

# health sense

## Don't forget your flu shot!

**I**t's fall, and that means flu season is coming. The good news is that vaccines (shots) can keep you from getting the flu. This season, you will need only one shot. It will protect you from three flu strains (including H1N1).

### Who should get the shot?

Everyone 6 months and older should get the flu shot every year.

### When should I get the flu shot?

It is best to get the shot in **October** or **November**. But it's never too late.

### Where should I get the flu shot?

At one of our Walk-in Flu Clinics.

They will be held Monday, Oct. 17, through Saturday, Oct. 29.

**What should I bring?** Bring your Cranberry medical card with you. There may be a line, so please be patient. If you can't come at the drop-in times, call the Treatment Nurse Appointment Line at **800-495-8885**.

**What if I have trouble getting a flu shot?** Please call **877-661-6230**. Press **option 2** for Member Services. Or press **option 1** for an Advice Nurse (available 24/7).

Note: If you are a county employee,



watch for flyers with times and dates you can get a free flu shot at work.

## Questions & Answers

### Who should get the whooping cough vaccine?

The whooping cough booster shot is also called Tdap. It's recommended for:

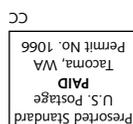
- Pregnant women.
- Anyone who spends time around babies younger than 6 months.

Children and teenagers 7 years and older may also need it.

California law requires proof of Tdap for 7th- through 12th-grade school entry.

### ✓ Mark your calendar: Walk-in flu clinics

<b>Antioch Health Center</b>	Oct. 19, 20, 26, 27	6 to 8 p.m.
<b>Concord Health Center</b>	Oct. 17 to 19, 24 to 26	6 to 8 p.m.
<b>Martinez Health Center</b>	Oct. 17 to 21, 24 to 28 <b>Saturday, Oct. 22</b>	9 a.m. to noon
<b>Pittsburgh Health Center</b>	Oct. 17 to 19, 24, 25 <b>Saturdays, Oct. 22 and 29</b>	5:30 to 8:30 p.m. <b>9 a.m. to noon</b>
<b>Richmond Health Center</b>	Oct. 17 to 21, 24 to 28 <b>Saturday, Oct. 22</b>	8 a.m. to noon



## Exercise your way to better blood pressure

Is high blood pressure getting you down? Add a little activity to your day.

Being more active can:

- Help lower blood pressure.
  - Help strengthen your heart.
  - Make it easier to manage your weight.
  - Help you feel less stressed.
- Managing stress is good for your heart health.

Even exercises such as brisk walking can help you control blood pressure. To get started:

- Do something you enjoy—whether it’s gardening, swimming or mall walking. You’ll be more likely to stick with it if you pick an activity you like.

- Listen to music or an audio book while you work out. Time will pass in a flash.

- Change things up. It will help keep you from getting bored. Vary the time of day you work out. Call a friend to work out with you. This can help you stay motivated.

Sources: American College of Sports Medicine; American Heart Association



## How to track blood pressure at home

**D**uring a checkup, your provider checks your blood pressure. But that one check isn’t always enough. It doesn’t give a complete picture.

You might need to know what your blood pressure looks like on a day-to-day basis. So your provider may ask you to check it at home.

You may need to do this if you:

- Are at risk for high blood pressure.
- Have prehypertension. This means that your blood pressure is almost too high.
- Have high blood pressure.

You can buy a blood pressure monitor to use at home. There are different kinds to choose from. They have a display that shows

your blood pressure numbers. Your provider can let you know which one is best for you.

Be sure the cuff fits you the right way. And ask if you can bring your monitor to your next checkup. You can check your readings with the provider’s readings. This can help you find out if your monitor is working right.

When testing at home, remember to:

- Measure at the same time each day.
- Take 2 or 3 readings 1 minute apart.
- Write down all your readings. Share them with your provider.

