

health sense

Questions & Answers

Q. How can I help my child get through his or her shots?

A. To help your child brave the pain:

- Compare the pain to a pinprick.
- Remind your child it will be over quickly.
- Just before the shot, have your child take deep breaths and blow, whistle or count to 5.

After the shots, your child may have some pain or a fever. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen (not aspirin) can help.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Immunization Action Coalition



Q. I just had a baby—could I be depressed?

A. Many new moms feel a little down. For most, these feelings go away in a little while.

For others, these feelings may last longer. This is called postpartum depression.

It can make you feel very sad.

If you think you might have postpartum depression, talk with your provider. Without help, it may last a long time or get worse.

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; American Psychiatric Association

Sun smarts

Summer sun means summer fun. It also means taking extra steps to keep your family safe from too much sun.

The sun can damage skin. Too much sun can lead to wrinkles, age spots and skin cancer.

Heat illnesses, such as heatstroke, are another problem. Children and older adults are most at risk.

To protect your family:

- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Keep inside when it's hot. If it is very hot and you don't have air conditioning at home, go someplace cooler, like the library.
- Stay in the shade when you're outdoors.
- Use sunscreen. Choose a type



that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and that protects from both UVA and UVB rays. Apply more every 2 hours.

- Wear clothes that will protect your skin, such as long-sleeved shirts and wide-brimmed hats.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Earthquakes: Be prepared

Earthquakes can come very suddenly without any warning. Planning ahead to make sure you have the right tools can make you feel safer and more ready.

What to do before an earthquake:

- Place large, heavy objects and items that break on lower shelves.
- Hang heavy items and mirrors away from where you sit or sleep.
- Make sure your water heater has straps and that damaged electrical and gas connections are fixed.

What to do during an earthquake:

- If you're indoors:
- Drop to the ground and take cover under furniture, such as a table or a desk.
 - Use a doorway for shelter only if you can get to it quickly.
 - Stay away from glass windows

and outside doors and walls.

- If you're in bed, stay there and cover yourself with pillows.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops; don't run around.

If you're outdoors:

- Stay outside—don't go into a building.
- Move away from buildings, walls, streetlights and utility wires.

If you're in a car:

- Stop as quickly as you can, if it's safe.
- Avoid stopping near buildings, trees, overpasses and utility wires.

What to do after an earthquake:

- Expect aftershocks.
- Listen to battery-operated radios or television.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- Stay away from damaged areas.
- Open cabinets with caution—objects can fall off shelves.



- Inspect utilities for leaks or damage, and clean up any hazardous spills.
- Help injured or trapped people if you can, or call for help.

In an emergency

Keep these important items on hand:

- Copies of health insurance cards.
- Copies of personal ID, driver's license, work ID or passport.
- Medical consent forms.
- List of emergency phone numbers.
- Bottled water.
- A first aid kit.
- A dust mask and latex gloves.
- Spare eyeglasses or contact lenses.
- A flashlight with extra batteries, light bulbs and light sticks.
- A whistle to alert rescuers.
- Sturdy shoes.
- Cash.
- Road maps.
- Personal hygiene supplies.
- Snack foods.
- Games, crayons or teddy bears for kids.
- Writing materials.

Quick tips for treating rashes

If your child has a rash, you'll want to know how to treat it.

Rashes can be caused by different things. For example, diapers and soap can irritate the skin.

Most rashes aren't serious. And mild rashes can often be treated at home. Try:

- Lip balm for rashes around the mouth.
- Moisturizer or petroleum jelly for dry skin.
- A cool, damp cloth for itchy skin.

Your provider can

recommend an over-the-counter or prescription medicine. This can help relieve redness and itching.

Be sure to call your provider if a rash gets worse. Also call if your child has a rash with other symptoms, such as:

- Fever.
- Fast or noisy breathing.
- A bad headache.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Seizures.



Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Medical Association

Try not to miss your doctor visits

It's one date you don't want to miss—your doctor visit. Getting all the checkups and screenings you need can help you stay healthy.

It may take a while to set up a new appointment, so try not to miss these visits.

If you can't make it, call your doctor's office as soon as you can. This way, the office can set aside the time for another patient. And they can set up a new time for you.



Getting all the checkups and screenings you need can help you stay healthy.

If you miss a visit and don't call your doctor's office, a doctor may decide not to see you again.

Have a calendar handy and mark appointments

down as soon as you make them. That can help you remember when you have one scheduled.

So try to keep your visits, and try to show up on time. It's part of staying well.

Why do you need a primary care provider?

