

health sense

Spring/Summer 2009

Things to Know

Healthy eating with WIC

California Women, Infants and Children (WIC), a nutrition and education program, will offer different foods starting in October. You can learn about the new WIC healthy foods in the coming months.

WIC is making the following changes:

- More incentives for moms who breastfeed.
- Baby food fruits and vegetables.
- Less formula for babies 6 to 12 months old.
- Fruits and vegetables.
- Less juice.
- Less fat in milk and cheese.
- More whole grains.

In October, your new WIC coupons will include these healthy foods. Talk with your local WIC agency, or call **888-WIC-WORKS (888-942-9675)**.



Summer's coming, but try not to sweat it too much.

Of course, that may be easier said than done. It's hard to stay cool when it's 100 degrees outside and hot inside too.

Hot weather is more than a comfort issue, however. It's also a

health issue.

Illnesses like heatstroke kill hundreds of people every year in this country. Those most at risk are the oldest and youngest.

Here are some tips for staying cool and safe when it's hot:

- Drink a lot of fluids. Water is a good choice, but avoid liquids with alcohol or sugar.
- Use fans. But if it gets really hot, seek out air conditioning. Go to the library, a movie

theater or another cooled place.

- Wear loose clothes that are light in weight and color.

Also keep close watch on young children, especially babies. And check on older people and those who have health problems.

Source: American College of Emergency Physicians



Asking questions can help prevent mistakes in your care.

- Ask how you can learn more about your condition.

At the pharmacy

- Be sure you're given the right medication.
- Ask when and how to take the medication.
- Let the pharmacist know about everything else you take.

At the lab

- Before a test, ask what you need to do to prepare for it.
- Ask who will tell you the results.

At the hospital

- Ask who is in charge of your care.
- Be sure people wash their hands before touching you.
- Ask for written instructions about the care you should get after you're out of the hospital.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Speak up for health

What you can do to help prevent medical mistakes

You don't need special medical training to prevent mistakes in your health care. All you have to do is speak up.

At the doctor's office

- Let your doctor know about everything you take. This includes medicines, vitamins and herbs.
- Tell your doctor if a medicine has caused problems for you in the past.
- Ask why you need a test or a medicine.

Interpreter services: Does anyone speak my language?

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) wants all members to know that we provide Language Services in case you need them. Making sure that you and your health care provider can communicate clearly is very important, and we have a variety of services for you. If you receive services at the county hospital or health centers, you

have access to interpreter services by telephone or video. If you go to a private doctor, you also have access to our telephone interpreter services by calling our Advice Nurse Unit. Both private providers and county clinics may also have bilingual staff to help you.

CCHP discourages using family members as interpreters, especially minors or friends, because of the

challenge of medical language. So remember, if your English skills are limited or you don't fully understand what's being said to you, ask for an interpreter. If you have problems accessing an interpreter through our clinics, hospital or private doctor's office, please let us know by calling CCHP at **925-313-6063**.

Take steps to prevent pre-diabetes

Before you get diabetes, you usually have a condition called pre-diabetes.

Pre-diabetes is serious. It means your blood sugar level is higher than normal but not yet high enough to be called diabetes.

Having pre-diabetes means you could get type 2 diabetes. You are also at high risk for a heart attack or stroke.

You are at risk for pre-diabetes if you:

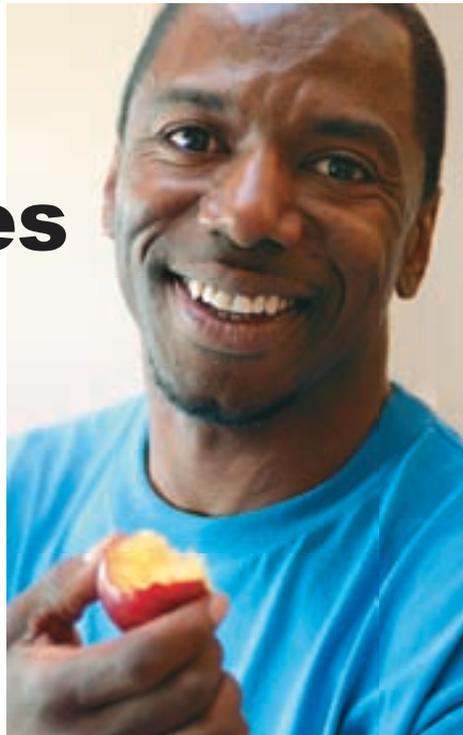
- Are overweight.
- Are over 45 years old.
- Have a family history of diabetes.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Have unhealthy cholesterol levels.
- Do not get much exercise.