Sources: American Heart Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

### » action

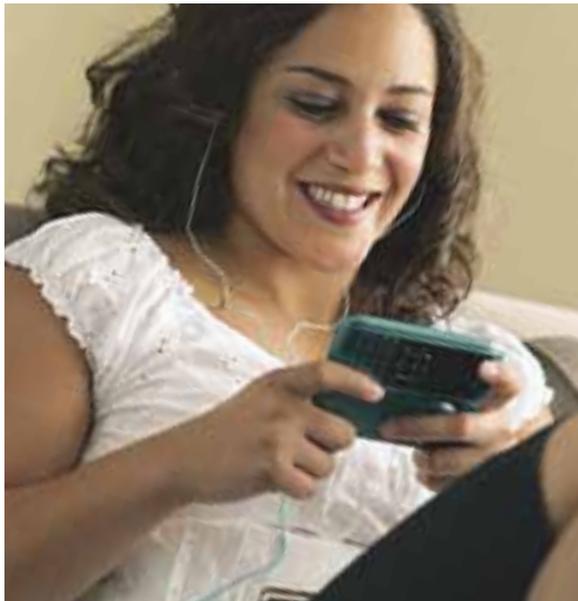
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**Ask your local pharmacy about free blood pressure checks.**

# Stress the positive

A positive approach to life can keep you in good spirits and good health.

Stress is a normal part of life. But too much stress can take its toll on your mind and body. It can increase



the risk of health problems.

To manage stress and stay healthy:

- Take care of your body. Find a kind of exercise you enjoy, and do it regularly. Eat healthy foods. Try to get between 7 and 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Connect with others. Talking to friends and family can help ease stress.
- Take time to relax. Listen to music, read a book or do a quiet activity.
- Know your limits. It's OK to say no if you feel overwhelmed.

And it's OK to ask for help. If it's hard for you to deal with stress on your own, ask your doctor for help.

Source: Mental Health America

## Welcome to Contra Costa Health Plan!

If you've recently joined us, welcome! We know this change can be difficult. But we are here to help. Twice a year we will send you this newsletter.

In it you'll find:

- Health info.
- Recipes.
- Helpful tips.



We value all of our members, and we look forward to serving you! Here are phone numbers in case you have any questions:

- Member Services  
Department: **877-661-6230, option 2.**
- 24/7 Advice Nurse  
Department: **877-661-6230, option 1.**

# Home safe home

As you get older, it's important to prevent falls.

Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths in older adults. You may be more likely to break a bone if you fall when you are older. This can lead to other serious health problems.

Many falls occur in the home. To help make your home safer:

- Put handrails on both sides of all stairs.
- Make sure stairs are well-lit.
- Fix rugs firmly to the floor.
- Keep floors free of clutter that you might trip over.



- Mount grab bars near toilets. Also put them inside and outside your bathtub or shower.
- Use a nonskid bath mat in the shower or tub.
- Keep cords and wires near walls and away from walking paths.
- Use night-lights in the bedroom

and bathroom.

- Avoid standing on chairs or tables to reach things that are up high. Use a sturdy step stool with a handrail and wide steps.
- Keep emergency numbers near each telephone.

You can also lower your risk of falling by keeping yourself in good health. Some tips:

- Try to be active when you can.
- Have your eyes and hearing checked regularly.
- If you take drugs that make you sleepy or dizzy, talk to your provider.

Source: National Institute on Aging



## Try these rainy day activities

What to do for fun when it's rainy or cold? Many kids spend time in front of the TV. But you can find other fun things to do. Here are some things you can do at home to keep kids from getting bored. Keep these in mind for the next rainy day!

- Cook a meal together. Or have a picnic indoors.
- Play music and dance.
- Decorate for a holiday or other special day.
- Build a fort using blankets and chairs.
- Play games like musical chairs or hide-and-seek.

## Fun times for fall

**G**o outside and collect leaves, nuts and sticks. Use them to create fall decorations. Here

are some ideas:

- Fold a piece of paper in half. Glue leaves, nuts and sticks on the front page. Then write inside to make a card.
- Cut the center out of a paper plate. Glue leaves, nuts and sticks

onto the ring to create a fall wreath.

- Place a leaf on a flat surface and cover it with a piece of paper. Use a crayon to color the part of the paper covering the leaf. A leaf shape will appear! Cut out the shapes and include them in your favorite crafts.

## A new road map for healthy living



**H**ave you heard? The food pyramid has been replaced with MyPlate.

It's a picture of a dinner plate with 4 parts: » Fruit. » Veggies. » Grains. » Protein.

There is also a side dish of dairy (milk). MyPlate shows how much of each food to have at each meal. The idea is to eat less. And half of your plate should be fruits and veggies.