Your primary care provider (PCP) is a medical provider who takes care of your overall health. A PCP can be a physician assistant, a nurse practitioner or a doctor.

A PCP manages and helps you make health decisions. You should always make appointments to see your PCP first when you are not feeling well or need a checkup. A PCP knows your medical history and

can give you the best care.

If you need a special kind of care, your PCP can give you a referral to another health care provider or specialist.

Studies show that patients who

have one provider for their medical care are:

- Happier with their health care.
- Have better care.
- Have a stronger relationship with their provider.

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If you haven't chosen your PCP, please call Contra Costa Health Plan Member Services at 877-661-6230 (press 2), Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Breast changes: What's normal?

If you've ever found a change in one of your breasts, you're not alone. You, too, might have felt afraid.

Or you might have told yourself not to worry. And you were probably right.

Most women have breast changes at some time in their lives. And most of these changes are not cancer, says the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Many common, normal breast changes are related



to hormones and aging.

Still, you don't want to ignore them.

Changes in your breasts might be a sign of cancer. But they are more likely to be:

■ Conditions that cause lumpy,

■ **Most breast changes women have are not cancer.**

tender breasts, especially right before your period. Most women will have these changes at some time, says the NCI.

■ Painless growths that feel hard, round and rubbery. These growths are most common in women in their 20s and 30s.

The NCI says to tell your doctor right away if you have:

■ A lump in or near your breast or under your arm.

■ Thick or firm tissue in or near your breast or under your arm.

■ Nipples that are tender or leak fluid.

■ A nipple that turns inward.

■ Itching or skin changes such as redness, scales, dimples or puckers.

■ A change in breast size or shape.

Your doctor will examine your breasts. He or she may order a mammogram. This can give your doctor a clearer picture of what the changes might mean.

How to prepare for a mammogram

Now that you are going to have a mammogram, here are some things to do.

Schedule the test for the week after your period. Your breasts won't be as tender then.

On the day of your test:

■ Wear a skirt or pants with a top that is easy to take off.

■ Don't wear lotion, perfume or deodorant. They can make the x-ray pictures unclear.

At your appointment:

■ Tell the person doing the test about any breast problems you may have.

■ Let the person know

if you might be pregnant.

After the mammogram, ask when you will get the results.

If you don't get them when expected, follow up.

The American Cancer Society says that most women 40 and older should get a mammogram every year. This x-ray of your breasts can help find a lump that is too small to feel. It can help spot cancer early, when it's often easier to treat.

Ask your doctor about a screening schedule that is right for you.



Additional sources: Radiological Society of North America; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Routine health checks

Newborn to 18 months

- Birth.
- Within first week.
- At 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18 months.

Screenings may include:

- Height and weight.
- Dental check.
- Nutrition counseling.
- Immunization/vaccine update.
- Blood lead testing (at 12 months).
- Blood test for hemoglobin level (at 9 and 15 months).
- Check healthy development.
- Secondhand smoke screening.
- TB testing (if needed).
- Safety counseling.

2 to 11 years

- At 24, 30 and 36 months, and every year after.

Screenings may include:

- Record height, weight, blood pressure and BMI (body mass index).
- Dental check.
- Nutrition counseling.
- Physical activity counseling.
- Immunization/vaccine update.
- Vision and hearing test (starting at age 3).
- Blood lead testing (if needed).
- Blood test for hemoglobin level.
- Check healthy development.
- Secondhand smoke screening.
- TB testing (if needed).
- Safety counseling.
- Urine test (annually, starting at age 4).

- Cholesterol test for high-risk patients.

12 to 20 years

- Once a year.

Screenings may include:

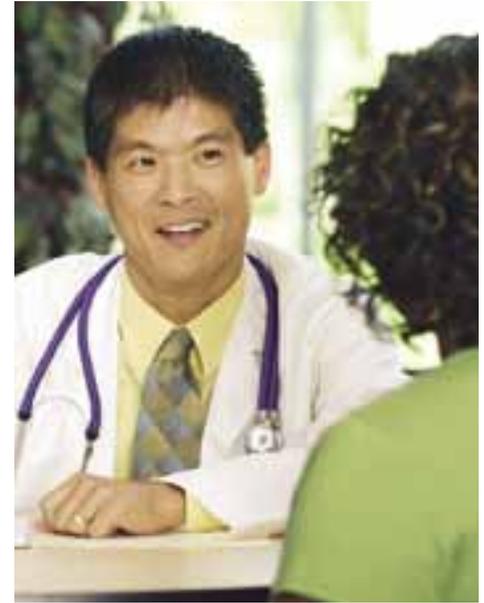
- Record height, weight, blood pressure and BMI.
- Dental check.
- Nutrition counseling.
- Physical activity counseling.
- Immunization/vaccine update.
- Vision and hearing test.
- Blood lead testing (if needed).
- Blood test for hemoglobin level.
- Check healthy development.
- TB testing (if needed).
- Tobacco and alcohol use assessment.
- Safety/lifestyle counseling.
- Urine test.
- Cholesterol test for high-risk patients.
- Pap smear and chlamydia test (for sexually active girls).