Your doctor can test for pre-diabetes. Treatment can help. You may be able to return your blood sugar level to a normal range.

There are some medications that can help. But a healthy diet and regular exercise are best.

These tips can help prevent and treat pre-diabetes:

- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. Whole-grain foods, such as brown rice and whole-wheat pasta, are good too.
- Limit high-fat meats and snacks.



- Eat fish a few times a week.
- Drink water instead of soda.
- Trim down portion sizes.
- Get at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. Go for a walk or bike ride. Use the stairs instead of an elevator. Or park at the far end of the parking lot.

Talk to your doctor for more ways to eat healthy and stay active.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Institutes of Health

Eye care: Stay focused on good vision

If you have diabetes, you need to look out for your eyes.

Diabetes can cause several eye problems that can lead to blindness.

You should see an eye doctor at least once a year or anytime you have any kind of eye problem.

Eye problems can include:

- Blurry or double vision.
- Trouble reading.
- Pain in one or both eyes.
- Seeing rings around lights, dark spots or flashing lights.
- Red eyes.

To protect your eyes:

- Control your blood sugar.
- Keep your blood pressure at a healthy level.
- Don't smoke.

Source: American Diabetes Association



Healthy snacks can keep you on track

With diabetes, healthy snacks should be part of your meal plan.

Snacks can help keep your blood sugar from getting too low.

It's best to avoid snacks high in fats, salt and sugar—such as cookies, doughnuts or potato chips.

Instead, enjoy: » Raw vegetables. » Fresh fruit. » Low-fat cheese sticks.

» Peanut butter on whole-grain crackers. » Unsalted nuts or seeds. » Air-popped or low-fat popcorn. » Yogurt smoothies. » Applesauce. » Sliced turkey on whole-wheat tortillas.

Ask your doctor how often you should snack, how much you should eat and which snacks are best for you.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; American Medical Association

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To learn more about pre-diabetes, talk to your doctor.

Rid your home of allergy triggers

No one likes to sneeze and wheeze, especially in their own home.

So if you have allergies, it makes sense to clean your house of as many allergy triggers as you can.

Many things can trigger allergy symptoms. Here are some of the common ones and ways to deal with them.

Dust. Vacuum and dust regularly. Wash your bedding at least once a week in hot water. Use allergyproof cases on your pillows, mattress and box spring. Also, get rid of wall-to-wall carpets if you can. Use throw rugs instead. Wash them regularly.

Mold. Dry off surfaces in damp areas, such as bathrooms and kitchens. Clean damp or moldy areas with a solution that is 10 parts water to 1 part bleach. Pay special attention to the corners of the shower and under sinks. Use a dehumidifier to remove moisture in damp areas of the home. Clean the dehumidifier weekly.

Smoke. Don't let anyone smoke in your house.

Pets. Bathe your pet weekly. Don't let your pet in your bedroom. Wash your hands after touching animals.

Cockroaches. Put food away in sealed containers. Sweep up crumbs as soon as you are done cooking and eating. Wash dishes and empty the garbage right away too. Use roach traps. Or call an exterminator, if needed.

Controlling triggers is very important. But it is just one part of your allergy control plan. Be sure to work with your doctor and take your medicine as directed.

Source: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology



Is your asthma under control?

Before you answer, take this quiz. It might change your mind.