For more info, visit [www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov).

First lady Michelle Obama has a program called Let's Move! to help you be more active. To learn more, go to [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov).

You can also get an award from President Barack Obama for being active.

Go to [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org) to learn more.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

# Diabetes and your heart

## Two keys to lower heart disease risk

**D**iabetes can make a heart attack more likely. Over time, high blood sugar can harm blood vessels and cause heart disease.

You may be able to lower your risk for heart disease with these key steps.

**1.** Keep your blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol in check.

Your doctor can help you set healthy targets for these 3 heart disease risk factors.

- Blood sugar. Have an A1c test at least twice a year.

- Blood pressure. Have it checked at every doctor's visit.

- Cholesterol. Have it tested at least once a year.

**2.** Aim for a heart-smart life.

To keep healthy, you may need to take medicine. You'll also want to:

**Move more.** Exercise may help your body use insulin better. And it's good for your heart.

**Aim for 150 minutes a week.** Be sure to spread your exercise time out over at least three days. But try not to go more than two days without being active. Start by taking a walk around the block every morning.

**Eat better.** Fiber may help lower cholesterol. It's in foods like:

- Oatmeal.
- Dried beans.
- Fruits and vegetables.



Also, eat less saturated fat. It's in meats and dairy products with fat. And avoid trans fat. This kind of fat is in foods made with partially hydrogenated oil, such as cookies and other snack foods.

■ ■ **Having diabetes doesn't mean you can't have a healthy heart.**

**Lose weight.** It may help your body use insulin better. Losing even a small amount of weight may lower your heart disease risk. Talk with your provider about what's best for you.

**Quit smoking, if you do.** Smoking increases your risk for heart disease, whether or not you have diabetes. Your provider can help you find ways to quit.

## Could it be a heart attack? Know the signs

A heart attack may not feel like you expect it to. Some are sudden and intense. But most are not. They start slowly and are mild.

Learn the signs of a heart attack, and you



may help save a life. Heart attacks can be fatal. But fast treatment may help prevent serious damage or death.

Most heart attacks cause discomfort in the center of the chest. You may feel pressure or pain. Pain may come and go.

Some other signs are:

- Discomfort in your arms, back, neck or jaw.
- Shortness of breath.
- Nausea.
- Cold sweat.

For both women and men, chest pain is the most common sign. But women may be more likely than men to have the other symptoms.

If someone has chest pain, call 911. Don't wait longer than 5 minutes to call. And even if the pain goes away, you should still have it checked out.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Sources: American Heart Association; National Institutes of Health



## After you give birth

**A**lmost all pregnant women have felt hormone changes after they give birth.

Studies show that up to 80% of new mothers report feeling the “baby blues.” Some of these emotions include feeling sad, anxious, irritable or moody; or not being able to sleep. It is important to know that some of these feelings are a normal part of your body adjusting. However, it is important to talk to your doctor about how you feel. If you feel like you may hurt yourself or your baby, it is important to get help right away.

In addition to talking with your doctor, here are some things that can help when you are feeling down:

- Share your feelings. Talk with your partner, a family member or a

close friend about how you feel.

- Join a support group for new moms.

- Slow down. Having a new baby is an around-the-clock job and will leave you feeling tired. Do not be afraid to ask for help with chores and cooking.

- Try to sleep when your baby is sleeping.

- Spend time outdoors if the weather is good. Put your baby in a stroller and go for a walk. The fresh air and sunshine can help you feel good. Or just sit outside in the yard.

- Take care of yourself. Ask your partner or a friend to watch the baby so you can take a relaxing bath. Take the time to style your hair the way you like it, or put on an outfit that makes you feel good.

Source: [www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com)

## Prenatal care for moms-to-be

Pick out a crib. Stock up on diapers. There are a lot of to-dos before your baby is born.

The most important? Take care of your health.

Prenatal care can help keep you and your baby healthy. Your primary care provider can:

- Help prevent problems.
- Find them early.

### When to call

As soon as you think you are pregnant, contact your clinic or provider to get a test to find out. If you are pregnant, see your doctor right away.

You might visit:

- Once a month for weeks 4 to 28.
- Twice a month for weeks 28 to 36.
- Once a week from week 36 until birth.

Some women may need to be seen more often.

