

Seniors, blue Line



SUMMER 2011

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BLUELINE... YOUR CONNECTION TO ALBERTA BLUE CROSS

Planning to travel outside Alberta?

Emergency medical travel coverage is something all Albertans should have when they are going on vacation abroad or even on a short trip to another province. Whether it's a family visit to Ontario, a dream vacation to Europe or a quick getaway to the United States, an unexpected medical emergency can happen to you. And if you do not have travel coverage, you could be facing very high medical bills that could potentially be a financial burden to you and your family.

Alberta Blue Cross offers a variety of travel coverage plans to meet the diverse needs of Albertans. When you qualify for our travel coverage, you know you're

protected in case of a medical emergency. Moreover, if you're involved in a medical emergency while travelling abroad, we offer travel assistance services like arranging for your transportation home (if medically permissible); locating an appropriate physician, clinic or hospital for you; keeping your family informed and coordinating payment to the hospital and physician.

As an existing Seniors Plus plan member, you qualify for a 10 per cent discount on Alberta Blue Cross travel coverage.

For the travel protection you need this summer, call Alberta Blue Cross today at 1-800-661-6995.

"Richard was admitted to a hospital in Arizona with chest pain and fatigue. After being diagnosed with pneumonia and severe acute cardiac and pulmonary pathology, he underwent a heart catheterization and, several days later, a coronary bypass surgery. He was repatriated home safely by air transport with medical escort and oxygen. Cost: \$462,647."

"When travelling to Las Vegas for four days, Sarah was hospitalized for two days for food poisoning. The total cost: \$21,106."

"While spending time in Thailand, David got into an accident and fractured his right leg in two places. After surgery and a nine-day hospital stay, he faced a bill for hospitalization, follow-up visits, non-emergent repatriation, meals and accommodations that went beyond his original return date. The total cost: \$37,708."

Return undeliverable addresses to:

Alberta Blue Cross
10009 108 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 3C5

Publication mail agreement: 40062397

www.blueadvantage.ca

Your Alberta Blue Cross coverage offers you special advantages

As an Alberta Blue Cross Seniors Plus plan member, you can enjoy savings on health-related products and services offered by providers across Canada through the Blue Advantage program.

This program provides you with savings at the point of sale on the total cost of products and services from participating providers, regardless of whether the item is covered under your health plan or not. To find savings, visit the Blue Advantage web site at www.blueadvantage.ca (also available as a link through the plan member section of the Alberta Blue Cross web site). Then to receive discounts, present your Alberta Blue Cross ID card to the participating provider and mention the Blue Advantage program.

On the Blue Advantage web site, you can also sign up for an e-newsletter that features savings and notifications of new providers joining the program.



What kinds of products and services are eligible?

- Vision care products
- Medical supplies and equipment
- Dental products
- Hearing aids
- Health and wellness products and services

Find your claim and benefit information online

24/7

Alberta Blue Cross offers you the opportunity to access information about your claims and benefits *at your convenience*.

Our secure web site for plan members has extensive resources for you to do the following:

- View a claim summary of completed claims.
- Check claim reimbursement status.
- View claim statements for the past 24 months.
- Check coverage levels and when you are next eligible for vision and dental services.
- Print claim forms.
- Update your mailing address.
- Arrange to have your claim payments deposited directly into your bank account.
- Print or order additional ID cards.

Visit www.ab.bluecross.ca/online_services.html to get started using this convenient service. Our Customer Services representatives are available to answer your questions about site access. Please call us toll free at 1-800-661-6995 if you encounter any issue while signing up or using our secure web site for plan members.

Access the Alberta Blue Cross Health & Wellness Companion. It's free!

Did you know that as an Alberta Blue Cross Seniors Plus plan member, you have access to the Alberta Blue Cross Health & Wellness Companion? This web site offers extensive resources on health-related topics, and access is free of charge.

Once signed in to the Health & Wellness Companion, you can complete a variety of health assessments, access an innovative symptom checker or go through a comprehensive health resource library and prescription drug information database. This site is designed and maintained on behalf of Alberta Blue Cross by Practice Solutions, a subsidiary of the Canadian Medical Association, so you can be certain that you are receiving accurate and trustworthy information.

Through the Companion, you can also create and maintain a secure electronic Personal Health Record to track emergency contacts, medical history and conditions, allergies, immunizations and

much more medical information. The

record is managed exclusively by you, and you decide how much or how little information you want it to contain. You can access or update your record anytime and print it out to take it with you when you visit a doctor. You can even share it in part or in whole online with your physician.