21 and older

- Once a year.

Examination may include:

- Record height, weight, blood pressure and BMI.
- Heart-health assessment.
- (Consider aspirin use for men over



40, postmenopausal women and high-risk patients.)

- Colon cancer test (age 50 or older).
- Cholesterol test (men age 35 or older and high-risk women over 35; all adults over 45).
- Depression counseling.
- Diabetes test for adults with blood pressure higher than 135/80 mm Hg.
- HIV test (if needed).
- Hepatitis B test for high-risk patients.
- TB testing for high-risk patients.
- Tobacco and alcohol use assessment.
- Immunization/vaccine update.

Screenings: His and hers

For women

- Pap smear every 2 to 3 years after 2 normal tests.
- Mammogram every 1 to 2 years from ages 40 to 69 after counseling about risks and benefits.
- Osteoporosis screening for all

women older than 65 and high-risk women starting at age 60.

- Chlamydia screening for women younger than 25 or high-risk women.

For men

- AAA test for men older than 65 who have ever smoked.



Your child's forehead is hot. Is it a fever?

You'll want to keep an eye on your child's temperature. But if it's a mild fever, there's usually no need to worry.

A fever itself is not an illness. In kids, it may come along with ear infections, colds, flu and pneumonia. A fever can be a good

sign. It shows that the body is fighting an infection.

A normal body temperature is about 98.6 degrees. And it's normal for that to vary slightly. So when should you call the doctor?

Call if your child has a temperature higher than 102 degrees.

Also, call a doctor for a baby

younger than 2 months with any type of fever.

And call for a child who has a fever and:

- Looks very sick.
- Is very sleepy or fussy.
- Has a stiff neck, a bad headache, a sore throat, ear pain, a rash, or repeated vomiting or diarrhea.
- Has had a seizure.
- Has an illness that makes it hard to fight infections.

For a mild fever, dress your child in lightweight clothing. Give him or her plenty of clear fluids.

Talk to your child's provider about medicines that can help a fever. Be sure to read and follow the instructions. Pay attention to how much to give and how often. Never give children aspirin.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; American College of Emergency Physicians

Know the warning signs for stroke

Traffic signs warn us to yield, stop or slow down.

Did you know there are warning signs for stroke too? Spotting them could help save your life.

Get help fast

Stroke is an emergency. It means the brain isn't getting enough blood. Brain cells need oxygen from blood to survive. Treating stroke fast can help prevent serious disability or death.

But many people don't know the warning signs of stroke. These can include sudden:

- Numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg—especially on one

side of the body.

- Confusion or trouble speaking.
- Trouble seeing in 1 or both eyes.
- Dizziness, loss of balance or difficulty walking.
- Severe headache with no known cause.

Call 911 if you see these signs in



yourself or someone else. Stroke medicines work best if given within 3 hours of the start of symptoms.

Prevent stroke

To help lower your risk:

- Don't smoke. Ask your provider how to quit.
- Stay on top of high blood pressure and cholesterol. Get your levels checked regularly.
- Manage diabetes. Use medicines as directed. Follow your meal plan.
- Eat foods low in cholesterol and saturated fat. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables.
- Exercise regularly. Walk, swim or do other things you enjoy.

Sources: American Stroke Association; National Institute on Aging

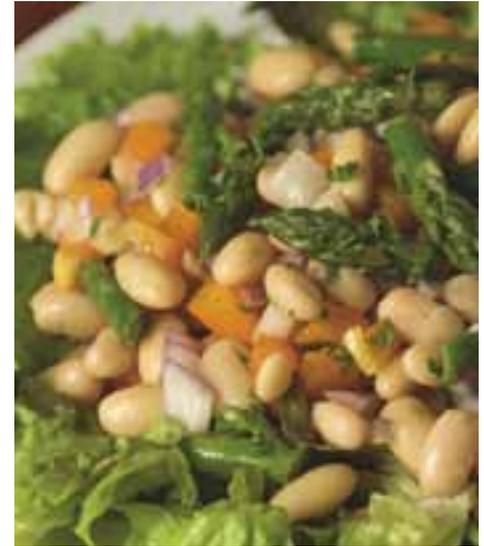
White bean salad with asparagus

Ingredients

- 5 stalks green asparagus, tough ends removed
- 1 can (15 ounces) white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 orange bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- ½ cup finely chopped red onion
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup leafy salad greens, loosely packed