### What to expect

At each visit, your provider will:

- Weigh you.
- Take your blood pressure.
- Measure your belly.
- Listen to the baby’s heart.

It’s important to go to every appointment, even if you feel fine.

Sources: March of Dimes; Office on Women’s Health

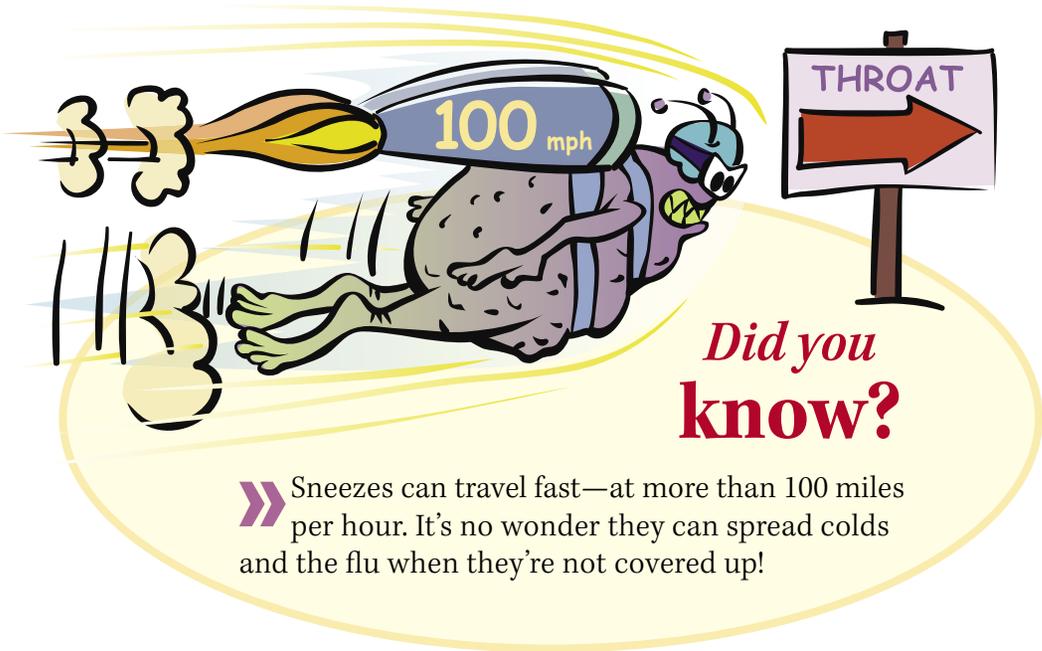
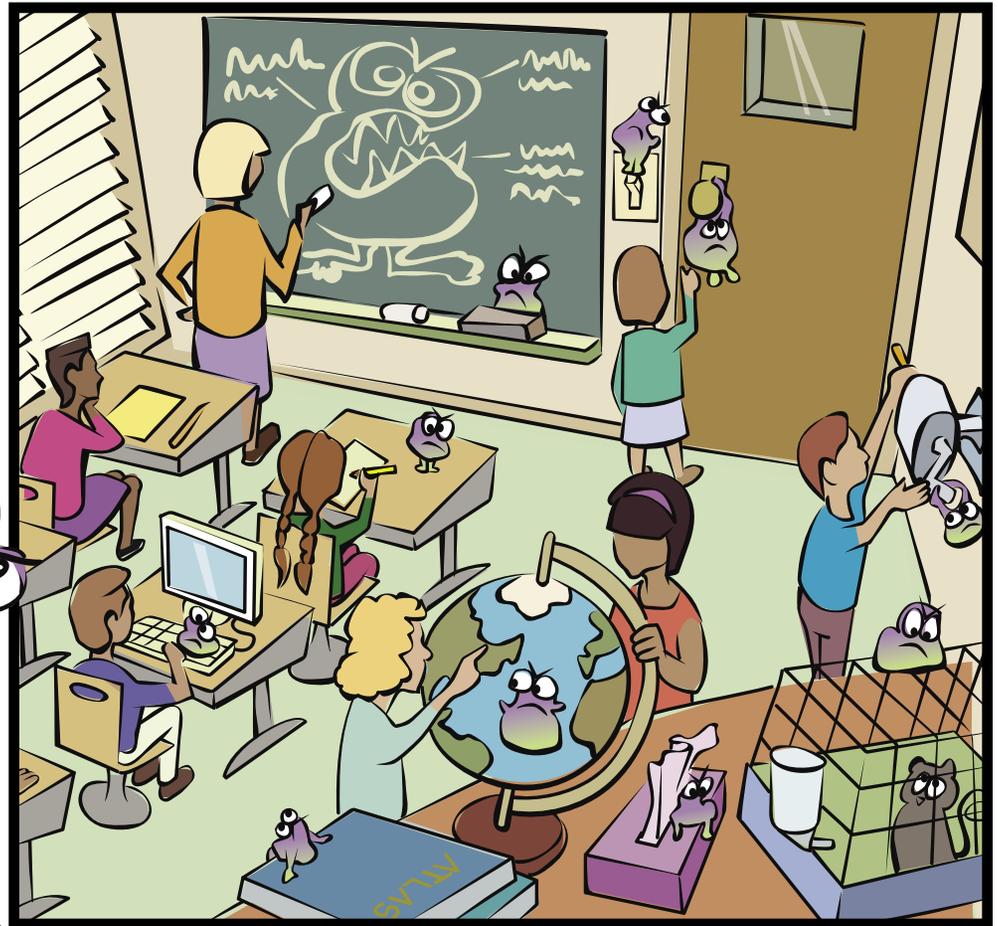
COLDS AND FLU