All you need to do to access the Health & Wellness Companion is to visit www.ab.bluecross.ca, navigate to the Health & Wellness Companion section and sign in using your Alberta Blue Cross ID number.

Think about food safety during the summer months

As the temperature rises, so does the risk of foodborne illness. Hot, humid weather creates perfect conditions for the rapid growth of bacteria. You can prevent many food-related illnesses by taking the following steps when handling and preparing food.

Clean

Wash your hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat and seafood, after using the washroom, changing diapers and touching pets. To prevent cross-contamination, clean and sanitize cutting boards used for raw meat and seafood before you use them for other foods.

Always wash raw fruits and vegetables in clean water.

Separate

Make sure to keep raw food separate from cooked and ready-to-eat food, such as bread and vegetables. Defrost raw foods in covered containers on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so they can't touch or drip onto other food. Also do this when you pack a cooler for an outing.

Chill

Always marinate food in the refrigerator in a covered container. Keeping food cold (at or below 4° C) slows down bacterial growth. The best way to store your lunch is in the refrigerator or in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen gel pack.



Put leftovers back in the cooler or the refrigerator as soon as you are finished eating.

Cook

Traditional visual cues like colour are not a guarantee that food is safe. Don't guess and instead use a digital instant-read food thermometer to check when meat and poultry are safe to eat. Ground meat is safe to eat when the internal temperature is 71° C; boned and deboned poultry parts, 74° C; whole poultry, 85° C. Heat leftovers such as soup, stew, sauce and gravy to a full rolling boil before consuming them again.

Source: Health Canada

The simple rule: When in doubt, throw it out.

Travel safely with your medications

Whether travelling within Canada or abroad, you should take special precautions to ensure you don't encounter problems with your prescribed medications. Take a look at the following tips recommended by Alberta Health Services.

- To **be prepared for unexpected delays**, always bring along medication for more days than the number of days you plan to be away.
- If you are flying, **keep your medications in your carry-on luggage**. This way, you will have access to them during the flight and will not lose them if your luggage is lost. Keeping them with you also prevents your medications from being exposed to the temperature extremes that can occur in the baggage compartment.
- If you require a syringe or needle to administer your medication (for example, insulin), you may need to **carry your prescription with you** to be sure you can get through airport security and customs. The Canadian Diabetes Association recommends you get a letter from your doctor indicating you require syringes to administer your medication.
- To prevent taking too much or too little medication when you are travelling through several time zones, consult your doctor or pharmacist to **work out a plan for adjusting the timing of your medication**.
- If you are visiting a hot, humid climate, **keep your medications in a cool dry place out of direct sunlight**.

It's also a good idea to carry your doctor's and pharmacy's phone numbers with you. And remember to keep your medications in their original labeled containers—to get through airport security and customs easier and faster.

Quick tip

Medication changes may affect travel coverage

If you purchased travel coverage for an imminent trip, please be aware that any new medications or changes to your existing medication could render your travel plan void. If your doctor has altered your medication in any way between the date you applied for travel coverage and your departure date, contact Alberta Blue Cross immediately to ensure your travel coverage is still valid for your upcoming trip.



Seniors
blue
Line

You ask... we answer

I'm planning on moving to a different home. How do I go about updating my address on your files?

Ollie, Calgary

It's important to notify Alberta Blue Cross of any change in your address so that we can keep our files current and avoid sending potentially sensitive health information to an incorrect person. You can change your address online:

- visit www.ab.bluecross.ca/online_services.html,
- select *Individual plan members* tab,
- sign in to the secure web site,
- visit the *Personal, banking and ID card info* section, and
- proceed to update your address information.

If you need to change your mailing address to an international residence, please contact our Customer Services representatives toll free at 1-800-661-6995.

If you do not have access to the internet, you can easily change your address by phoning our Customer Service representatives at 1-800-661-6995; by faxing a change notice to 1-780-498-3531 or by mailing to 10009 108 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 3C5.

If you have a question you'd like to see answered in a future issue of *Seniors' BlueLine*, e-mail us at blueline@ab.bluecross.ca.

Alberta Blue Cross is involved in your community

Alberta Blue Cross is an independent, not-for-profit organization with an unparalleled focus on and commitment to the health of Albertans. Not only do we strive to be the best supplementary benefits provider for all Albertans, but we also make every effort to make a positive difference in our neighbourhoods.

While as a not-for-profit organization we have limited funds to invest, we are committed to do as much as we can. Whether through volunteer initiatives or employee and corporate donations, Alberta Blue Cross aims to make a positive difference in communities across our province.

While our approach doesn't get Alberta Blue Cross the level of recognition that paying to have our name put on a building or banner would bring, we ensure that funding is spread across a wide range of organizations throughout the province and is put to use for the good of Albertans.

Aspects of our community involvement

- Alberta Blue Cross plays an active role in leading and supporting province-wide health and wellness projects and initiatives.
- Through our 50th anniversary scholarship program, we provide extensive support to Alberta students pursuing post-secondary education.
- We provide a wide range of support to charitable community-based organizations across Alberta, both at a grassroots level and through our Hearts of Blue program—an employee-led charity that is funded through employee and corporate donations.



Our Hearts of Blue volunteers help Habitat for Humanity.

Some of our community involvements over the past year have included sponsoring the Alberta Finding Balance Campaign—an educational program designed to raise awareness about seniors' falls, the Coalition for Cellphone-Free Driving, sponsorship of Alberta Health Services' *Apple* magazine and the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada.

In 2010, we also supported ABC Head Start, the Canadian Liver Foundation, CURE Foundation, food banks across the province, Edmonton School Lunch Program, Grande Prairie Hospital Neonatal Unit, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Kids Kottage, Lethbridge Rehabilitation Society, Meals on Wheels, MS Society, Operation Friendship Society, Calgary Health Trust, Red Deer Women's Outreach Society, Ronald McDonald House, Santas Anonymous, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Canadian Blood Services, Youth Emergency Shelter Society and Wings of Providence.

Alberta Blue Cross is proud to be a sponsor of the Alberta 55+ Seniors Games

As part of our commitment to healthy living and community involvement, we are pleased to be a sponsor of the 2011 Alberta 55+ Seniors Games.

The 55+ Seniors Games competition, being held in Fairview from July 21 to July 24, provides seniors the opportunity to pursue greater levels of physical activity and intellectual challenges in an entertaining and stimulating environment.

The games include numerous activities such as swimming, tennis, bocce, curling, and arts and crafts.

For more information visit www.fairview55games.com.



ALBERTA
55 PLUS SUMMER GAMES
JULY 21 - 24, 2011 FAIRVIEW

Keep your mind active!

Challenge your mind with words

This tree-themed word search game is a great way to challenge your mind—and support your mental health. The objective is to find and circle all the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message—a Greek proverb.



- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| APPLE | LARCH |
| APRICOT | LINDEN |
| ASH | LONDON PLANE |
| ASPEN | MAPLE |
| ARBORVITAE | NECTARINE |
| BALD CYPRESS | OAK |
| BEECH | PALM |
| BIRCH | PEACH |
| BOXWOOD | PEAR |
| BUCKEYE | PECAN |
| BUTTERNUT | PLUM |
| CATALPA | PINE |
| CEDAR | POPLAR |
| CHERRY | REDBUD |
| CHESTNUT | RUBBER TREE |
| COTTONWOOD | SEQUOIA |
| ELM | SPRUCE |
| FIR | SYCAMORE |
| GINKGO | TULIPTREE |
| GOLDENRAIN | WALNUT |
| HAZELNUT | WITCH HAZEL |
| HEMLOCK | WILLOW |
| HICKORY | YELLOWWOOD |

Source: www.puzzles.ca/wordsearch

Hidden sentence: A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.



If you have a question about your Alberta Blue Cross coverage, we're as close as your telephone. Even outside regular business hours, you may leave a message and have a Customer Services representative return your call the next business day.

Edmonton 780-498-8000
Calgary 403-234-9666
Red Deer 403-343-7009
Lethbridge 403-328-1785
Medicine Hat 403-529-5553
Grande Prairie 780-532-3505

Toll free from anywhere in Alberta
1-800-661-6995

*The Blue Cross symbol and name are registered marks of the Canadian Association of Blue Cross Plans, an association of independent Blue Cross plans. Licensed to ABC Benefits Corporation for use in operating the Alberta Blue Cross Plan. ABC 82865 (2011/05)

VISIT US ON THE INTERNET

Want to know more about Alberta Blue Cross? Check out our web site at www.ab.bluecross.ca

To minimize the environmental impact, Seniors' BlueLine is printed on paper made with post-consumer waste fibre. As corporate citizens, we continue to look for ways to reduce our environmental impact. Please recycle this newsletter when you are done with it.

