/benefits/medical.

Better Health, Better Choices Workshops

Kaiser Permanente offers several six-week workshops on topics like diabetes, heart disease, asthma, pain, depression and more. These no-cost workshops are designed to help you gain the skills you need to manage your condition and improve your overall well-being. You'll be part of an online group who are experiencing similar health challenges. Together—along with knowledgeable, trained health professionals—you'll learn how to complete small, achievable steps toward healthier living. To find out more visit: wa.kaiserpermanente.org/html/public/classes/living-well.