

health sense

Spring 2008

Things to Know

Food for healthy teeth

When it comes to healthy teeth, a balanced diet is important.

Eat foods from lots of healthy sources, such as:

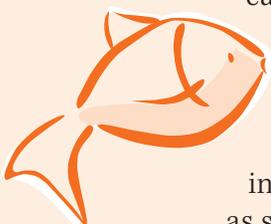
- Breads, cereals and other grains.
- Fruits.
- Veggies.
- Meat, poultry and fish.
- Milk, cheese and yogurt, which are good sources of calcium for healthy teeth.

But even healthy foods have sugars and starches that promote tooth decay. So it also matters *when* you eat.

Try to limit snacks, especially sugary, starchy munchies and sugary drinks.

And keep in mind that foods with sugars or starches are

easier on your teeth when you eat them as part of a meal instead of as snacks.



Time for good foods

Kids need plenty of fruits and veggies to grow up healthy and strong. And with a little help, they can learn to like all kinds of foods that are good for them.

Try these tips:

- Ask your kids which fruits and veggies they like best.
- Go shopping together. Let kids pick out new fruits and veggies to try.
- Have kids help fix fresh foods. They can tear up

lettuce or wash fruit, for example.

- Have a potato party. Serve baked, steamed or boiled potatoes. Put out toppings like salsa, broccoli and cheese.

- Chop up some fruit and let kids make their own salads.

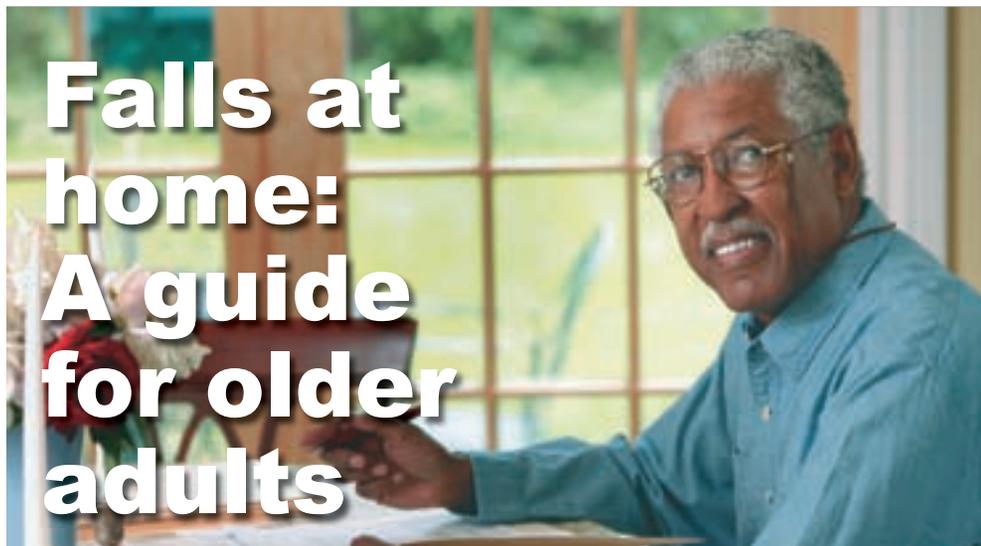
- Add veggies to favorite foods. You could mix peas with macaroni and cheese. Or put chopped veggies in spaghetti sauce.

- Set a good example.

Pile your own plate with fresh veggies and fruits. And be willing to try new ones!



Sources: American Dietetic Association; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Bathroom

- Put a nonslip rubber mat or tub strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- If you need support in the shower or near the toilet, have a carpenter put grab bars inside the tub and next to the toilet.

Other tips

- Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medicines you take, even over-the-counter medicines. Some medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy, and some can be dangerous when mixed together. Always bring a list of your medications to your doctor appointments.
- Have a doctor check your vision once a year. Poor vision can increase your risk of falling.
- Get up slowly if you have been sitting or lying down for more than 15 minutes.
- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise makes you stronger and improves your balance and coordination.
- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Each year thousands of older Americans fall at home. Some end up in the emergency room with broken bones. Falls can be caused by hazards around the house that we do not think can harm us. Here is a list of tips on how to prevent falls inside your home.

- Pick up things that are on the floor or stairs.
- Tape cords and wires to the wall or floor.
- Have a lamp close to your bed so it's easy to reach at night.

With a little planning, you can prevent injuries due to falling in your home.

Living room and bedroom

- Move furniture to have a clear path to the main rooms.
- Remove all rugs or use double-sided tape or a nonslip backing so the rugs won't move.