# Bag the bugs

» Germs cause colds and the flu. Sometimes they get in the air when a sick person coughs or sneezes. (That's why you should cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve!)

But germs can also lurk on everyday items. If you touch them and then touch your mouth, eyes or nose, they'll be lurking in you!

You can help protect yourself by washing your hands often. It's especially important to wash your hands after touching things that germs like to hide on. See if you can find the 10 germs hiding in this classroom.



## Did you know?

» Sneezes can travel fast—at more than 100 miles per hour. It's no wonder they can spread colds and the flu when they're not covered up!

# Scrub-a-dub

» For fun ways to learn about washing your hands, go to [www.scrubclub.org](http://www.scrubclub.org).

Here's a tip: When washing your hands, sing the "Happy Birthday" song 2 times! It takes that long to get your hands good and clean.



## Firehouse lentil soup



### Ingredients

- 1½ cups uncooked lentils
- 6 cups water
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 4-ounce can diced green chilies, undrained
- 1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, diced
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

### Directions

Place first 6 ingredients in large pot. Bring to a boil and simmer until lentils are tender, about 20 minutes. Remove 1 cup of lentils and puree with green chilies in blender. Add back to the soup. Add bell pepper and carrots and cook until the vegetables are tender. Discard bay leaves before serving and serve with lime juice and olive oil.

**Nutrition information** Serving size ½ recipe. Per serving: 200 calories; 35 calories from fat; 3g total fat (1g saturated fat); 0g trans fat; 0mg cholesterol; 80mg sodium; 32g total carbohydrates; 12g dietary fiber; 3g sugar; 13g protein; 40% vitamin A; 80% vitamin C; 6% calcium; 25% iron.

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## French country bean soup

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 carrot, cut in half-moons
- 1 rib celery, sliced
- 1 small onion, chopped in bite-size pieces
- 1 small leek, chopped in bite-size pieces

- 3 outer leaves Savoy cabbage, rolled and cut in ½-inch strips
- 4 cups fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 2 cups squash (e.g., butternut), peeled and diced
- 1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas or white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup cooked chicken cut in bite-size pieces (optional)

### Directions

- Heat oil in medium Dutch oven or large, deep saucepan.
- Saute carrot, celery, onion, leek,

and cabbage until leaves are bright green and other vegetables start to soften, about 3 minutes.

■ Add broth. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

■ Add thyme, garlic, squash and beans. Cover and simmer 15 minutes. Stir in chicken, if using.

■ Ladle soup into deep bowls and serve accompanied by toasted slices of whole-grain French bread or other rustic bread. (This soup reheats well. It keeps up to 5 days, covered, in the refrigerator.)

**Nutrition information** Makes 8 servings (with chicken). Per serving: 123 calories; 3g total fat (2g saturated fat); 18g carbohydrates; 3g protein; less than 1g dietary fiber; 586mg sodium; 425mg potassium.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research