Sometimes my coughing and wheezing wake me up at night. Yes No

Some mornings I wake up and it's hard to breathe. Yes No

My asthma keeps me from doing things I'd like to do. Yes No

I have missed work or school because of my asthma. Yes No

I have gone to the hospital in the last year because of my asthma. Yes No

I use my rescue inhaler (quick-relief medication) often. Yes No

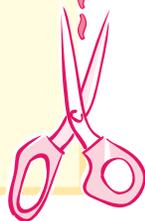
If you answered yes to any of these six questions, your asthma might not be controlled.

Take this completed quiz to your next doctor's visit. It can help your doctor help you breathe better.

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take **Visit the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology website at www.aaaai.org.**

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Talking to kids about drugs and alcohol

When's the last time you talked to your kids about the dangers of drugs and alcohol?

You might think that's an issue only for older kids. But if your kids are in preschool, now's the time to start talking.

Children who learn about those dangers early in life may be more likely to make good choices later.

With young kids, keep things simple. Tell them that drugs and alcohol can harm them. And make it clear that you don't want your kids to use them.



As children get older, the pressure from friends gets more important. It's good to talk about why you don't want your kids to use drugs and alcohol.

But you should also help your children practice ways to say no when friends try to talk them into it. A good relationship with your child can help a lot.

Have these conversations often as your kids grow up.

And if you've used drugs or

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For more tips on talking to your kids about tough topics, go to <http://familydoctor.org>.

alcohol yourself, don't let it stop you. You don't have to share all of the details, but you can be honest. Tell your kids you want them to learn from your mistakes.

Sources: American Council for Drug Education; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; Partnership for a Drug-Free America

Help children say no to violence

Violence shouldn't be part of anyone's life—especially a child's. But too often it is.

You can help your kids learn to resist violence. Here's how:

Set a good example. Kids learn from watching you. Slapping and spanking them may teach them that it's OK to hit others. So when you need to punish your kids, don't strike them. Show them that calm words are better than fists or threats.

If people hurt each other in your home, seek help. Don't let kids think violence is normal.

Don't let your kids watch

violent shows. Violence on TV, in movies and in video games can have a big impact on your kids. Pay attention to what they see, and limit how much violence they're exposed to. When violence does come up in what you watch, talk about it. Explain that it's not real and that real violence hurts people.

Stay involved. Take time each day to talk—and listen—to your children. Always know where they are and who they are with.



And make sure someone is watching your kids when you can't. You might suggest that they join a school program or sports team.

When your kids are in a group, take note of how they get along with others. Let your kids know when they don't behave well, and teach them what to do when someone makes them feel bad.

Give your child lots of love. Hugs and affection are good for children—and can make their behavior easier to manage.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Safe disposal: Medication drop off

Contra Costa County residents can now drop off unused prescription drugs at several locations.

This disposal program was created to give residents an environmentally friendly way to throw out old medicines.

This program may also help prevent drug abuse by teens and prevent seniors from taking expired medications.

Before you drop off expired prescription drugs, make sure pill bottles are sealed and that bottles containing liquid are placed in plastic bags.

Also, make sure that you remove or black out names on prescription labels.

Controlled substances, such as antidepressants and painkillers, must be turned into police.

Central County

■ Walnut Creek City Hall

1666 N. Main St., Walnut Creek
Open Monday through Friday,
from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Contra Costa County Sheriff's Field Operations Building

1980 Muir Road, Martinez
Open Monday through Friday,
from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Contra Costa County Regional Medical Center Sheriff's Substation

2500 Alhambra Ave., Martinez
Open Monday through Friday,
from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

East County

■ Delta Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

2550 Pittsburg Antioch Highway,
Antioch
Open Thursday through Saturday,
from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Call **925-756-1990** or visit
www.ddsd.org.

West County

■ West County Household Hazardous Waste Facility

101 Pittsburg Ave., Richmond (one block off the Richmond Parkway)
Open Thursday, Friday and the first Saturday of each month.

Call **888-412-9277** or visit
www.recyclemore.com.

■ Mobile collection of household hazardous waste

This free pickup service is available to residents 60 or older or who are disabled and residing in the cities of El Cerrito, Richmond, San Pablo, Hercules, Pinole or El Sobrante. Call **888-412-9277** for a pickup appointment.

Source: Contra Costa Times



Find a PCP using our new online tool

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) has a new online tool to help you find updated information about health care providers from your computer.

The new Online Search Engine (OSE) provides a fast and easy way to search for more than 1,300 contracted Primary Care Providers (PCPs), specialists and pharmacies.

You can use the tool to

customize your search by provider type, ZIP code, sex, language and more. When you search for a PCP, you will see details about each one, including their specialty, gender, languages spoken, location, office hours and health care network. The OSE directory also provides maps and driving directions to help you find a provider's office.

CCHP has received positive

feedback from members and providers who are impressed by the easy-to-use search feature. We hope to expand this service even more in the coming months.

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take The Online Search Engine (OSE) can be found at www.contracostahealthplan.org.

Eat more veggies this summer!

Two bean and corn salad

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinaigrette
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can Great Northern beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 cups frozen corn, thawed
- 1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 cup chopped red onion
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 small jalapenos, seeded and chopped (optional)

Preparation

1. In a large bowl, whisk together oil, vinaigrette and cumin.
2. Add remaining ingredients and toss to coat.
3. Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 1 hour to allow flavors to blend.

Servings: Makes 10 servings. One cup per serving.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Calories: 227

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take Place your order now for a free exercise and nutrition DVD. Parents, grandparents and children can benefit from this upbeat, fun DVD. Call 925-313-6917 by July 15. Supplies are limited.

Healthy goals for CCHP families

Select one, two or three things you can do to improve your health:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Cut TV, computer and video game time to 1 hour per day.
- Drink less soda.
- Eat breakfast each day.
- Eat smaller servings.
- Eat less often at fast-food restaurants.

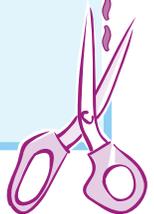
To help your family achieve your healthy living goals, get your complete packet at www.contracostahealthplan.org or call Contra Costa Health Plan

at 925-313-6917.

Topics include: dealing with picky eaters, reducing sugar, how to cut back on TV, get the family moving, healthy family recipes and more.



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Free cooking demonstrations

The Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association promotes and organizes certified farmers markets in local communities. Take advantage of its free cooking demonstrations in our county.

Cookin' the Market uses fresh fruits and vegetables, shares

healthy recipes, and teaches easy ways to prepare them. Learn to cook fresh and nutritious foods using farmers markets.

For a list of scheduled farmers markets and upcoming cooking demonstrations, please call 925-825-9090, or visit the association's website at www.pcfma.com.

Help us be green!

Receiving information electronically uses less paper and protects Earth

Help us reduce paper waste and better use our resources by signing up to receive information electronically as materials become available. You can give us your e-mail address by calling Member Services at **877-661-6230** or by e-mailing us at cchp@hdsd.cccounty.us.

At www.contracostahealthplan.org you can also download your member materials and view past *Health Sense* newsletters. Less paper today is a greener planet tomorrow!



How to know when it's an emergency

From time to time, we all get hurt or sick. It's usually something minor, solved with first aid and TLC.

But what about problems that go beyond a bandage and a kiss? How do we know which conditions are routine and which ones require a trip to the hospital?

It's best to call 911 if you think someone's life is in danger.

Experts say signs of serious trouble include: » Uncontrolled bleeding. » Trouble breathing.

- » Chest pain or pressure.
- » Fainting. » Changes in vision.
- » Confusion. » Sudden, severe or strange pains. » Severe vomiting.
- » Vomiting blood. » Coughing up blood. » Ongoing diarrhea.
- » Thoughts of suicide. » Trouble speaking.

Take special care with children. Kids may not be able to explain how they feel. If you think a child is having a major health problem, see the doctor right away.

Remember that urgent care can be an option when you need treatment but it isn't an emergency.

If your doctor's office is closed, you might visit an urgent care center for: » Insect stings or animal bites. » Minor cuts that need stitches. » Fever. » Flu. » Earaches.

Source: American College of Emergency Physicians

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For the best urgent care option, Contra Costa Health Plan members can call our accredited Advice Nurse Unit at 877-661-6230, option 1.