Kitchen

- Move items in your cabinets to keep them on the lower shelves.
- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

Call us by June 30!

You can help us improve our services

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) is updating our member language and ethnicity data so we can serve you better. We want to have the most accurate information on all our members. We currently have language and ethnicity data only on Medi-Cal members. Accurate language and

ethnicity information will help us review the treatment patients receive and make sure everyone gets the highest quality care.

If you are a CCHP member and **don't** have Medi-Cal, please call our Member Services Department at **1-877-661-6230 (press 2)**. They will ask you 4 short questions.

CCHP will protect your information, including your race, ethnicity and language choices. We will not share this information with anyone outside of our own health care system.

We care about your input. Remember to call Member Services at **1-877-661-6230 (press 2)** by June 30.



A safety guide by age

Keep your child safe

Kids are natural explorers. And since they can't judge what is dangerous, it's our job as parents to keep them from getting hurt.

Follow these steps from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Birth to age 2

- Always use a car seat. Secure it in the back seat, facing backwards until your child is **both** 1 year old and weighs at least 20 pounds. After that, your child can face forward in a car seat, but leave it in the back seat.

- Put babies to sleep on their backs, even for a nap. This helps protect them from sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS.

- Keep small objects out of your baby's reach. That includes foods like popcorn and grapes.

- Don't leave children alone around pools, bathtubs or even buckets that have water in them. Kids can drown in less than 2 inches of water.

- Tie window cords high and out of reach. Children can choke in them.

- Keep medicines and cleaning products out of sight and reach.

- Keep any guns unloaded and locked away.

Ages 3 to 6

- Make sure your child always wears a helmet when riding a bike and doesn't ride or play in the street.

- Don't let your child swim or play around water unless an adult is within reach.

You can help prevent most childhood injuries.

- Teach your child to look both ways when crossing the street and to always cross with a grown-up.

- Keep your child in a car seat as long as possible before switching to a booster seat.

Ages 7 to 10

- Make sure your child wears the right protective gear for sports.

- Find out if there are guns where your child visits and how they are stored.

Help protect kids online

Parents today have a new concern. It's online safety. You can help protect your kids by teaching them never to:

- Give information about themselves, such as their name, address, phone number or photo.
- Meet in person anyone they met online.
- Use a credit card online without your OK.
- Share passwords.
- Flirt. They can't be sure who they're really dealing with.
- Reply to something that seems bad or confusing. Instead, they should tell a trusted adult.

You should also:

- Learn how to use the Internet. Explore it together with your kids.
- Keep the computer in an area the family shares, like a living room. Then you can see the sites your child visits.
- Use software or an online service to block sites you don't approve of.
- Talk to your kids about how to use the computer. Encourage them to use the Internet for homework and to look up subjects of interest.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Federal Trade Commission

- Teach your child to always buckle up the car safety belt.

You can help prevent most injuries and teach your child to be safe as he or she grows up.

Need help now?

Health advice when you need it

By Gloria Mayer, RN, and Ann Kuklierus, RN, Institute for Healthcare Advancement

Contra Costa Health Plan Advice Nurses can help you decide if you need emergency or urgent medical care. An Advice Nurse can tell you what to do before you go to the emergency room and what to tell the staff members once you get there.

If you or your child is sick or injured, call an Advice Nurse right away. Our 24-hour, 365-days-a-year toll-free phone number is **1-877-661-6230 (press 1)**.

Here are some examples of when you need to get help right away:

- You or your child has trouble breathing.
- Bleeding that will not stop.
- Any injury that you think could lead to death.
- Blood in pee (urine) or in bowel movements.
- Coughing up or throwing up blood.

- Diarrhea and no urine for 6 hours.
- The soft spot on your baby's head is bulging or sunken.
- Pain in the ear, or liquid, pus or blood coming out of the ear.
- Your child has a hard time swallowing or won't eat.
- Your child has both a fever and a stiff neck.
- Your baby has a fever of 100.2 degrees (rectal) and is younger than 2 months.
- Your baby has a fever of 101 degrees (rectal) and is between 2 and 6 months.
- Your baby has a fever of 103 degrees (rectal), and is between 6 months and 2 years.
- Any fever that doesn't reduce with cold fluids, acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil), or if it lasts more than 3 days (any age).

If you or your child has any signs or symptoms of injury or illness that concern you, you may call the Advice Nurses any time, 24 hours a day.



take action
Get help from an Advice Nurse day or night. Call 1-877-661-6230 (press 1).

CCHP interpreter services: We speak your language

When you're sick, it often helps to see a doctor. And the easier the doctor is to talk to, the better. But talking with a doctor can be hard if he or she doesn't speak the language you know best. When that's the case, we can help.