Instructions

- Cut asparagus into 1-inch pieces. In vegetable steamer, set into large saucepan; lightly steam for 2 to 3 minutes. Set aside to cool.
- In large bowl, combine white beans, orange pepper and red onion. Gently toss in asparagus.
- In separate bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, mustard, salt and pepper. Gently toss dressing into salad. Adjust seasonings to taste.
- Line salad bowl with leafy greens. Top greens with white bean salad. Serve with hearty whole-grain bread.



Nutritional information

Makes 5 servings. Per serving: 134 calories, 6g total fat, <1g saturated fat, 16g carbohydrates, 4g protein, 5g dietary fiber, 156mg sodium

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research

Healthier rice pilaf

Many times, ready-to-make boxed foods have added salt, calories and fat. Learn how to make healthy homemade rice pilaf and trade in the boxed pilaf.

If you learn how to cook basic pilaf you can create your own recipes. To change it a little, add any kind of nut, grilled vegetables, any protein, capers, sun-dried tomatoes, cheese, olives or beans, when the pilaf is just about cooked.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil or butter
- ½ cup of chopped white onions
- 1 cup jasmine or basmati rice
- 1½ cups of vegetable broth or water
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and fresh-ground black pepper to taste

Instructions

- Heat the oil or butter in a small saucepan over medium-high heat and cover it with a lid. Add onions and sauté for 3 minutes until onions are soft and clear. Add the rice and continue to sauté until all of the rice is coated with oil or butter.
- Add the broth or water, bay leaves, salt and pepper; bring to a

boil. Cover and turn down the heat so the liquid simmers and the rice cooks for 25 minutes or until all of the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender.

Other recipes to try

Tuscan pilaf: Add ¼ cup of chopped basil, 1 medium-sized chopped tomato, 1 minced garlic clove and ¼ cup parmesan cheese.

Spanish pilaf: Add 2 teaspoons of paprika, 1 chopped medium tomato, ½ cup drained chickpeas and minced jalapeno pepper.

Asian pilaf: Add 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce, ¼ cup frozen peas, ¼ cup shredded carrots, ¼ cup chopped red bell peppers and 1 scrambled egg.



You can tell when your child gets a good night of sleep.

A well-rested child can pay attention and be creative and friendly. A tired kid is more likely to be forgetful and grumpy.

Good sleep is important for other reasons too. It helps kids' muscles and bones grow and heal when injured. It also helps build a healthy brain and a good immune system to fight diseases.

But most kids don't get enough sleep.

Do you know how much sleep your child should get every night? It depends on age:

- Up to 1 year old—14 to 15 hours.
- Ages 1 to 3 years—12 to 14 hours.
- Ages 3 to 5 years—11 to 13 hours.
- Ages 5 to 12 years—10 to 11 hours.
- Teens—at least 9 hours.

You can help your child get the sleep he or she needs. Try to follow a regular bedtime routine. For

example, have your child bathe, brush teeth and put on pajamas.

Try to follow a regular bedtime routine to help your child get the sleep that he or she needs.

Then read a book together. This can help your child relax.

Talk to your child's doctor if your child still has sleep problems.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Got a sweet tooth?

Most kids love sugary sweets. But they shouldn't eat them all the time. Foods with lots of sugar are often high in calories and can cause kids to gain weight. Sugar can also raise a child's risk for tooth decay.

You can limit the amount of sugar your kids eat by making sure they eat nutritious foods before they get sweets.

And try these tips to help cut back on sugar at home:

- Serve milk or juice that hasn't been sweetened instead of sugary sodas.
- Use less sugar than a recipe calls for.
- Add raisins instead of chocolate chips to cookie dough.
- Serve reduced-sugar syrups, jams and other sweets.
- Make candy a "sometimes" food.

Sources: American Dietetic Association; Children's Nutrition Research Center

When kids don't want to go to bed

It's a nightly routine for many parents. It's bedtime, but your child doesn't want to go to bed.

You may be able to help make bedtime easier with these tips:

- Put your child to bed at the same time every night.
- Have a bedtime routine, such as brushing teeth and reading a story.

- Avoid TV just before bedtime.
- Keep activities calm.
- Have your child choose a special blanket or stuffed animal to take to bed.

You don't need to stay with your child until he or she falls asleep. It's good for children to learn to fall asleep on their own.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics