



# Mind and Body: Supporting Women's Health

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Beginning on Mother's Day, National Women's Health Week highlights the importance of women prioritizing our own health needs.

For many women, particularly mothers and other caregivers, the daily juggle of family responsibilities and career demands often leads to not prioritizing our own well-being. It's not uncommon for women to put the needs of our families and jobs before our own, sometimes at the cost of our health. I certainly have done it myself, over and over again, and need to remind myself that my health is a priority – we only have one body to live in! National Women's Health Week empowers women to take charge of our health including access to important services through our job-based health coverage.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) makes it easier to address your health needs. For your job-based health coverage, the ACA provides access to preventive services like screenings for cancer (such as mammograms and pap tests), urinary incontinence, diabetes and interpersonal and domestic violence with no out-of-pocket cost, as well as critical health benefits such as maternity and newborn care and general well woman care. This ensures you can access these important screenings without financial barriers and receive comprehensive services at all stages of life. The ACA also mandates coverage for services including blood pressure checks, cholesterol screenings, some forms of nutritional counseling, obesity counseling, diabetes tests, help quitting smoking, lactation support, intervention and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence, and contraception and family planning services - all empowering women to take control of our health. The ACA requires plans to provide coverage with out-of-pocket costs for medications and devices related to preventive care such as contraception medications and devices and breastfeeding equipment and supplies. These comprehensive protections explained further by the [Health Resources and Services Administration Women's Preventive Services Guidelines](#) help you prioritize your health while managing your busy life.

Your mental health is also an important part of your overall well-being. Many job-based health plans cover mental health services such as counseling and therapy. The ACA requires health plans to cover screenings for anxiety at no out-of-pocket cost. Mental health parity laws generally require that mental health and substance use disorder benefits are provided in a similar way as medical and surgical benefits in job-based health plans. When you seek treatment, you should not face barriers or roadblocks that don't exist for medical and surgical treatments. We offer publications and resources to help women understand their benefits and protections such as [Understanding Your Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefits](#).

During National Women's Health Week, we want women to know their health protections so they can make informed decisions and use their job-based health coverage to stay strong and healthy. We have benefits advisors who can help you understand your health benefits, answer your questions and assist if you run into problems. [Reach a benefits advisor at \[askebsa.dol.gov\]\(https://askebsa.dol.gov\)](#) or call 1-866-444-3272 (EBSA). As we celebrate women and mothers

and highlight women's health, let's help all women feel supported and empowered to speak up about their health and health care needs, and take advantage of their job-based health coverage. It's the greatest gift we can give to ourselves!

*Lisa M. Gomez is the Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Employee Benefits Security Administration.*

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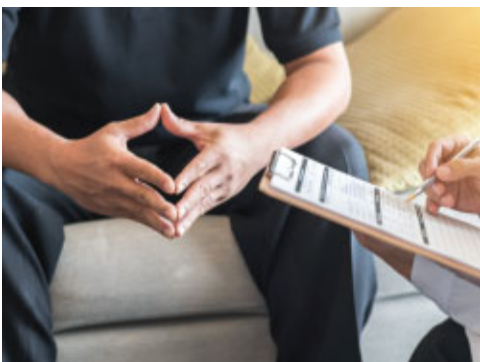
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