We have interpreters available who know many languages, including sign language. And if we

don't have someone who speaks your language, we'll find someone.

Interpreters make sure that the doctor knows what you're saying and that you know what the doctor is saying. With their help, you can get answers to all of your questions.

This service is free and easy to use. If you go to the County

Health Centers, we have many options for you: interpreters by telephone, video and in person. Private community providers can contact Contra Costa Health Plan's Advice Nurses, who can connect them to telephone interpreters. So next time you see a doctor and need an interpreter, ask for one.

Your plan for weight loss

Keep in mind, the goal is better health

Many diets claim to have the secret to losing weight. There is no secret. Food has calories. Our bodies need calories for energy. We use up calories with every activity. Some activities use more calories than others.

Unused calories are stored as fat. We gain weight when we eat more calories than we use.

To lose weight, we need to use more calories than we eat. To do that, make healthy food choices and exercise more.

The only secret lies in forming a plan that works for you.

Be sure to make lifestyle changes you can live with.



Take small steps

It can be hard to change your lifestyle.

It can be even harder to make big changes all at once. So try making small changes slowly.

Add one fruit or vegetable to each meal this week, for example. Next week, add a 10-minute walk to each lunch break.

Be sure to make changes you can live with. Otherwise, you probably won't stick with them.

You don't have to make big changes in what you eat. For example, switch from:

- White to whole-grain bread.
- White to brown rice.
- Fried to baked chicken.

You can also add exercise slowly. It's good to get at least 30 minutes of activity every day. But you might want to aim for 10 minutes today. Then add 10 more minutes tomorrow. And 10 more next time.

Keep your eye on the goal

Celebrate each step.

And keep in mind that your goal is better health. Losing weight, if you need to, is a bonus.

When emotions make you eat

It doesn't do much good to tell your troubles to a bag full of cookies.

And eating all of them will only make things worse.

Many of us have turned to food for comfort after a bad day. Eating too much of a favorite treat might make us feel better for a little while.

It can also become a bad habit. Emotional eating won't solve your problems. And it may make new ones—such as weight gain or feeling bad about yourself.

Think about when you eat.

Do you eat only when you're hungry? Or do you eat when you're bored, lonely or sad?

Keep a diary. Write down how you feel every day and what you eat.

If you're bored or stressed, don't reach for a snack. Put on your shoes instead, and take the kids or the dog for a walk.

Talk to your doctor if you think you might need help to control your eating.



Sources: American Dietetic Association; American Psychological Association

CCHP: A Culture of Caring for 35 years

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) is celebrating its 35th anniversary! We would like to take a moment to thank all the providers, members and community partners who helped us get started back in 1973, some of whom are still with us today!

Remember that we are here to serve you and everyone in our community. So if you know anyone



without health insurance, please pass our number along (1-800-211-8040), and we will do our best to help. Together, we look forward to another 35 years of being *A Culture of Caring*.

What is a health maintenance organization?

A health maintenance organization (HMO) is not like the old insurance plans. An HMO has a couple of rules that are set by this type of health insurance.

With an HMO, only certain providers or doctors are contracted with Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP). To try and understand how an HMO works, here are some things to remember:

■ You are asked to select a primary care provider (PCP). This is the doctor you will always see first for your health care needs.

- You select your PCP from a group of providers contracted with CCHP.
- Your PCP can make a referral for you to see a specialist or other doctor.
- With most CCHP plans, emergency medical care does not require a referral from your PCP or authorization from CCHP.
- With certain CCHP plans, women can see an OB/GYN without a referral.

If you have any questions, don't know who your PCP is or if you have not chosen a PCP, please call Member Services at 1-877-661-6230 (press 2).

Weight gain and diabetes

Extra pounds can do more than make your clothes feel tight. They also increase your risk of diabetes.

Most people with type 2 diabetes, the most common form of diabetes, are overweight. And it doesn't matter what your age is. Both overweight kids and adults are at risk for diabetes.

But losing even a little weight—often only 10 pounds or so—can help you avoid diabetes.

If you already have diabetes, losing weight can help improve your blood sugar levels.

These tips can help:

Get moving.

Try to exercise at least 30 minutes every day. If you don't have much time, get up early and go for a brisk walk.

Eat smart. Help yourself to plenty of fruits, veggies and whole-grain foods. Go easy on sweets, fatty foods and sugary sodas.

Don't skip meals. You'll overeat later on.

Grocery shop on a full stomach. You'll avoid foods that might tempt you.



Sources: American Dietetic Association; National Institutes of Health